

KENT ASSOCIATION OF FE CORPORATIONS

PROJECT OUTLINE

PROGRAMME LED APPRENTICESHIPS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Introduction:

Apprenticeships have further grown in importance in terms of addressing the skills agenda. The Leitch report outlined a national target of 400,000 Apprenticeships by 2012. In order to achieve such a target there needs to be an increase in employer engagement, with a particular emphasis on employer matching. Information, Advice and Guidance should also be further developed to ensure greater progression from FE vocational programmes. There will also need to be a clear focus on curriculum to facilitate the movement from Programme-Led Apprenticeships to Employer-Led Apprenticeships.

Although Programme-Led Apprenticeships may be started without the learner being in employment, the preferred option is for employed status to be achieved as quickly as possible. The Apprenticeship may not be completed without a substantial period spent in employment. However, finding employment opportunities is one of the main difficulties in developing these Apprenticeships and needs to be improved.

There is often a danger that without the right level of IAG, students who complete vocational courses will return to the NEET group. These students should be provided with the opportunity to undertake an Apprenticeship.

There are still a number of issues that need to be tackled for Programme-Led Apprenticeships to reach their full potential. These include matching the skills of the young person to the needs of employers; ensuring the suitability of stand-alone NVQs for young people; clarity between the Apprenticeships and the new Diplomas; an improvement in progression and completion rates; and achievement of efficiency and value for money.

KAFEC intends to utilise the funding available to undertake the range of activities outlined below, together with additional activities which may be identified further into the project. Funding will be divided proportionally between the seven KAFEC colleges, based on their 16-18 allocation. The KAFEC Quality and Curriculum Group would take responsibility for agreeing and drawing up activities, and these would be delivered both by individual colleges and collectively, as agreed by the group.

Proposed Activities:

1. Undertake initial investigation to look at other similar initiatives in Kent and Medway. Link with similar initiatives to avoid duplication and share good practice.
2. Promote Apprenticeships to employers and increase employer engagement in appropriate curriculum areas in order to support progression to Apprenticeships. Develop a strategy to match employers and learners to ensure the correct skills sets are being taught and that students and employers will work well together. This would ensure an efficient procedure for placing students within work. Events will be held and materials produced to provide further information on Apprenticeships for both employers and learners.
3. Encourage the development and implementation of work placements during the vocational programme. This would further develop relationships with employers and provide opportunities for employment for students undertaking the full Apprenticeship, thereby supporting progression. Introduction events will be held between employers and learners in all KAFEC college localities. Funding is offered for a college resource to develop a work placement programme; this will be awarded proportionally, based on each college's 16-18 allocation.

Therefore, colleges with larger allocations will receive funding for 0.5fte and smaller colleges for 0.2fte.

4. Development and provision of specific Information, Advice and Guidance for learners who may be interested in undertaking an Apprenticeship. This would allow learners to understand their options and to receive information regarding how to progress onto the Apprenticeship scheme. This aspect of the project will focus strongly on those students at risk of leaving their course.
5. Ensure that strong employability skills are developed during the vocational programme. This will mean that learners are better prepared for progression to employment and to the Apprenticeship scheme. They are also more likely to find a work placement opportunity more easily with an already developed skill set.
6. These Apprenticeships are a possible route that students who are at risk of leaving FE may be offered. A strategy for identifying learners who are considering leaving their course without completing will therefore be developed through this programme. The strategy will be developed with tutors, IAG and Connexions staff.

Funding Allocations:

College	Share of Project Funding
Canterbury	£30,615
Hadlow	£4,545
Mid Kent	£32,511
North West Kent	£27,056
South Kent	£15,524
Thanet	£10,823
West Kent	£18,926
TOTAL	£140,000