



Employer Led Vocational Education and Training in Europe (ELVETE)

Highlighting of good practice in 14 -19

VET education

Work Package:	2 – Highlighting of good practice in 14 – 19 VET education
Purpose:	To highlight good practice in 14 to 19 vocational education and training by sharing and exchanging experiences and investigating and writing up case studies.
Case Study Ref:	WC/UK/2 The Graduate Academy Salon and Spa at Walsall College
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Date:	September 2014

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Case Study:	WC/UK/2
	The Graduate Academy Salon and Spa at Walsall College
Summary:	<p>Walsall College is an English General Further Education College with a strong vocational offer to learners aged from 14. The majority of the College's full-time vocational provision is for 16 to 18 year olds, with some 3,500 learners in that cohort. The College's current main campus is five years old and incorporates on the main site a Graduate Academy Salon and Spa. This development was designed with substantial and detailed input from a leading Hairdressing chain – the FrancESCO Group. Walsall College learners in Hair and Beauty complete their training in the Graduate Salon under conditions that are an exact facsimile of employment in the industry. The Graduate academy trades to the general public.</p> <p>This case study describes the involvement of employers in the design and delivery of the Hair and Beauty curriculum.</p>
Target Group:	14 to 19 year old learners and their acquisition of vocational skills and recognised qualifications for employment in the Hair & Beauty Industry.

<p>Stakeholders:</p>	<p><u>VET Institution:</u></p> <p>The Graduate Academy Walsall College Wisemore Campus Littleton Street West Walsall WS2 8ES</p> <p><u>Lead industry partner:</u></p> <p>Francesco Group (Holdings) Ltd Francesco Group House 1 The Green Stafford ST17 4BH</p>
<p>Areas of Co-operation:</p>	<p>Francesco is a leading, high quality hairdressing business based in the English Midlands and with retail outlets in many towns. It has long been involved in and supportive of education, training and skills initiatives. The Business, which has salons in Walsall, had a long history of work with Walsall College. When the College was able to re-locate to a new building (from the old campus, which it had occupied since 1952) the opportunity to develop a very high quality, employer-orientated training facility emerged. The senior staff of Francesco gave their time and expertise to the College in the development of the Graduate Academy. The Academy, a large, modern facility, is a part of the Walsall College campus and is a working facsimile of a high quality commercial salon. It trades to the general public in its own right. Francesco supervised and advised on all aspects of the design, build and fitting out. Walsall College learners, predominantly but not exclusively in the 16 to 19 age range, complete their three year professional programmes in the Academy. This experience is instrumental in preparing them for employment.</p> <p>The stakeholder benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners receive not just professional training and qualifications but a very realistic working experience – proving supervised salon services to the general public. This is important for reasons of competence, confidence, professionalism, advanced commercial skills and employability. • Walsall College is able to attract hairdressing trainees with the appeal of a state-of-the-art facility that is sponsored by a high quality, well-respected brand name. • Francesco are able to set the standards for their industry, quality-assure the supply of new entrants, and market their brand. <p>Latent influence on standards</p> <p>The core qualifications that underpin the training programmes are supplied by</p>

	<p>City & Guilds – a UK government recognised Awarding Organisation. The UK government regulator that grants recognition is Ofqual. As a condition of recognition, Ofqual require that vocational qualifications are developed with clear employer/business input. In this way, either directly or indirectly via sector representation Francesco are able to influence the content and assessment methodology of the qualifications.</p>
<p>Learner response:</p>	<p>From January 2014 to September 2014, using a variety of methods and media, the following learner views were identified.</p> <p>Student A - female</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I would definitely encourage people to study hairdressing at Walsall College. The best part about my time at the College was learning the advanced creative colours and cuts during the level 3 course and gaining real work experience in the College’s Graduate Academy salon. I wasn’t just training, I was doing the job with real clients in a professional environment; I really started to feel like a hairdresser. The courses set me up for my future career in every way.” <p>Student B – male</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I enjoyed studying hairdressing at Walsall College and working in the College’s commercial salon. I got the opportunity to meet some fantastic people who were really helpful. I enjoyed gaining experience in dealing with clients and building my confidence up. I was even awarded student of the year at the end of year awards ceremony, which was fantastic recognition for my hard work.”
<p>Findings:</p>	<p>It is immediately apparent to first time visitors to the Graduate Academy that it is high quality and in effect barely distinguishable from a high quality salon on the high street. This in itself raises standards because it raises expectations, and it also instils a sense of confidence in learners. Further, the model is consistently recognised as being of the highest possible grade by inspectors from government agencies.</p> <p>Success rates amongst learners are very high and it is perceived that the very realistic training they receive at the Graduate Academy is a substantial contributory factor in the development of their competence and confidence.</p>