

## Careers Fair Case study: West Herts College, Hertfordshire

### Introduction

We are a general FE college with campuses in Dacorum, Kings Langley and Watford. At our most recent Ofsted inspection we were graded as 'Outstanding.' Each year nearly 12,000 students pass through our doors - around 4,500 studying full time – on their way to successfully completing their qualification.

West Herts College is trying to give all of our Students an opportunity get work experience with local businesses. We offer great flexibility, some are working one or two days a week (fitting in with their courses) and others working on a project or a block of time during the holidays. This is proving very successful with quite a few part time job offers following. We call this 'Gap' and refer to 'Gap Experiences' and we have a 'Gap Lounge' where Students can search for jobs and discuss opportunities with our advisors.

### How it works

I have been arranging for an employer to come in around once a week and talk to 40/50 Students at a time. This would tie in with the Students courses. The talks are informal and take place in our Gap Lounge, with Employers speaking for around 30 minutes and questions afterwards. It is mostly about their journey and how to get into the business. I think it works better not to have a presentation format.... our Students are mostly aged 16-19.

Inspiring the Future really helps me with getting high profile clients to come into the College. For instance, we have had the UK Communications Director from Tesco and a senior person from Hewlett Packard. Each talk would be targeted. The IT Students from our Business School came to the Hewlett Packard talk and Students from the Business School plus Retail for the Tesco talk.

The clients have been happy to stay behind for a while after the talk and help any Students that want a private word. Most of them have also handed out their business cards.

It also works better if the Tutors prep the Student's beforehand otherwise there is silence at question time. The most successful speakers are those that engage the Student's right from the start and ask lots of questions themselves.

### Contact details:

[www.westherts.ac.uk/](http://www.westherts.ac.uk/)

Francesca Bonnm Head of Community Engagement