

Issue 4
November 2014



DUDLEY **Insight**

THE APPRENTICESHIP CHALLENGE



This is one of a series of papers aimed at providing our stakeholders, both internal and external, with up-to-the-minute information on how we are strategically responding to local and national challenges. The papers may be of interest to many relevant stakeholders including parents, employers and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The college has always worked with employers to deliver relevant and valuable training. This not only adds to the skill base of the workforce locally, and nationally, but also allows the development of individuals for the benefit of their employers and themselves. This position paper sets out recent developments in this vital area of work together with the strategies in place to further improve our provision.

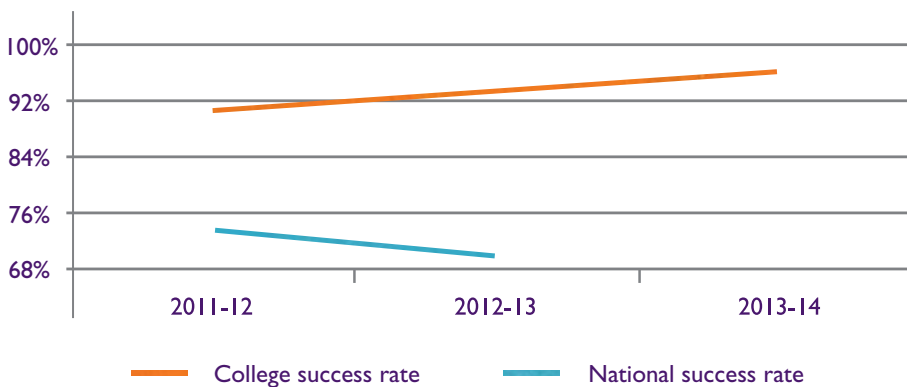


2 CONTEXT

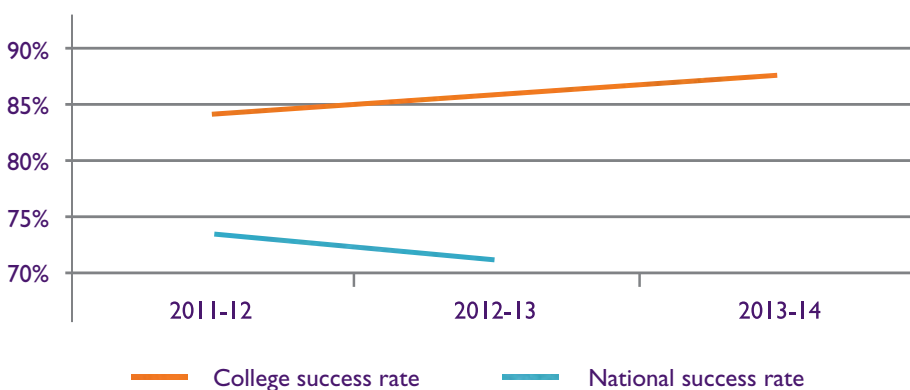
In 2011 a new Directorate was set up with the express intention of developing all forms of work based training and preparing people for work. This area, known as the Skills Hub, has grown significantly in the last three years and now employs over 130 staff and has a turnover in excess of £9.7 million in 13/14 academic year (16-18 apprentices £4.1m, adult apprentices £2.8m and workplace learning £1.8m). Apprenticeships, workplace learning and pre-employment training are delivered to a wide variety of learners including 16 – 18 year old apprentices, adults in the workplace and the unemployed. Skills Hub staff work closely with employers of all sizes and from all sectors to provide the training that meets the needs of each individual business and their employees. The range of subjects and levels is large and expanding.

This provision is successful with both work based learning areas inspected in the 2013 Ofsted inspection judged to be good. Many areas are now judged to be outstanding or good in the recent self-assessment reviews. Success rates overall are very good and generally exceed national rates. This has all been achieved by flexible delivery, good assessment practice and effective employer engagement which allow local and national priorities to be met.

19+ Overall success rate - all levels



16-18 Overall success rate - all levels





3 THE CHALLENGE

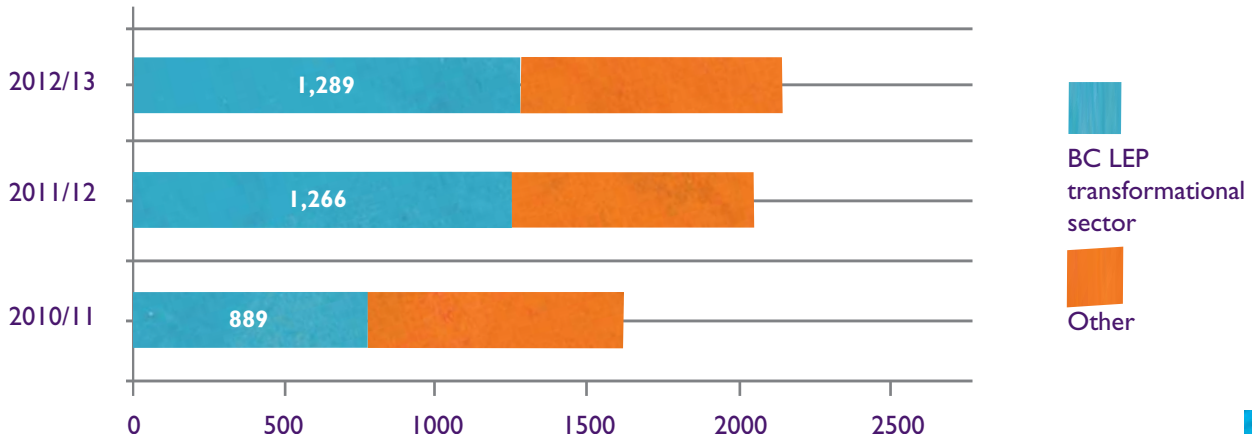
Apprenticeship frameworks require all apprentices to undertake a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. The college has worked hard to develop processes and procedures to ensure that delivery is carefully planned and that the employers are involved at every stage. However there still remains some work to be done to ensure that all employers are fully committed to the training process and contribute to it. When planning and delivering an Apprenticeship programme the employer must be engaged in the process throughout. They must understand the need to provide named mentor support for each Apprentice and that on-the-job monitoring, assessment and guidance is made available between assessment visits as part of any Apprenticeship programme.

4 OUR RESPONSE

Considerable developments have been made in the last three years since the inception of the Skills Hub. Having an area of the college devoted to working with employers has meant that existing practices have been reviewed and improved. Previously communication with employers was often regular but informal. During the life of the Skills Hub processes and procedures have been standardised and embedded to allow effective and consistent standards of employer engagement.



Proportion of Apprenticeships (all ages) linked to BC LEP Transformational Sectors



5 PROGRESS TO DATE

The following have been put in place to particularly address the issue of employer involvement in the Apprentice programme:

Organisation Training and Development Plan

At the time of the initial visit to an employer the Sales team prepare an Organisation Training and Development Plan. This outlines the training requirements, timescales, costs and impact measures. It also requires the employer to sign the document to confirm their commitment and specifically to appoint a company contact to liaise with assessors. This is followed by a sales proposal with numbers and costs.

Delivery plans

Once the company has agreed the sales proposal the curriculum team(s) involved discuss exactly what is required; the nature of the job roles, mode of delivery required by the company and learners, time allowed off-the-job, shift patterns etc. They then prepare detailed delivery plans to meet the employer needs and allow efficient delivery of the qualifications. This plan will indicate exactly what training is being delivered, what it will cover and how it will be assessed. With this information the employer can make sure that the work given to the employees is appropriate to their current level of study and provide additional work experience opportunities if required.

Tri-Party Agreements

At the point where individual apprentices are inducted to the Apprenticeship programme the Apprentice, their employer and the college sign a tri-party agreement. This agreement states that the employer will provide facilities, experience and training in their workplace to help the learners to achieve. They agree to provide the Apprentice with a range of work tasks that meet the Awarding body requirements. Finally the employer agrees to nominate a person who will supervise the learner at all times and participate in work monitoring and target setting. This should be a named mentor for each Apprentice.

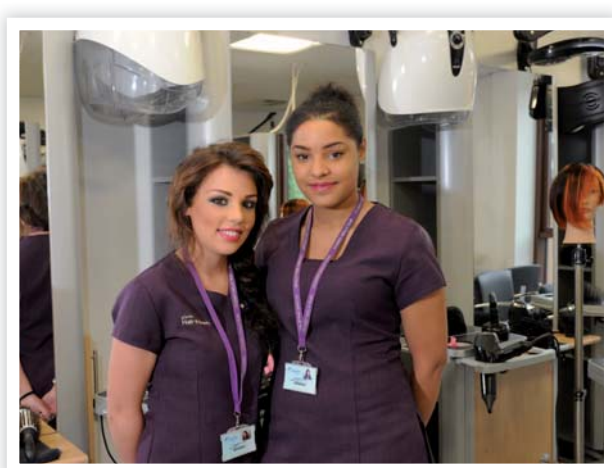
On-programme monitoring

Day release apprentices are all supported by Personal Development Officers whose role includes visiting the workplace and liaising with the employers. They should ensure that the Apprentice is receiving appropriate on-the-job training and support. Assessors carry out this role for those apprentices assessed and trained entirely in the workplace.

The assessor's main job role is to assess the competence of the apprentices in the workplace. They ensure that the Apprentice has received the on-the-job training and support that will allow them to achieve competence.

Guided Learning hour logs are maintained by the apprentices to identify the amounts of on-the-job and off-the-job training, support, monitoring and mentoring they have received during the course of their programme.

Regular progress updates and progress meetings are held with many employers so that any issues relating to the whole framework may be discussed. This is an area where there is still some work to do on standardisation of approach across all employers.



“Success rates overall are very good and generally exceed national rates. This has all been achieved by flexible delivery, good assessment practice and effective employer engagement which allow local and national priorities to be met.”



6 NEXT STEPS

Plans are in place to further improve the links with employers and make sure that they work in partnership with the college to provide a full Apprenticeship programme delivered by their own and college staff. These include:

Mentor training

Recently while setting up an Apprenticeship scheme with a large logistics company training was given to prospective mentors. The opportunity to mentor an Apprentice was seen as a step towards promotion within the company and they were selected carefully. Once chosen they all came to a day's training where they received an overview of the Apprenticeship programme and their role. This included some training on mentoring in general. This proved to be very successful and the intention is to roll this out to other companies.

Detailed delivery plans for all companies

Detailed delivery plans are prepared in conjunction with employers and this has proved to be very valuable in setting out at the start what is required from all parties. Not all companies engage in this process and not all curriculum areas produce these consistently. There is further work to be done on standardising these delivery plans while still allowing them to be individualised and relevant for each company.

Skill scans

At present skill scans are carried out with the Apprentice and the assessor to establish their current skill levels and training needs. In future the assessor should also repeat this exercise with the named mentor as they may be in a better position to know the type of job role planned for the Apprentice in future. They may also be able to identify where additional work experience, over and above the day-to-day job role, may be needed to meet the occupational standards.

Work logs

As part of the Apprenticeship programme the GLH log could be expanded to become more than simply a record of time spent. It could be developed into a work log which would detail on-the-job training and support given in more detail. This would allow apprentices to reflect on their practices and progress and may be used in portfolios as workplace evidence in some circumstances.

Quality assurance

More detailed work logs would allow quality assurance to take place of the on-the-job training. On a sample basis assessors could ensure that apprentices are being mentored, receiving appropriate training, work experiences as well as being supported in the workplace.

7 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

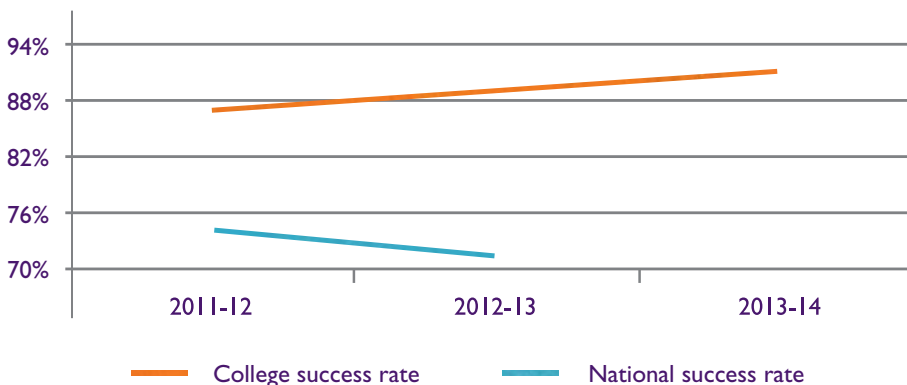
The aim of the college is to provide all apprentices with a fully rounded framework provision. College and the employers should work in partnership to ensure that this is the case.



Employers who support Apprenticeships:

- Agnes House**
- Automobile Association**
- Alan Nuttall Ltd.**
- Black Country Housing Ltd.**
- Charnat Support Services**
- Clamasons**
- DHL**
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC)**
- Dodd Group**
- Eurocraft – Engineering**
- Higgs and Sons**
- Kathleen House**
- Leabrook House Nursing Home**
- Prime Care Nursing Home**
- Safeharbour**
- Scientific and Chemical**
- Techniswage**
- Thomas Dudley**
- Thomson Friction Welding**
- UPS**
- West Bromwich Building Society**

All ages Overall success rate - all levels



If you are interested in finding out more about how Dudley College is delivering Apprenticeships

please contact:

Hilary Jakovlevs
Executive Director of Standards and Learning
The Broadway
Dudley
DY1 4AS
Email: hilary.jakovlevs@dudleycol.ac.uk
Tel: 01384 363494

Dudley Insight catalogue:

- Issue 1: The STEM Challenge - October 2014
- Issue 2: The Maths Challenge - October 2014
- Issue 3: The English Challenge - October 2014
- Issue 4: The Apprenticeships Challenge - November 2014