

Contents

Introduction	3
A new focus, increased confidence and lifelong friends	4
City College Plymouth	7
Lancaster & Morecambe College	10
Cardiff and Vale College	13
Leeds City College	16
New College Lanarkshire	19
New College Durham	22
Grimsby Institute	25
Boston College	28
South Eastern Regional College	30
Dudley College of Technology	33
CollegesWales	35
About the British Council	37

Introduction

These case studies showcase the impact of internationalisation activities within the UK technical vocational education and training sector, and have been compiled as the result of a recommendation in the British Council's 2017 report *Changing Lives: Internationalising the skills sector.*

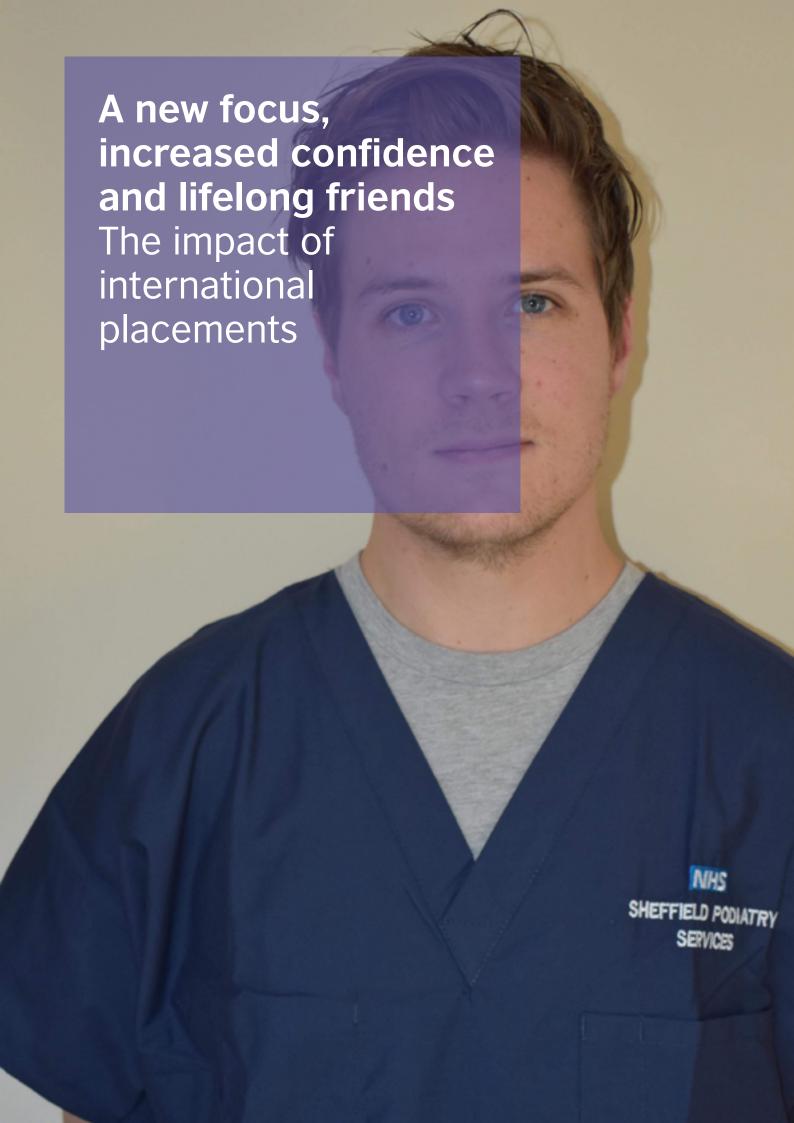
Internationalisation activities can include a whole host of academic and strategic initiatives carried out by further education colleges, from developing partnerships with colleges in other countries and offering overseas placements to students and staff, to recruiting international students. But what links these activities, and what these case studies aim to demonstrate, is the positive impact internationalisation can have on students, teachers, learning environments and local communities.

The contributors were selected based on their significant commitment to internationalisation, aside from any commercial motivation. For many of the colleges included, the primary aim of their international work is to provide learners with opportunities and experiences that will benefit their future and support their development as global citizens. Alongside a series of institutional cases, this impact is perfectly captured within the case study of a past student whose international experiences back in 2003 helped to shape him as an individual, giving him a global outlook on his future and career and an understanding of other cultures.

As an alumnus of a further education college myself, I can testify to the life-changing power of internationalisation. Contacting contributors and compiling these case studies brought back memories of how the international opportunities I was given have affected my life positively, from boosting my self-confidence and improving my foreign language and communication skills to, ultimately, helping me develop a passion for further education and pursue a career I love.

Marguerite Hogg

International Projects Manager, Association of Colleges and International Consultant



Fifteen years after applying for his first European placement at college, Jon Campey is convinced the opportunity to study and work abroad had a profound effect on his life, from opening his eyes to different cultures to helping him succeed in the world of work.

I found myself at a crossroads

I decided to leave school when I was just 16. I'd only completed one year of sixth form, but poor exam results made me question my ability as a student, and I suffered from a huge lack of confidence. I found myself at a crossroads, unsure of which direction my future was heading. The only thing I thought positively about was my football ability, so I decided to apply for a BTEC qualification in Football Studies - Performance and Excellence at Thomas Danby College, now Leeds City College.

The turning point

During my first year, the college's International Coordinator came to talk to us about the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which is now part of Erasmus+. There was an opportunity to apply for a three-month placement in Finland, but I wasn't sure I could spend that long away from home. Thankfully, the International Coordinator gave me the advice and support I need. I applied and got accepted!

I travelled to Finland with three other students to play football for FC KooTeePee in the town of Kotka. It was such an amazing experience. It helped me grow both personally and professionally and gave me an idea of the direction I wanted my life to take. I enjoyed my time there so much that, after completing my studies at Leeds, I returned to Kotka for another year. I had left school two years earlier questioning my abilities, but my experiences in Finland gave me a focus and confidence that I would not have gained otherwise.



A passion for new experiences

I was lucky enough to be accepted on another European placement — this time while studying for a Bachelor's Degree in Podiatry. I travelled to Spain to learn about how healthcare was practised there, and how the techniques and practices compared to the UK system. Again, it was a fantastic opportunity to experience another way of life, learn another language and make lifelong friends from Spain and further afield.

I truly believe my international experiences helped me stand out from other candidates when applying for work after I graduated. My European placements gave me a passion for new experiences, to see the world and for gaining and understanding of other cultures. Since graduating, I've lived in Australia and travelled around New Zealand and South America. I've worked for the NHS and in private healthcare settings, and I'm now a Band 6 Specialist Podiatrist in Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. I'm convinced my personal and professional development would not have been so significant had I not applied for that first placement 15 years ago.



I truly believe my international experiences helped me stand out from other candidates when applying for work after I graduated. My European placements gave me a passion for new experiences, to see the world and for gaining an understanding of other cultures.



By embedding internationalisation and offering an array of international learning opportunities, City College Plymouth has boosted motivation and achievement while also having a significant impact on the local community.

Serving 12,500 students, City College Plymouth is located in the heart of Plymouth, a city that has low levels of diversity in comparison to the UK average. Some areas in the city are within the top five per cent of the most deprived areas in England, and social mobility remains relatively low.

Embedding internationalisation

Embedding internationalisation throughout all areas of learning has been a key part of the college's strategy for the last 15 years, as it has looked to create greater cultural diversity and awareness amongst a student population living in a predominantly mono-cultural region of the UK. International activities have been embedded throughout all faculties and business support areas across the college. Recruiting overseas students, participating in international programmes and building international partnerships has helped to broaden students' understanding of other countries and cultures, while also better preparing them for an increasingly globalised workplace.

A host of international learning experiences

Each year, more than 100 students get the opportunity to participate in short- and longterm work experience and training placements overseas, while more than 70 staff members get to experience education systems in countries such as China, Thailand, Malaysia and South Africa first-hand. As well as outgoing mobility, the college hosts students and staff from the European Union and delivers high-level training and vocational programmes for partners in China and South East Asia. The college has links with two South African colleges through a British Council International Skills Partnership project aimed at developing mutual employability programmes. It also works with seven partner colleges across Europe through an Erasmus+ project to improve social enterprise in vocational education.

'My Swedish experience was fantastic because the people at my placement were friendly, helpful and interested in me as a person. This made me feel valued and the whole experience has given me the confidence to apply for apprenticeships.'

Mature student living with cerebral palsy.

Participating in international programmes builds our staff's passion and motivation, and this strongly correlates with our students' success and attendance.

A focus on employability and increasing motivation

Through its array of international programmes, the college is helping learners improve their employment chances by responding to employer demands for soft skills, greater cultural awareness and international experiences. Participating in international projects and placements has also increased the motivation of both staff and students, leading to significantly improved attendance and academic achievement. An impressive example of this is the Advanced Technical Chef Level 3 programme, which achieved 100 per cent attendance in the 2016-17 academic year for the first time ever. The tutor of the course believed this was linked to his increased motivation, which he attributed to carrying out placements in Spain and France. The same student cohort has been nominated for Student of the Year award as a group the first time this has ever happened.



On a wider level, international placements and overseas recruitment generates income for the college, host families and the city of Plymouth as a whole, and the college has seen improved local recruitment for courses featuring international elements. The college's commitment to embedding internationalisation was recently recognised by the Association of Colleges Beacon Awards where it achieved a Highly Commended award for its International Staff Development programme. Internationalisation has also led to improved relationships with partner universities, cementing further growth and development.

Significant community impact has been achieved through the college's participation in the UK-China Partnership Innovation Challenge Fund, an international project that supports the improvement of dementia care in the UK and China and provides training for Chinese and UK students. Through this project, local partners have drawn on their collaborations with partners in China to better support dementia sufferers in the Chinese community in Plymouth. The college has also developed a partnership with the Alzheimer's Society in the UK, which has been involved in the delivery of the project.





Through its many international activities, Lancaster & Morecambe College is helping to build the cultural awareness of its student population, leading to increased confidence, new skills and improved employment chances.

Lancaster & Morecambe College provides technical education to around 1,500 full-time learners and reaches a further 3,500 through its varied outreach programmes. Many of the students face personal, social and demographic challenges, and more than 20 areas in the district are among some of the country's most deprived according to the Office for National Statistic. Historically, the college's learners also have limited exposure to people from other cultural backgrounds within their own communities.

Building cultural awareness through international activities

The college organises an array of international learning opportunities to enable learners to increase their understanding of different cultures and interact with peers from other countries. Recent years have seen students leading summer camps in Estonia, Bulgaria and Slovakia, and carrying out work experience and job shadowing placements in a host of different countries. Through Erasmus+, more than 175 students have carried out learning experiences in other European countries, and more than 75 have undertaken overseas exchanges and participated in international learning projects at the college. The impact of welcoming international volunteers and students to the college as part of international programmes and projects has led to an increased spirit of cooperation and collaboration and new ways of working across the campus.

I've become an entirely different person. I can now stand in front of a crowd and talk. I can even speak another language!

Boosting employability and increasing confidence

Undertaking mobility placements overseas has had an extremely positive impact on participants, with the college recognising a significant increase in the employment chances and personal development of its learners. International activities have opened students' eyes to the possibility of working in other countries, and in 2017 alone, four students were offered employment in other countries, while a further two returned to their host countries for extended, self-funded placements. Others have been inspired by their heightened confidence and enhanced skills to pursue new life experiences and opportunities abroad, such job placements in the USA through Camp America. One Erasmus+ participant even returned to his original training destination as a European Voluntary Service volunteer to undertake a gap year before starting university.

'I can work and live independently, and I have made friends from different backgrounds that I would have never had the opportunity to meet,' says Erasmus+ participant Liam. 'I can now say for sure that this has been one of, if not, the best years of my life.'

Improved teaching and learning

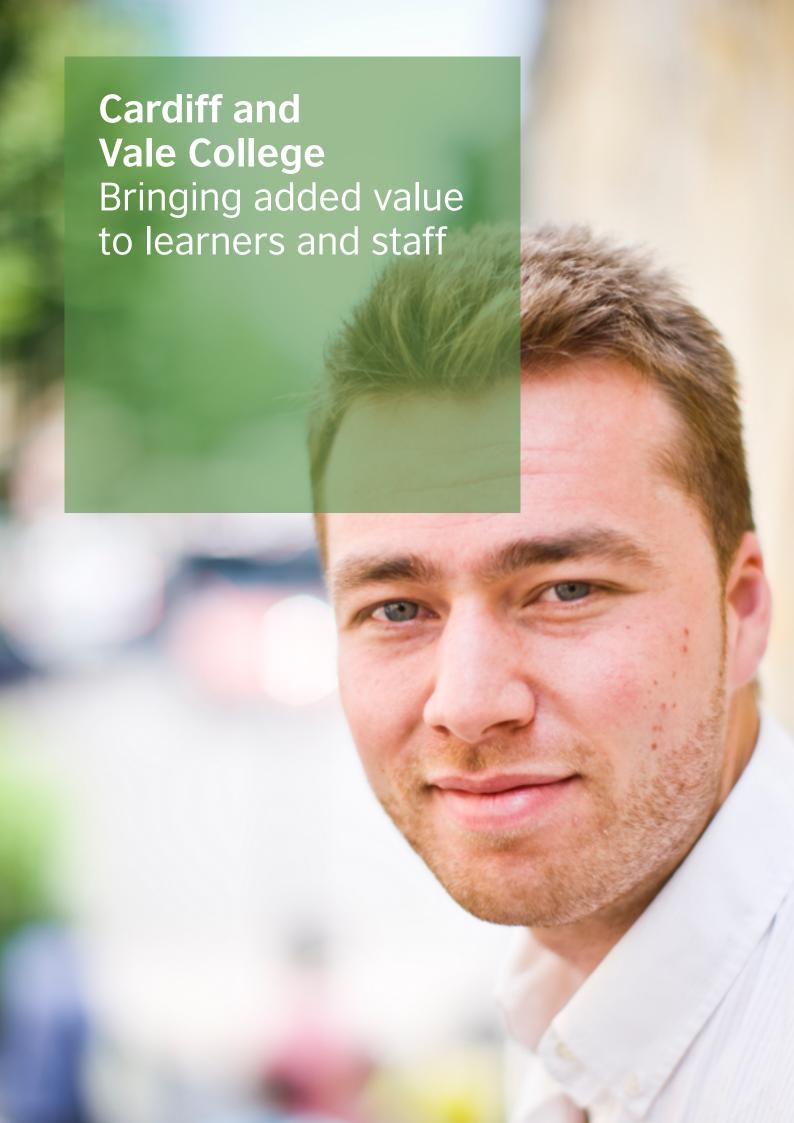
Staff who have participated in projects and training abroad have returned revitalised and reinvigorated with new ideas, and they now approach their roles with more enthusiasm and increased confidence. There are now plans in place to integrate European Voluntary Services volunteers to work and learn alongside the college's support teams, including ICT and Student and Learner Services, as a way of further embedding the new international outlook within the fabric of the college.

I'm delighted to see the positive impact of international activities on the college and, more importantly, on the students who come from a diverse range of backgrounds. There are numerous examples of how these opportunities enhance our students' lives and raise their aspirations whilst increasing their employability.'

Wes Johnson, Principal

Impacting on the wider community

Erasmus+ activities have helped establish new partnerships with local community groups, universities, schools, non-governmental organisations, support agencies and businesses, and these have been sustained after individual projects have ended. Thanks to a partnership project with a local drop-in centre for people with neurological conditions, for example, students continue to have a valuable volunteering opportunity and the centre benefits from improved perceptions within the community. The college's new dissemination strategy will also ensure that students, staff and the wider community are aware of the positive impact of all international activities.



By taking a strategic approach to internationalisation, Cardiff and Vale College is helping to embed a global perspective across the campus, bringing an extra dimension to the classroom for learners and re-energising staff.

Cardiff and Vale College is one of the UK's largest further education institutions, serving 30,000 learners each year through work-based programmes, including 14,000 apprenticeships. Located in the culturally rich and diverse city of Cardiff, the college hosts learners from more than 25 ethnic groups, including 1,400 overseas students.

A strategic approach

The college carries out a wide range of international activity, all of which forms part of an international strategy focusing on inward recruitment, strategic partnerships and overseas delivery. A key focus of this strategy is using international projects and partnerships to add value for existing and future learners, staff, employers, partners and the wider community. The college's international activities include recruiting overseas students to full- and part-time courses and summer and winter schools; strategic international partnerships, including an office in China which is shared with a local university; reciprocal student and staff visits through partner schools and Erasmus+; and sponsored overseas trips for learners.

Bringing a global perspective to the learning environment

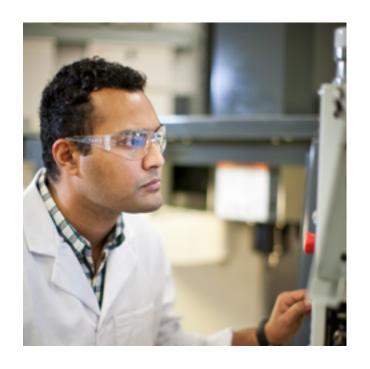
International activity is an important feature of the college for learners, staff and the wider community. Students and teachers are accustomed to seeing and interacting with visiting groups of learners and delegates from different countries and cultures. Learners benefit from the extra dimension international visitors bring to the classroom by gaining an added awareness of the key aspects of globalisation and developing their cross-cultural and interpersonal skills within an international framework. Teaching staff face new challenges and cultural opportunities by hosting overseas colleagues, which, in turn, helps to energise teaching. The need to translate for visiting groups, often at short notice, has even revealed previously hidden foreign language skills in many staff.

A focus on mobility

Learners are strongly encouraged to take up international places through Erasmus+ and other initiatives. As well as being a transformational experience for the individuals who travel, student mobility has a positive effect on peer groups and staff, as returning students provide a source of inspiration for the wider college. The selection, training and preparation of mobility candidates can be a highly beneficial learning experience, and working in partner schools brings a whole new dimension to their studies. For many, international mobility is a life-changing experience. Staff undertaking mobility placements benefit from a deeper understanding of education in different international contexts. Through this, they can explore how national education policy impacts on individuals, communities and local skills economies, which offer insights into the role education can and should play in UK communities.

Involving the local community

The college uses its international activities to build community relationships and add value to local stakeholders. These various initiatives have included introducing a group of young Chinese summer school students at a local primary school where Mandarin is being taught; a football coaching tour to China to help the Welsh Football Association raise their profile in China; an invitation to accompany a Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary to the Middle East to represent regional skills capabilities to a group of potential inward investors; and the college's Chinese partners funding a senior member of the local council to accompany college staff to meet representatives of the Chinese District Government.



During my visit to China, I had the opportunity to conduct some teacher training sessions, where we analysed and evaluated different teaching and learning methods. Since returning to Cardiff, I've implemented some of these strategies to improve the ways in which our students learn. My students have responded well and they seem more engaged with the learning process.

llario Siciliano. Science Lecturer



Through its rich history of internationalisation, Leeds City College has supported the employability of students and enhanced the learning experience by inspiring an international spirit amongst its student and teacher populations.

One of the largest further education providers in the UK, Leeds City College serves a region that includes significantly disadvantaged areas. Through its strong community mission, the college offers a range of learning and development opportunities for marginalised groups and disenfranchised learners, including ex-offenders, cared-for young people, the long-term unemployed and young people not in education, employment or training.

A rich history of international activities

Leeds City College and its legacy colleges have participated in international programmes since 1991. Through Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes, the college has worked with a host of partners across Europe, and staff and students have a range of options to carry out placements and participate in joint projects in other European countries. The college also welcomes a number of overseas students and staff each year through Erasmus+ and other initiatives. As well as participating in externally-funded international programmes, some faculty areas across the college organise tailored international activities to enhance their students' own specialisms.

Supporting personal and professional development

The benefits to students in terms of employability skills and personal development have been immeasurable. Participating in international projects has helped students strengthen their personal statements, CVs and progression achievements, and many have secured interviews at higher education institutions as a result. Students report that their attitudes have changed and their cultural awareness has increased since visiting other countries. There are also examples of students securing employment thanks to their participation in international projects. Most recently a group of Hospitality students who undertook Erasmus+ placements were successful in gaining employment at the end of their qualification, either with Leeds-based restaurants or back with their European host settings. Local employers also benefit from receiving high-quality European students coming to complete their work placements in Leeds.

The benefits of an international learning environment

The international environment at the college has a positive impact on staff and students and enhances the overall learning experience. Meeting and interacting with peers from Europe gives staff valuable opportunities to share good practice and discuss methodology and pedagogy, helping to improve teaching practices and approaches across the college. For students, spending time with and working alongside peers from other countries facilitates the sharing of knowledge and experiences and has led to new friendships. Those who travel abroad for placements are encouraged to share their experiences with the rest of the college, which creates a ripple effect amongst other learners and helps to enhance learning through the sharing of first-hand experiences in the classroom.

Inspired by the international spirit across campus, the college's Student Union has set up a language society — Language Emergence — which draws upon the many languages that are already spoken by students and staff and provides a platform where different nationalities and cultures are shared and celebrated. During a recent visit from partners from the Netherlands, students also discussed how they could share teaching and learning modules simultaneously in Amsterdam and Leeds, and Google Classrooms is now being explored as a digital solution to enable students and staff to communicate in real time.



The college aims to expand its successful record on delivering mobility through Erasmus+ into a dedicated network of international volunteering opportunities for individuals and communities, supporting skills development and the promotion of being a responsible international citizen. A new international strategy has been developed and a new International Officer role has been created as part of the Student Union, which is recruited through student elections and will help to further embed and promote the international spirit across the student population.



A new international strategy has been developed and a new International Officer role has been created as part of the Student Union, which is recruited through student elections and will help to further embed and promote the international spirit across the student population.

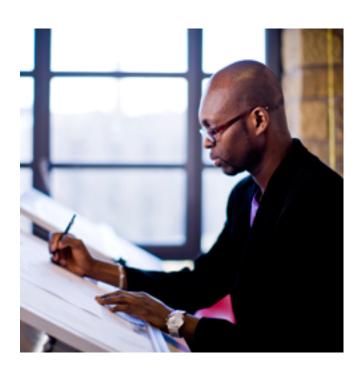


As the first college in Scotland to offer international mobility opportunities to vocational students, New College Lanarkshire has built up a strong and varied internationalisation programme to support the development of learners and staff and build a mutually beneficial global network.

With 1,100 staff and 25,000 learners,
New College Lanarkshire is the fifth largest
further education college in Scotland, serving
both urban centres and rural hinterlands.
Many of these communities are extremely
disadvantaged, and the percentage of
unemployed school leavers is amongst the
highest rates in Scotland. A large proportion
of the student population also face complex
barriers to participation in training and
employment, including financial difficulties
and a lack of formal qualifications, and many
have never travelled outside of the UK.

Developing international mindsets

The college sees international activities as a way of positively impacting on the culture and diversity of campus life. This is reflected in its international strategy, which is the result of a strong collaborative effort from teams across the college. The strategy covers four key objectives: creating an international mindset, generating additional income, future-proofing the college, and building a strong international network. This international spirit is enhanced by the various groups of learners and teachers from different countries the college hosts each year. These groups live on campus in halls of residence, eat in campus cafes and canteens, and mix with Scottish learners during class and social times.



Pioneering international mobility

The college was the first in Scotland to offer international mobility opportunities to vocational students. Each year, more than 300 students have the chance to visit colleges across Europe. In turn, the college welcomes 100 visiting students. Mobility opportunities have been used as a way of supporting learners identified as being furthest from the labour market. Through tailored activities these learners build their motivation and confidence and develop new skills. The college recognises the positive impact international mobility can have on social inclusion and equality, and mobility participants report that they have developed more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity as a result of their placements.

For staff, mobility opportunities focusing on Continuous Professional Development have helped to increase their confidence in their professional abilities and have supported the improvement of teaching practices across the college. The college aims to continuously develop staff mobility activities to ensure that best practice forms the basis of programmes across in the college. It is also seeking to build on the positive momentum of mobility participants by sharing the inspirational experiences of both staff and learners.

Building a strong international network

Through its various mobility initiatives, the college has developed partnerships with diverse partner institutions in Spain, France, Lithuania, Malta, Ireland, Austria, Cyprus and Italy. It has also carried out mutually beneficial British Council International Skills Partnership projects in Tunisia and South Africa, which have resulted in the development of a toolkit of resources that will help to enhance employer relationships, improve understanding of industry practice, increase the relevance of work-based learning programmes, and improve monitoring and management processes. The college has significant links in China and India, with a focus on the college's strength in Dental Nursing provision, as well as cultural exchanges, English language and vocational taster short-courses. Partnerships with three colleges in Wisconsin, USA, are also creating a pipeline of planned international activities.

These partnerships are all designed to prioritise sustainability, and, wherever possible, the college focuses on building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with international peers to maintain a strong international network. Emphasis is placed on nurturing partnerships to embed activities across both partner organisations and achieve shared objectives.



With a strong commitment to offering European mobility opportunities to learners and welcoming international students to its own campus, New College Durham has brought a new dimension to learning, boosting motivation, increasing cultural awareness and improving personal development.

New College Durham offers a mix of vocational, A Level, apprenticeship and higher education programmes. The local area has been identified as having one of the lowest rates of higher education participation in the country. But while overall participation of 16-18 year olds in learning is increasing, participation amongst young people in vulnerable categories is still significantly low.

A commitment to mobility

The college's European Policy Statement confirms that it is committed to promoting and supporting staff and student mobility, that it seeks to embed the European dimension within its vocational curriculum, and that it recognises the contribution academic mobility can make to economic wellbeing and mutual understanding. Within this framework, the college uses Erasmus+ to provide international work placement opportunities to its higher education students. This is an invaluable opportunity for UK students who may have never travelled abroad before to develop their employability skills and experience life in other countries. The college also welcomes students from across Europe as an Erasmus+ host organisation, and all incoming students participate in existing classes alongside their UK counterparts.

'Giving our students a global dimension to their education is more important than ever. For some students and staff, that will mean taking part in an overseas study visit or exchange programme. For others, it may be exploring international aspects of the curriculum or working alongside young people from other countries and cultures, gaining an insight into lives very different to theirs.'

John Widdowson, Principal and Chief Executive

Bringing a new dimension to learning

International students continue to have a positive impact on staff and students by bringing an extra dimension to the learning environment. Having international and UK students working side-by-side in lessons enhances classroom dynamics and broadens the cultural awareness of both staff and learners. International students offer different ideas and perspectives, and they allow UK students and staff to experience new ways of learning and contributing to discussions inside the classroom. Visiting students also motivate local learners to become more involved in activities and help them realise they could also have an opportunity to study or work abroad in the future.

Developing partnerships

The college has a number of long-standing partnerships with European institutions, through which it attracts students to study on its programmes and has grown the college's international alumni network. The partnership with one Norwegian institution sees groups of Norwegian learners visit each year to participate in the college's full-time A Level programmes. The college has also worked to build partnership links with institutions in China, and since participating in the British Council's UK/China Leadership Exchange Programme, the college's Principal has been very active in championing enhanced links with Chinese partners.



Giving our students a global dimension to their education is more important than ever.



Grimsby Institute developed an internationalisation plan to counteract deprivation and a lack of cultural diversity amongst its student population. Through international mobility and partnerships, students have been given new opportunities to increase their awareness, skills and life chances.

With a recruitment area that includes the ward with the highest levels of economic and educational deprivation in the UK, Grimsby Institute's student population includes a high number of looked-after children and young people from families with generational unemployment. The college also has growing concerns about mental health issues amongst its students, particularly due to Grimsby's isolated location and the lack of decent public transport links, as well as limited access to personalised careers advice at school.



The positive power of internationalisation

To counteract low cultural diversity on campus and increase cultural interactions for learners from areas where 94 per cent of the population is white and British, the college has introduced an internationalisation plan. Initiating Erasmus+ in 2017, the college now offers international mobility opportunities and placements for students, enabling them to build awareness of other countries, experience new cultures and interact with peers overseas. The opportunity of overseas mobility has become a key recruitment tool for the college. The college's Erasmus+ activity also includes mobility for staff, who have the chance to carry out Continuous Professional Development placements in Europe.

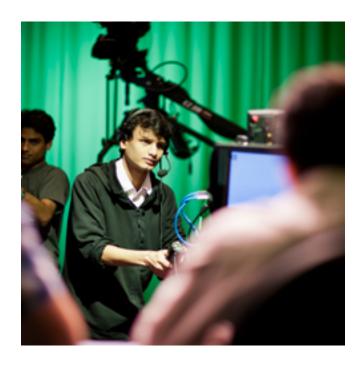
The college now offers new learning programmes that are seen as 'international' in nature, such as Historical & Performance Costume Design. Creative Media and Design and Television Production. It has also integrated specific international elements into existing programmes. Its Career 6 programme, for example, now includes an International Business element, with the chance to learn either Spanish or Mandarin. The college is also planning to organise a trip to Japan for all participants of this programme. The college's commitment to providing new opportunities for young people was recognised in 2017 when it was awarded an Association of Colleges Beacon Award for Widening Participation in Learning.

Building optimism and boosting motivation

International experiences have helped to boost the employment chances of participants. Students who have undertaken placements in European countries have developed their soft skills and strengthened their CVs, increasing their appeal to future employers. Staff returning with enhanced skills and knowledge have had a positive impact on the learning environment by increasing motivation throughout the college. Visiting students enhance lessons and bring an extra dimension to campus life. Students learn about the differences and similarities of other countries when learning side-by-side with peers from overseas. Hosting a teacher group from India as part of a teacher training project also had a positive impact in a college where the dominant ethnicity is predominantly white British.

Plans for the future

The college is now looking to build on these positive experiences and the wider impact this has on teaching and learning by strengthening internationalisation across new curriculum areas and providing more opportunities for international interactions in the classroom. Whilst the college has halls of residence for international students, it is keen to develop a network of host families as a way of supporting positive cultural development throughout the community. Through Erasmus+ and other initiatives, the college is also learning how to collaborate with employers to boost the relevance of its programmes or study and is using labour market data to influence teaching.





With a 30-year history of hosting international students and creating overseas relationships, Boston College is helping to build positive cultural associations amongst its student population and to further strengthen links with the local community.

Government-funded Boston College provides further education to 1,600 full-time and 6,000 part-time learners from in and around the market town of Boston, on the east coast of England. With a thriving dock, Boston has a long history of welcoming visitors from different parts of the world, continuing up to today with the recent influx of eastern European migration, which has resulted in 20 per cent of the population being made up of migrant workers and their families.

A truly international learning environment

Each year, Boston College recruits around 50 international students from countries across the world who come to study full-time programmes such as A Levels and Access to University. The college also runs a summer school for more than 200 Vietnamese, Italian and French learners. Alongside the very tangible financial benefits the college gains from its international recruitment programme, the college's local students also benefit from daily interactions with international peers. International learners lead on a range of cultural events throughout the year, including Brazil Day and Chinese New Year, inspiring local learners to travel, to learn languages and to gain a greater understanding of the wider world. Many of the college's international students also go out into local schools to offer cultural demonstrations to young learners or visit local businesses and community groups.

Building mutually beneficial partnerships

The college has successfully built and nurtured a range of international partnerships, and is always seeking to engage with institutions and potential partners from other countries. It recently worked with the organisers of a Brazilian Ministry of Tourism sponsored programme to host a group of students from Brazil, giving the college's local learners the opportunity to learn side-by-side with the Brazilian students. Other international partnerships have seen the college deliver training for the Saudi Royal Air Force and host skills delegations from Mexico City and China. It has also supported staff and learners to visit the European Parliament.

The challenges of internationalisation

'As well as the many benefits of international activities, there can also be considerable challenges that colleges need to keep in mind, such as language barriers and visa rules that can sometimes make it difficult to recruit international learners. Working to overcome these challenges, however, is definitely worth it.'

Paul Collins, Director of Business Development



Through mutually beneficial international partnerships, South Eastern Regional College is positively impacting on learners, staff and the college's standing, and is now turning internationalisation into a platform for future development.

Based in Northern Ireland, South Eastern Regional College serves more than 32,000 learners and employs around 1,000 members of staff. Considered as one of the UK's cutting edge educational institutions, the college provides professional and technical qualifications from Entry Level to Level 7.

A partnership approach

Over ten years, the college has built many successful international partnerships, and a new international unit has been established to reinforce these links and develop new global relationships. Some of these partnerships have grown and developed organically, leading to significant mutual benefits. What began life as a student exchange programme with a college in Japan, for example, has steadily grown into a full-fledged college partnership, incorporating aspects of knowledge exchange, best practice sharing, joint student and staff projects and collaborative research. Nurturing this relationship has opened the door to other college partnerships in Japan, Thailand and Singapore.

Most recently, the college has strengthened it global standing by supporting a host of international partnership projects. Through three British Council International Skills Partnerships. the college has supported partners in Pakistan, Egypt and South Africa to develop innovations in the fields of renewables, maritime transport and solar energy. Through two transnational projects, it has supported the launch of a Massive Open Online Course providing free marketing resources to app developers across Europe, and has helped to upskill teaching staff in the use of technology in Italy, Slovenia and Ireland. Alongside these institutional links, the college has a longstanding partnership with the charity Fields of Life to develop a vocational training institute in northern Uganda, which has seen students raise £15.000 through various activities.

Enhancing the curriculum through international opportunities

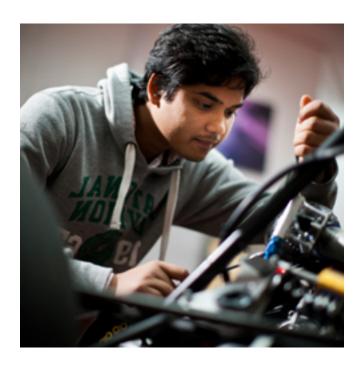
The college uses internationalisation to enhance teaching and learning by providing staff and students with new personal and professional development opportunities. International activities are helping students improve their intercultural awareness and soft skills, increasing their employability chances in today's globalised workplace. Many of these projects are supported by Erasmus +, which provides funding for student and staff mobility across a range of vocational and higher education curriculum areas, as well as two partnership projects, one with colleges in Thailand and Japan, and the other with colleges in Pakistan and Uganda. Through these various collaborative initiatives, the college also facilitates knowledge sharing amongst staff, leading to improvements in teaching approaches across the college.

'We recognise today's increasingly integrated world economy and the challenge to provide learning and teaching responses to this global context. It is important that staff have the experience and knowledge to assist students on this journey. Our strategic approach to internationalisation, and our well managed overseas international partnerships, in particular, ensure that students and staff have exposure and experience on an international stage.'

Ken Webb, Principal

A focus on sustainability

An underlying focus of all the college's international work is how it benefits learners and staff, and the college is continually seeking to build on the significant impact of this international work to develop and grow as an organisation. In particular, it is exploring overseas commercial and funding opportunities and is planning to boost international student recruitment and expand its international school of English. This will ensure more Northern Irish students have the opportunity to learn side-byside with their international peers and will provide additional funding streams for the future development of the college.



It is vitally important to ensure our students are equipped with the employability skills, intercultural skills and confident attitude to succeed in this international economy.



Since 2013, Dudley College of Technology has built a solid reputation as a leading education institution, backed up by a strong programme of internationalisation activities that have boosted the employment chances of learners and improved staff development.

Dudley College of Technology has recently established itself as a centre of academic excellence, increasing its reputation locally and nationally. An inclusive and welcoming environment that celebrates the cultural differences of its diverse learners, the college focuses on building the work-readiness of the young people and adults that make up its student population, helping them improve their economic futures.

A host of mobility opportunities

The college offers a range of mobility opportunities through Erasmus+, including work placements in Europe, to learners across different vocational departments. Study and working in other countries is a valuable experience, giving students the chance to be independent, face new challenges and strengthen their soft skills, such as communications, cultural awareness and team working. It has helped to build participants' confidence and improve their selfreliance, and many have returned from their mobility placements more mature, ambitious and focused on their long-term goals. Many have also demonstrated a greater understanding of the world of work and business. Looking to build on this impact, the college is continually seeking to expand the mobility opportunities on offer through Erasmus+ and other programmes.

Improving teaching through collaboration

Through an Erasmus+ project focusing on dance training, the college is exploring the development of alternative training methods and approaches, which is supporting higher quality training programmes. Through the exchange of good practice and participation in teacher training workshops across Europe, the college is working to develop a common model of improved educational techniques that can enhance the employability of dance trainers from diverse backgrounds. The project is also helping to strengthen local community links through the involvement of a local dance company.

Boosting professional development

Participation in the UK India Research Initiative has seen the college play a significant role in the development and delivery of an ambitious leadership programme to deans of polytechnic colleges across India. This initiative has reached more than 400 participants, who have achieved outstanding results both personally and for their organisations. During the evaluation of the project, the college identified opportunities to build on project learning and resources to support the Continuing Professional Development of its own staff. By modifying existing project materials and developing new resources the college has now created a bespoke leadership training programme for new and existing managers, as well as aspiring managers. The college is now looking to expand participation in the UK India Research Initiative to support enhanced professional development opportunities for even more members of staff.



By supporting the international activities of further education across Wales, CollegesWales is providing life-changing opportunities for students and staff, boosting collaboration amongst Welsh colleges and supporting the country's wider educational priorities.

ColegauCymru, or CollegesWales, is a member-led body that represents all further education colleges in Wales. It works to raise the profile of further education amongst decision-makers, whilst improving educational opportunities. Recognising the Welsh government's key priorities of developing life skills and global citizenship in learners, CollegesWales also plays a central role in organising international opportunities for staff and students across its member institutions

Supporting colleges across Wales

Through its dedicated international arm, CollegesWales co-ordinates key international activities for colleges across Wales. The body oversees a programme of work experience in countries in Europe for Welsh learners and apprentices, and works with Welsh employers and businesses in to place European learners. Alongside this, it hosts official delegations from other countries wanting to learn about vocational education in Wales and to identify future partnership opportunities. It also co-ordinates a global programme of Continuing Professional Development for teachers, trainers and leaders. Through these activities, CollegesWales helps colleges establish and strengthen their international projects and partnerships, while also strengthening sector-wide collaboration.

Providing life-changing opportunities

By overseeing the management of Erasmus+ consortium applications on behalf of the further education sector in Wales, CollegeWales supports learners and apprentices to participate in work placements across Europe, and enables staff to undertake professional development activities in other countries. For learners participating in Erasmus+, many of whom come from socially deprived areas of Wales and have never travelled before, international mobility can broaden horizons and be a truly life-changing experience. Staff benefit from a unique professional development experience as they get to train alongside peers from other parts of Europe. Participating in Erasmus+ also helps staff members make new connections and build new friendships with staff from other Welsh colleges. giving them a new peer support network back home.

Supporting national priorities

CollegesWales continually works with Welsh further education colleges to identify and develop activities that can support the government's internationalisation strategy. For example, it supports one group of colleges in Wales to deliver a teacher training delivery model in China by helping them engage with and recruit other Welsh and UK colleges to support the roll-out of this model into more areas of China. With relatively small membership, compared to other similar membership bodies, CollegesWales can remain flexible and responsive when it comes to new international opportunities. This also supports a more collaborative approach amongst colleges in Wales, by enabling them to work together more efficiently and effectively to respond to new international opportunities when they arise.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

PhotographyPages 1, 9, 16, 35 © WorldSkills UK Pages 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33 © Mat Wright Page 32 © British Council

© British Council 2018

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural and educational opportunities.