**WORK PACKAGE 4 – CAPACITY BUILDING**

**TEMPLATE FOR COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES**

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| **Name of the best practice** | Northern Ireland Colleges  |
| **Country** | Northern Ireland (UK) |
| **Description** | **Example 1: Lecturers into Industry** The Lecturers into Industry initiative at NI Colleges aims to created a robust link between VET teaching staff and industry though 3-5 day placement of lecturers into business and industrial settings. Circa 10 lecturers per college benefit from this scheme annually. The Programme aims to support lecturers to engage directly with relevant sectors of industry to improve their skills and knowledge aligned to current business and industry practice therefore contributing to improving the quality and relevance of FE provision within the college providing information to influence curriculum offer to meet the needs of business in our region. **Lecturers into Industry Programme Objectives** * To ensure that the skills and knowledge of lecturers are kept up to date with developments in relevant identified and priority sectors by supporting placements in business and/or industry;
* To embed current industrial and business practice across the curriculum
* Enhance the learner experience, and the professional development and industrial knowledge of SWC Lecturers.
* To recognise the lecturers’ participation and completion of the programme their involvement will contribute to their CPD through completion of a Placement industry project which demonstrates clear impacts and outcomes in curriculum provision.
* Provide a platform for colleges to promote their full range of Curriculum provision and activities to participating employers.

Lecturers from all curriculum backgrounds have advanced their technical skills through this form of industry engagement, opening up valuable opportunities for industry-led upskilling in areas including Biochemistry and Biomedical Techniques, Food Technology, Automotive. Not only does this improve relationships between employers and lecturers, but also it directly exposes teaching staff to the current and future needs of local industry through placements lasting up to two weeks. This has empowered them to adapt their curriculum, teaching and learning materials and capitalise on the partnerships created for student benefit. |
| **Target Group** | * Teachers / Trainers
* Employers
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| **Who is involved? How were they motivated to participate?** | The two parties involved are the teacher and the industrial partner. **Teacher Motivation** * Industry leading knowledge and skills
* Improve links with industry
* Upskilling in niche technical area
* Latest industrial equipment

**Employer Motivation** * Better links to skills providers
* Secondary benefits e.g. student placements
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| **Benefits**  | The primary benefit is that the skills and knowledge imparted by lecturers to learners will be better aligned with the current needs of business and industry. The short placement enables lecturers to identify ways to enhance teaching practice, workplace practice and / or the college curriculum.Business and industry benefit from exposure to an education perspective on their activities, which may promote improved approaches to training and up-skilling within the business and industry. Staff develop and sustain more effective relationships with business and industry sectors, in turn promoting more awareness of what VET can provide for business and industry.. |
| **Challenges and how they were overcome** | * **Employer buy-in:** NI Colleges have excellent links with employers, but it may present a challenge to colleges with low levels of employer engagement.
* **Costs / Cover:** timetable cover while the lecturer is out. Alternative options are to schedule during holiday periods, or after teaching hours.
* **Project Management:** effective project management to ensure the process is well management, monitored & recognised. All step-by-step model has been created for colleges to follow (see below).
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| **Step by step for the implementation of the good practice (transferability to other VET college)** | 1. Staff member completes an expression of interest
2. Industrial placement providers are investigated *\*staff member usually has this pre-identified based on current partnerships*
3. A short project proposal is development & endorsed by Head of Department
4. Submitted & approved by Project Steering Committee *\*in line with criteria*
5. Dates for placement agreement
6. 3-5 day industrial placement occurs
7. Staff member completes evaluation report
8. Dissemination presentation delivered to curriculum team
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| **Description** | Example 2: Industry Advisory Board NI Colleges have established Industry Advisory Board’s (IAB) linked to each curriculum school / department. The role of the Industry Advisory Board is to facilitate the exchange of information between public and private companies, academic staff and professional institute’s, with the aim of driving curriculum excellence and industry collaboration in the construction sector. The primary functions of an IAB are:* To inform the curriculum and enhance employability skills
* Embed collaboration with industry across all college departments
* Support industry to access bespoke training and R&D services at colleges
* Provision of student placements and student assessments
* Promotion of new technologies, regulations & professional progression

The IAB formally meets twice annually to embed an official and trusted channel of communication between the College and the local industry sector e.g. construction / engineering. On occasion subgroups are formed to deal with specific issues around training, recruitment and assessment. Collaboration between the industry and College is a two-way process.  |
| **Target Group** | * Employers
* Professional Bodies
* Teachers / Trainers
* Business support staff
* Students
* Local stakeholders e.g. regional councils
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| **Who is involved? How were they motivated to participate?** | * **Industry:** For industry, it provides a platform for stakeholders to voice their training and skills needs, promoting the continuous alignment of College provision to industry developments and skills challenges in the construction sector. It also enables local employer’s to make themselves known to students early in their learning journey as a potential employer and enables them to influence and encourage students with the career opportunities available to them.
* **College**: From a College perspective, the close collaboration provides staff with a trusted and dependent network of stakeholders to support interview panels, curriculum validation and College-led events and initiatives.Additionally, it provides immense benefits to young people, supporting the placement of students and recent graduates into local companies. Not only does this create unique learning and local employment opportunities for the young people, but also it supports the drive to tackle local skills and workforce challenges experienced by our industry network.
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| **Benefits**  | The primary benefits of an IAB include: * Promoting closer academic and industrial collaboration
* Working with academics to develop and enhance courses in line with industry's standards and needs
* Identification of specific training needs from industry
* Co-development of curriculum & apprenticeships
* Inform the curriculum on academic programmes
* Provide work placement opportunities for students
* Support the college with professional accreditation / validation of qualifications
* Industry can support the assessment of student performance in industry
* Employability opportunities for learners / student visits
* Support for college events and initiatives
* Scholarship & bursary programmes
* Opportunity for local stakeholders to inform the college of regional projects at the development stage e.g. infrastructure plans
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| **Challenges and how they were overcome** | **Ensuring productive / structured meetings** * Appointing a chair/secretary
* Developing terms of reference for the group & identifying roles & responsibilities of members, chair etc
* standardised agenda etc
* Agreeing meeting schedule at the outset
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| **Step by step for the implementation of the good practice (transferability to other VET college)** | 1. Agree a curriculum / industrial area e.g. construction
2. Brainstorm potential members (public, private, professional institutes etc) and include atleast 10 external members
3. Establish objectives for IAB
4. Distribute IAB invitation letter
5. Finalise IAB membership
6. Agree IAB schedule of meetings & agenda
7. Establish IAB terms of reference
8. Appoint IAB Chair & Secretary
9. IAB meeting
10. Minutes distributed
11. Evaluate effectiveness
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