

# Teach Too

Developing a Centre of  
Excellence for new markets  
in plaster and rendering



Kirklees College

## LEAD CONTACT

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## EMPLOYERS

British Gypsum

Proton Plastics

Commissioned and funded by

The  
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## Introduction to Teach Too

**Teach Too** is an ETF-funded project delivered in partnership by UCL Institute of Education and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP). Deriving from a key recommendation of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) Report in 2013, it sets out to explore and evaluate different models of collaborative activity between employers and providers at practitioner level, in the co-design, delivery and assessment of vocational education and training programmes. Project findings show that these collaborative partnerships have produced significant short and medium-term benefits for employers, providers and learners, and enrich and strengthen local economies and communities.

**Jay Derrick** Director of Teacher Education (post-compulsory),  
UCL, Institute of Education



## Project aims

- To work with local employers to develop knowledge and skills in new plastering and rendering techniques
- Develop a quality demonstration film to showcase the new techniques in Italian plastering
- To collaborate with employer partners to develop new approaches to teaching plastering and rendering
- To provide opportunities for Plastering teachers to test new products and technologies, and provide feedback on performance before being launched on the open market
- To develop better understanding of manufacturer's products through collaborative working with partner employers.

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## Project description

Kirklees College and British Gypsum have together created a Centre of Excellence for new markets and techniques in plaster and rendering, with particular emphasis on Venetian plastering, a technology unique to the British Gypsum/Kirklees college partnership. The focus of this project was to further develop skills and knowledge of local employers in new techniques and to provide staff and students with the opportunity to extend their product knowledge.

The College worked with new magnetic plasters that led to opportunities to learn how to apply the latest emerging technology with Venetian plaster for use in restaurants and offices. The Centre of Excellence also includes training in render systems, metal stud, ceiling and paint systems. The next step for the college will be to include more eco-friendly techniques and materials in traditional building methods suited to the preservation of ancient buildings.

A variety of activities took place to facilitate the project: 50 learners have benefitted from high quality vocational training and 60 students were involved in visits to the plaster manufacturing plant and Gypsum mine in Cumbria. There have been demonstrations of teaching techniques, such as the on-line learning tool, to influential employer partners and delivery of employer familiarisation sessions on the new technique. A member of staff has visited Proton in Sicily to experience skills and techniques first hand and College tutors are on a British Gypsum working group to test new products and technologies before being launched onto the open market.



## Positive impacts

- Students were motivated by the visits to manufacturing sites and it provided them with a better understanding of products and materials
- Students had greater understanding of the new techniques
- Curriculum staff were up-skilled in the new techniques and products by employers
- There were opportunities for employers to develop a better understanding of the learning provided by the College and to familiarise themselves with the Centre of Excellence
- Local employers were able to access specialist training on new techniques to improve the services they can offer
- Feedback from employers led to the development of a new curriculum offer based on their experiences.

## Key learning points

- The strong partnership has made this project work. It has helped to have the formal agreement with the partner employer to understand contributions and responsibilities
- The employer committed considerable time and resources to making this project work. The joint goal of the 'Centre of Excellence' was an essential basis for keeping up the momentum
- New resources and teaching materials needed to be developed quickly to respond to student and employer needs, ensuring that these were quality materials and fit for purpose was a key challenge.



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## Recommendations for developing employer partnerships

- Have a formal agreement (a memorandum of understanding) to ensure that commitments and responsibilities are understood and agreed by all partners
- Meet regularly with partners to discuss issues and agree priorities
- Develop means of regular communication with employer partners. The College provides a termly newsletter to its' Construction Employer Forum. This highlights specific examples of work with local employers and ways in which the College can be flexible and responsive to an industry with rapidly changing skills needs e.g. KC Works where we match employers to prospective trainees who want industrial work experience.



## Links and contact details

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