

Diploma

Engineering Case Study



Available at Levels 1, 2 and 3, the Diploma in Engineering opens up the wide range of employment opportunities that exist in each of engineering's specialist sectors. It provides learners with the chance to develop their knowledge and understanding of engineering through a range of 'real life' activities.

Mansfield Learning Partnership is leading on the implementation of the Engineering Diploma. The partnership consists of West Nottinghamshire College, secondary schools, employers, Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance, Nottinghamshire County Council and other external agencies. West Nottinghamshire College, The Brunts School and Garibaldi Maths and Computing College are delivering the Engineering Diploma on behalf of the partnership.

With around 24,000 learners accessing its programmes every year, award-winning West Nottinghamshire College is one of the largest and best colleges in the East Midlands. It has had an Engineering provision for 14–16-year-olds for many years and saw offering the Diploma as an opportunity to build on that.

Planning the Diploma

One of the early tasks with the Engineering Diploma was to decide on an awarding body. The decision was

to be made by the partnership's development and delivery team, which included a representative from each school and the college.

"The resounding decision was that we use OCR," said Frank Skillington, Curriculum Manager at West Nottinghamshire College. The college and schools have all had experience of using OCR for GCSE qualifications. Frank added, *"Everyone was happy with what they were already doing with OCR."*

Great support from OCR

"When we got down to the detail of organising the Diploma, we got OCR involved," said Frank. *"We had a one-day event looking at Level 1 and Level 2 specifications and assessments in detail. We also had a visit by the Qualifications Manager and a Principal Moderator to discuss assessment issues and receive specific assessment materials to enhance our understanding and delivery of the Diplomas."*





He added, "When we requested information from Phil Wills, the Customer Support Manager, he provided it very quickly – even before it hit the website. He was very supportive."

They've also been able to rely on assistance from OCR since the initial period. "Queries have been answered promptly and efficiently," said Frank.

Learning with a wide appeal

The Mansfield Learning Partnership currently has one group of 14 Foundation learners and one group of 13 Higher learners and it is also looking at offering Level 3.

Frank believes that the OCR Engineering Diploma has a wide appeal. "It caters well for learners coming in at different levels," he said.

It also makes engineering come alive. One of the projects that students have been involved in as part of it is Quacky Races – which has seen them manufacture a new base plate for an electro-mechanical duck kit and then, for fun, have a competitive race.

They've also worked on the maintenance of mountain bikes, manufactured parts of a chain breaker – which is linked to the Maintenance unit, performed practical tests on a range of 14 different materials and visited the Black Country Museum and Papplewick Pumping Station to study the history of engineering.

Inspiring teachers and learners alike

Teaching staff are enthusiastic about the OCR Diploma. They like the design of the curriculum, including the structure of each unit and how the units link together well within the Principal Learning.

The learners particularly enjoy all the practical aspects of the Principal Learning. There's also been good feedback from them.

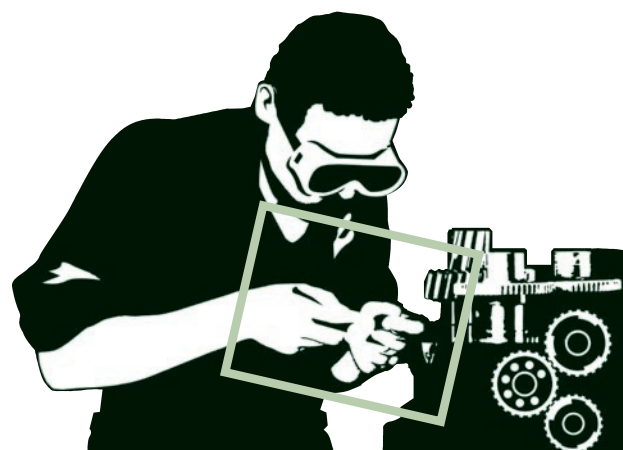
In research carried out in February 2009 by the Mansfield Learning Partnership with an observer

from the DCSF, 100% of the learners asked at the Foundation and Higher levels agreed completely or mostly that they were enjoying the course, while 100% asked on the Foundation course and 93% on the Higher course agreed completely or mostly that they would recommend the course to a friend.

Looking ahead

The partnership will be taking all the existing learners forward on the second year of the Engineering Diploma in September 2009. It's also in the process of planning for additional groups at both the Foundation and Higher levels in Principal Learning, and a cohort of Advanced learners.

"OCR has been very supportive," said Frank. "We are enthusiastic about what they have done for us."



OCR Customer Contact Centre

Vocational qualifications

Telephone 024 76 851509

Facsimile 024 76 421944

Email vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

Head office

1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU

Telephone 01223 552552

Facsimile 01223 552553

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