

Leeds City College

Rising to the challenges of a dynamic region



With more than 40,000 students and over 1,300 staff, Leeds City College is one of the largest Further Education Colleges in the country. Serving one of the most dynamic economic regions in the country, the College is rising to the challenge of devolution and a fast changing skills landscape by putting in place a five-year strategic plan, which includes a commitment to “*build effective partnerships to enhance their reputation as a lead deliverer of all vocational and work-based learning,*” and to “*provide products and services designed to meet local and regional skills needs*”.

Serving the needs of a dynamic region

Critical to implementing their strategy is the ability of the College to understand both its position in the skills market and the needs of local and regional employers. To answer this need, at the end of 2015 the College brought in Emsi’s online data tool, **Analyst**. With its unique ability to delve down to the most granular levels of industry and occupation data, and at the most granular geographic levels, the tool provides the College with the vital level of detail they were looking for to understand and react to the needs of the region. As Rachel Mather, the College’s Research & Bid Development Manager, comments:

“We will be using Analyst to explore the changing economic dynamics within our catchment area, such as industry and occupation growth/decline, and to create a skills offer which is underpinned by a clear evidence base. Analyst data will support the development of a skills portfolio which offers responsive, dynamic and highly relevant training to provide the labour market with suitably skilled individuals to sustain long term economic growth.”

Overleaf are some of the innovative ways in which the College is using Analyst data to reach their goals.

Using Emsi data in outward-facing operations

CURRICULUM PLANNING

One of the more applications of the data in **Analyst** is in curriculum planning, not least because the tool has a dedicated curriculum planning function. In the context of future potential cuts in the Adult Skills Budget, the College intends to use the data to analyse their current curriculum offer against jobs, openings and projected changes, in order to evidence where there is alignment, where there are gaps, and therefore where they should focus and grow the curriculum to better align with current and future market demand for skills. This is not just a theoretical exercise, however, and since bringing the tool into the College at the end of 2015, it has already been used to underpin a gap analysis of the College's 19+ curriculum offer.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT & APPRENTICESHIPS

Although the College already has good links with local businesses, it recognises the need to do more to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) achieve their growth ambitions, to sustain strong collaborative links with the network of micro businesses across the city region, and to add value to existing relationships with large employers. **Analyst** is seen as a vital part of this, and is being used in a number of ways to identify employers that align with the College's targeted engagement activities.

The College is also using the tool in driving its Apprenticeship strategy. By deriving intelligence on occupations and industries that are set to grow, and then identifying the key employers in these growth sectors, the Business Development & Employer Engagement team is in a much better position to initiate discussions with businesses regarding the skills and qualities apprentices can contribute towards their growth ambitions.

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Leeds City College is aware that real success depends not on better curriculum planning and employer engagement, but on attracting people onto courses. Once again **Analyst** is set to play a key part in this, with its local occupation data on job demand, job forecasts and wages being used to attract people onto courses by showing them how it can lead them into a sustainable career.



Using Emsi data in inward-facing operations

CENTRAL LMI RESOURCES

Members of the Business Development & Employer Engagement team have been appointed as key Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) leads and assigned to work with different departments throughout the College. Their role is to help faculty directors identify how LMI can support and enhance their specific operational and strategic planning activities. For instance, the Key LMI leads provide directors with continuous 1-1 support, advice and information regarding what insight **Analyst** can provide, with a view to embedding LMI across curriculum and service areas.

In addition, the College has created an online data hub, which is intended to lead the curation of emerging national, regional and local intelligence relating to the supply of skills, employment, devolution, policy, and priority sectors. The hub is accessible by all staff throughout the College and is updated daily by the Research & Bid Coordinator.

BI-MONTHLY, QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL REPORTS

The College is using LMI from **Analyst**, along with other sources, to inform the production of a series of reports. These include quarterly curriculum/business reports, which are being used to underpin curriculum or business planning, and bi-monthly emerging trends reports, giving an overview of key developments within the Leeds City Region labour market, including inward investment, business growth, and priority sectors. The College is also hoping to produce an annual report, which will include an analysis of labour market demand in the region compared to the output of students, and a curriculum audit/gap analysis comparing course-related sectors with occupations in the region.

“The hope is that faculty directors will use this information to aid their understanding of the local labour market and shape future provision accordingly to meet projected and forecast needs” **Rachel Mather**

CAREERS GUIDANCE

There is also a recognition of the huge potential for supporting students with data. Through the Student Services team, the College aims to provide students with key intelligence on a range of careers, including skills and competency requirements, projected earnings, and annual openings. Data from **Analyst** will inform discussions with students to ensure that significant career decisions are centred on tangible evidence and projected market demands.



How LMI helped Leeds in a bid for funds

The College has also seen huge potential for using LMI in its funding bids, both in terms of identifying areas of growth, and in lending a more scientific and credible foundation to the application. The College took this approach when bidding for funding from Erasmus+ for KA1 Mobility for VET Learners & Staff – a project which aims to provide transnational placements for Leeds City College staff and students.

According to Rachel Mather, data from **Analyst** was used to demonstrate how the College links EU placement opportunities with UK national and regional market demand, in order to develop both the employability skills and in-demand skills of students to prepare them for relevant employment opportunities:

“This helps our students gain an advantage in the UK labour market, as they will have not only the relevant qualifications, but also appropriate knowledge and customer care skills to enable them to work constructively across growth vocational areas.”

The bid also used **Analyst** data to show how aligning opportunities with growth sectors gives the College the ability to give students a competitive advantage through skills acquisition to support high growth industries and in-demand occupations; support localised and regional economic growth through supplying suitably skilled candidates with relevant industry and occupation work experience; and work with EU partners to ensure the curriculum and work experience offer meets the demand across participating countries.

This commitment to demonstrating impact with good, solid evidence appears to have impressed the bid assessors who commented:

“The application provides strong contextual evidence for the need for the project and how it fits within an established set of processes and procedures... the external impact at all levels has been comprehensively explained.”

In April 2016, the College was pleased to hear that their application had been accepted, with a total of €650,000 in funding secured (approximately £500,000).

To find out more about how our data can help your institution rise to the challenges in your region, contact us at:

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