

## WP2 Case Study: North East Wolverhampton Academy

<b>General Information on VET Organisation</b>
Institution: North East Wolverhampton Academy (NEWA)
Type of Institution: Academy (secondary phase)
Locality and Country: Wolverhampton, West Midlands, UK
Course name and level: Work experience is accredited through BTEC Level 2 WorkSkills course. Students receive a WorkSkills Award by working through 3 credits. They can also receive extra credits through other subjects and PSHE and be awarded higher levels of the award.
Target Group of Course/Curriculum: Year 10
Pedagogy used? n/a
Is the course accredited? Yes.
Statistical Information (if relevant)
<b>General Information on Business involved</b>
Name of Business: NEWA works with a large number of businesses in relation to work experience.
Number of employees: Not applicable. NEWA works with a large number of businesses in relation to work experience.
Area of involved Business: NEWA works with a large number of businesses across a wide range of sectors in relation to work experience.
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.

Work experience takes place for 2 weeks with Year 10 towards the end of the summer term,

usually in June. The key reasons for undertaking work experience are in relation to employability, skills development, re-focusing students in relation to the purpose of their education, informing them of the expectations of employers and particular careers and to develop independence.

A range of preparation work takes place with both staff and students. Personal tutors support students through a specific scheme of work and students work through a handbook and audit booklet. This preparation helps to identify skills, aspirations and career choices and prepare students for work experience. Although many students have aspirations in relation to career choices others need additional support, provided by careers advisors, to help them focus on possible careers or to develop specific skills. CV preparation and development also takes place in the run up to work experience.

The week before students go on their placement a preparation day is held where they look at Health and Safety, employer expectations and so they are clear about what they want to achieve from their time in a business.

The Head of Careers and IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) oversees the process and supports tutors. There is also administrative support in place for organising placements and evaluation. Wolverhampton Education Business Partnership also supports NEWA in securing placements and carries out the risk assessments. In addition, parental permissions are also gained.

Where possible, students undertake a placement which is relevant to their subject areas or chosen careers: approximately 75% generally get a placement in an area of interest. Placements are also linked to the curriculum where relevant, and subject teachers also get involved in finding placements and supporting students.

Whilst students are supported in finding placements, onus is also put on them to find placements independently through their own networks and contacts.

There are a very small number of students (usually less than 10) who don't feel ready for participating in work experience due to confidence issues or other issues such as language barriers. For these, a programme is organised to run alongside work experience where students visit different work environments showing a range of job opportunities and are given tours and talks about what the job involves, qualifications needed, range of jobs etc. For example, visits have taken place to Walsall Housing Group and the Fire Service and students also had a practical day in either construction or hair and beauty at Wolverhampton College. Presentations also take place at NEWA by employers, such as the police. The students also look at the BTEC WorkSkills units in relation to searching and applying for a job and they have an interview for a fictional job with Human Resource experts from local businesses. In this way all students needs are met and aspirations raised for all.

Work experience is also supported by academic mentors who visit students once a week. The visit involves a chat with the student and company representative to ensure there are no issues, and, if there are, resolve or escalate them.

### Student perspective

A number of students were interviewed to gain their perspective in relation to their work experience. The range of employers was vast and varied from aerospace to nurseries to retail to community groups. Students reported very positive experiences and particularly enjoyed learning about new subject areas, gaining new experiences and meeting new people. A number of students said it had developed transferable skills such as team work and confidence. For those students who had firm ideas about their future careers, it either confirmed that they had made the right choice for them, or eliminated it as a choice. A number of students also reported that they had experienced new forms of ICT such as specific systems and software. Other benefits they identified were in relation to building relationships, learning how to deal with people and experiencing a real work environment.

NEWA is also planning to introduce work experience to Year 12 in 2015. This will have a strong emphasis and link with subject areas and career choices.

### **Useful Links**

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

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/workskills/level2/Pages/default.aspx>