

Title: ESOL+ / REACH

Cardiff and Vale College

Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC) was established in August 2011 to provide further education at eight locations between Trowbridge in East Cardiff and Rhoose in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Cardiff city centre campus was opened in September 2015.

CAVC provides full-time and part-time college courses, university qualifications and apprenticeship programmes, to more than 30,000 learners each year, as well as dedicated training provision for employers.

CAVC's ESOL cohort represents over 80 nationalities between the ages of 16 and 80. 30% of the college's learners do not have English as their first language and approximately 30% of the college population are black, Asian or minority ethnic learners. ESOL learners include asylum seekers, refugees, women in closed communities, young people, parents with childcare needs, learners with hearing impairments, and professionals.

Typically, an ESOL learner would take up to 8 years to progress through the ESOL levels and therefore CAVC identified an alternative ESOL+ curriculum. In ESOL+ courses, learners train for a career while improving their English through the course.

ESOL+ courses are vocational programmes which combine the full suite of ESOL Skills for Life with vocational units. The pathways offered reflect the sector priority areas, local employment opportunities, and demand based on learners' skills, educational backgrounds and future aspirations.

ESOL+ courses are 16hrs per week and are offered in Health and Social Care, Construction, Hairdressing & Customer Services, Barbering, Business Administration, Business & IT, Hospitality & Catering, and AAT (Accounting). The ESOL+ AAT course was the first AAT course in the UK to run the new model Access Award in Business with ESOL learners, achieving a 92% pass rate and a 67% progression onto the higher-level AAT course.

For ESOL learners wishing to undertake more academic pathways, CAVC worked in partnership with the General Education department to design and deliver an adapted Higher Education (HE) preparation course. As a result, an additional 20 learners per year are able to fast-track to Access and Foundation courses.

ESOL+ courses

Each course includes:

- ESOL element: language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Grammar and specialist vocabulary related to the specific work context.
- Employability and Study Skills, Vocational Subject Specialism, Tutorial & Individual Learning Plan targets, and Numeracy.
- Vocational qualifications which are recognised by employers.

Building blocks for success

ESOL+ courses combined with the REACH programme provides an innovative model to meet the needs of ESOL learners, supporting them to progress to further education, training or employment. The success of the approach is dependent on:

- **Cross college partnership**

ESOL+ builds learners' interest in learning as it brings together the ESOL provision with mainstream vocational provision, so that learners widen their aspirations and develop confidence through accessing wider college opportunities.

ESOL+ schemes of work embed health, employability, digital literacy and technology enhanced learning. For example, all courses have an online 'Class Notebook' where learners from Pre-Entry to Level 2 work in collaborative online spaces, and teachers encourage classroom discussions through Yammer, Twitter and Whatsapp.

- **Assessment, referral and support through REACH**

CAVC works collaboratively with 18 organisations to deliver the REACH programme, which was established as a direct result of a proposal to National Government to ensure that ESOL demand is met, but not duplicated and that progression pathways are clearly mapped. REACH has a central hub, in the CAVC College Campus and a database that supports the referral process and tracks learner progress and progression. All partners have access to this database for their provision so can monitor assessment results and plan accordingly.

The initiative works with 16 – 82-year olds including asylum seekers, refugees, EU citizens, individuals who have been settled in the UK for many years with no English language skills, and those with visual and hearing impairments.

The service assesses, interviews and refers learners, allowing them time to discuss their needs, barriers and challenges, and ensuring they are placed in the most appropriate provision. Learners not placed into core provision are referred to flexible roll on roll off courses provided by the partnership within the third sector, FE and/or online learning.

Learners are supported in finding additional forms of ESOL learning in the community such as informal conversation classes and have the opportunity to progress into core provision as new courses commence which forms part of the learner journey.

Impact

The REACH service enables students to access the most appropriate provision at the earliest point, which progresses them into FE, University and employment. In addition, the service is improving social cohesion and community integration. REACH has successfully mapped the full provision of ESOL in the region and fully recognises the individuality of all the providers that offer ESOL. The offer is incredibly diverse and includes both accredited and non-accredited provision, conversational classes and social groups bringing communities together.

Since REACH was established in September 2017, over 1000 learners have been assessed and placed. REACH provides a transformative learning experience by allowing individuals the time to discuss their needs, barriers and challenges ensuring learners are placed into the

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most appropriate provision. Within its first year of operation the hub has halved the city's ESOL waiting list by providing a consistent and efficient approach to referrals across the region thereby enabling learners access to learning and progression at the earliest possible opportunity.

REACH has recently informed the planning of a course specifically for deaf learners and National Government has recently announced that REACH will be rolled out nationally due to the success of the pilot. By understanding the full scale and demand for ESOL in the region REACH is influencing an innovative curriculum planning approach in order to ensure the right courses are offered. The programme has enabled a greater understanding of learner needs and challenges, for example, informing providers of the need to cater for single sex groups and the need for childcare provision to support learners in accessing provision.

REACH has a sustainable approach being a partnership initiative with investment from Government who recognised the need for the project. It plays a pivotal role in informing policy and the future development of ESOL nationally. The project is strategically supported at all levels - Government, executive level within the host organisation and senior leadership buy-in from all organisations involved, resulting in highly effective leadership and management and a shared vision.

The collaborative approach between National organisations and the third sector is key to making REACH a success, below our partners describe the impact the service has had on them and their communities;

"Having a central referral point for all customers requiring ESOL support has transformed the service we can offer our Claimants knowing they will be quickly assessed and referred appropriately." **Gaynor Williams – Partner - JCP Department for Work and Pensions**

"What is striking is that the partnership is clearly focussed on the needs of the learner above all else." **Clive Morgan - Partner –ALW**

Silviana, a learner on the Level 1 ESOL+ Health and Social Care course during the 2016/2017 academic year was encouraged to become course representative. Her confidence increased through links with the wider college, fostered by the working partnership between her ESOL tutor and Healthcare vocational teacher. She says that coming to college is the best thing that ever happened to her. As a result, she was nominated by the ESOL department for a Contribution to College Life award which she won. She is now employed as a cross college Sabbatical Officer for Learner Voice.

Aleks is in her 40s and despite her high level of education prior to coming to the UK, the lack of opportunities in Poland, and difficult family circumstances meant that she had all but given up on her dreams of having her own career. When starting the ESOL+ IT course in 2017, she was working as a cleaner. She believed the course was her last chance to ever have a career. In addition to the ESOL+ IT course, Aleks was enrolled on the ESOL GCSE Maths course. She also took a very active part in all ESOL fundraising events organised by the department throughout the year.

Emi is a young single mum from Albania whose dream is to be a psychologist. In fact, for her Speaking and Listening exam she did a very well researched and eloquent presentation on the qualities required to be a psychologist. Through her role as student rep on the course,

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she had the opportunity to develop her communication skills further. Initially assessed at Entry 3 for Maths at the start of the year, she was placed in an E3 ESOL numeracy class. When she found out about the entry requirement for Access, and realised that she would not reach that level just by attending her Maths classes on a Friday, her tutor arranged extra support through the learning and skills centre. Emi says, 'I loved my teachers and learnt so much; I now have a chance to move on.'

Both Aleks and Emi have now progressed onto an Access to Health Sciences course. Leham, a young single mother, recently widowed, and subsequent asylum seeker from Ethiopia commenced her ESOL journey at the college on an Entry 2 ESOL course, progressed through the ESOL levels and onto the ESOL+ Business course. From there she progressed onto the Level 3 ESOL Practitioners course and joined the ESOL team as an ESOL support worker. She has since left to start her own business.

Hiba completed E2 and E3 in one year and struggled at the beginning of her Level 1 ESOL+ Hair and Customer Service course in 2016/2017. However, through the practical aspect of the course particularly encouraging learners to take a proactive approach to their own learning, Hiba improved her determination, self-motivation, language and hairdressing skills and was voted the Hair and Beauty Department overall learner of the year.

Roghieh was an ESOL+ Hair and Customer Services learner in 2016/17. Roghieh and was a very shy student who really struggled with the language barrier but showed excellent potential in hairdressing. She progressed onto a level 1 hairdressing course in 2017/18 and gained a full NVQ qualification in hairdressing and beauty therapy as well as E3 AON and Comms. During this time Roghieh grew in confidence and won the level 1 student of the year award. The same year Roghieh progressed onto level 2 Hairdressing and completed the course before any other person in the group, won the level 2 student of the year award for hairdressing and came third in the National hairdressing competition in Blackpool. Roghieh now works full time in a hair and beauty salon and is currently studying level 3 hairdressing as well as having two younger children to look after.

How the 'ESOL+ / REACH' programme demonstrates Citizens' Curriculum Entry Pathways principles

Principles	Capabilities	Links	Examples
Taking account of the setting and local context		✓	Includes asylum seekers, refugees, EU citizens, individuals who have been settled in the UK for many years with no English language skills; working collaboratively with 18 organisations; reflects local employment opportunities
Learner involvement in co-design of learning		✓	1:1 interviews to discuss needs, barriers and challenges. Tutorial and individual learning plans

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Citizens' Curriculum Capabilities			
	Literacy/English	✓	Explicit courses / taught sessions with optional accreditation
	Numeracy/Maths	✓	Explicit courses / taught sessions with optional accreditation
	Language (ESOL)	✓	Core element of the programme
	Digital Capability	✓	Embedded as part of digital literacy and technology enhanced learning – online collaborative spaces
	Health Capability	✓	Embedded within programme schemes of work
	Financial Capability		N/A
	Civic Capability	✓	The service itself is improving social cohesion and community integration; includes conversational classes and social groups bringing communities together
Links to vocational		✓	Employability and Study Skills; vocational subject specialism; grammar and specialist vocabulary related to the specific work context; vocational qualifications recognised by employers;

Critical Success Factors:

- Cross college partnership – ESOL provision with mainstream vocational provision to meet learner needs, interests and aspirations
- Assessment, referral and support for learners through REACH central hub and database – ensuring learners are placed in the most appropriate provision
- One to one tutorial support to find work, gain qualifications or progress to further learning
- Multi agency working including the third sector and partnership with local employers and National Government

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Estyn Inspection report November 2018

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Cardiff%20and%20Vale%20College.pdf>