

General Information on VET Organisation
Institution: ACE Academy
Type of Institution: Academy (secondary phase)
Locality and Country: Tipton, West Midlands, UK
Course name and level: Not applicable
Target Group of Course/Curriculum: All students, levels and subjects. Years 7-13 (ages 11 – 18)
Pedagogy used? Not applicable. Depending on the activities and initiatives different pedagogies will be used.
Is the course accredited? Not applicable
Statistical Information (if relevant) Number on role: 1400 Current year 11: 257 Current post 16: 80
General Information on Business involved
Name of Business: ACE Academy works with a large number of businesses
Number of employees: Not applicable. ACE Academy works with a large number of businesses
Area of involved Business: ACE Academy works with a large number of businesses across a wide range of sectors
How is the Business involved in the curriculum? In various ways – please see detailed description and examples below.

Engagement profile of business: In what way(s) does the business cooperate
In various ways – please see detailed description and examples below.

ACE Academy carries out an extensive range of employer engagement across all year groups. This case study outlines the provision in place and focuses on a number of specific examples.

There are two part time members of staff responsible for career related and business links and who provide a point of contact and support for students.

A range of weekly and fortnightly events take place in dedicated slots within the timetable. For example, every 2nd Wednesday a careers talk is held and each week post-16 careers interviews are held in tutor sessions. A CV club is also organised every week and is open to all year groups

At key points throughout the year a number of events are held:

Interview skills workshops for Year 11 involve students attending a mock interview with a business representative. Students are required to wear appropriate dress and bring a copy of their CV with them. The interviews and businesses are related to their chosen career paths.

A careers convention is held every March for Year 9 students and is attended by employers, universities, colleges and training providers. In the morning students attend career talks on a carousel basis and in the afternoon have the opportunity to visit the employers' exhibition stands and talk to representative. This continues in the evening and parents are invited and encouraged to attend.

Year 10 students attend a 'preparation for work' day which aims to prepare them for their forthcoming work experience. In conjunction with another local school, students work with a business mentor for a day and carry out various work related tasks and role plays.

A range of events are also organised for Years 7 and 8, for example, visits to businesses.

All events and activities are evaluated by students and staff and results are summarised and reviewed. Records are also kept in student career files.

As a result provision is adapted accordingly and areas where students need extra help and support can be also easily identified. The team also has the capacity to provide bespoke support if needed. Whilst students are well supported, they are expected to be proactive and show commitment.

There is a large commitment from senior management and resources, including staffing, are allocated to the activities.

ACE Academy develops and maintains the links with employers in a number of ways. A regular newsletter is produced which includes links to employers and acts a

marketing and PR activity. Vacancies for jobs and apprenticeships are also advertised to students and a number have been successfully in securing roles this way. Extensive work with the business sector does require a large amount of networking and attending of events in order to make contacts with businesses, however, many employers see the relevance and value of working with schools and are active in Business in Community work.

Future plans include the introducing of a post-16 childcare link with employers which will involve students spending time working in a nursery. Post-16 work experience will also be changing and students will spend 1 day per week or fortnight in work experience, rather than in one block of time.

Two of the activities can be seen in more details below:

Careers Academy

The Careers Academy is a national initiative for Years 12 and 13 for which students have to apply to be involved. The Academy involves trips to businesses, support from business 'gurus' and support from a business mentor/partner in business. Students also undertake an internship of 4 - 6 weeks and as a result some have been offered jobs. The scheme culminates in a graduation ceremony in London. The Academy links to the subjects that students are studying and mainly focus on accounting, business and law.

Career talks

Every 2 weeks students are invited to attend a careers talk from businesses. These are 20 minute informal talks consisting of a 15 presentation and 5 minutes for questions. There is a break session immediately afterwards so students can stay and talk to business representative in their own time if they want to. Held during tutorial sessions – are well advertised and all are encouraged to attend. Each talk is specific to a wide range of industry sectors and related careers.

An example of a careers talk is that given by Sandwell Homes, part of Sandwell Local Authority. The talk was delivered by Dave Salt, a manager at Sandwell Homes. The careers covered were management, plumbing, carpentry, construction, electrical and the public sector generally. 23 boys attended the event from years 11 and 12.

Dave Salt introduced himself and the business and explained about the apprenticeships they offer, salary information and requirements. He then explained his education and career path and focussed on the wide range of employability skills along with the importance of qualifications. The talk was engaging and informative and it was clear that the boys related to Dave and his experiences. Many of them asked questions and a number stayed behind to talk to Dave about specific areas.

All students complete an evaluation form – see Annex 1. These are used to determine future talks.

Useful Links

ACE Academy

<http://www.acesch.co.uk/>

Careers Academies UK

<http://www.careeracademies.org.uk/>