

Skills for Work Case Study

National 5 Creative Industries course
Forth Valley College (Falkirk Campus)



Introduction

Forth Valley College (Falkirk Campus) offers the National 5 Skills for Work: Creative Industries course as part of a full-time National Certificate (NC) Creative Industries programme. The Skills for Work course is the main focus of the programme. Each of the other elements provides skills development in specialist areas in art, design, media, and sound production. In addition, learners develop other essential skills including problem solving, working with others, information and communication technology (ICT), communication, and numeracy through engagement in a wide range of creative tasks. The programme also helps learners develop capacities in enterprise and entrepreneurialism through participation in live projects based on briefs provided by internal and external clients.

Background

Forth Valley College has an established creative industries portfolio in areas such as art and design, contemporary art practice, visual communication, media and communication, and sound production. Most of the provision prior to the implementation of the Skills for Work course was at SCQF levels 6–9. The college recognised a need to provide a qualification that would allow learners to progress to appropriate qualifications at SCQF level 6, as well as providing them with opportunities to develop both their subject knowledge and the skills and qualities valued by employers.

Approach

The National 5 Skills for Work: Creative Industries course is currently delivered as part of a full-time further education (FE) programme.

Learners attend college for 16 hours per week and participate in mainly practical activities; including web design, animation, video production, and art and design.

Learners complete approximately four major projects throughout the programme and acquire the skills required to complete each project within subject-specific areas. As the course progresses, learners can draw upon the subject-specific skills they have acquired and start to engage in increasingly demanding projects.

Towards the second half of the course, learners are introduced to the *Creative Industries: The Creative Process* and *Creative Industries: Creative Project* units. The project topics usually tie in with a local or national initiative. Recent projects have included:

- producing tourist information videos for a local landmark
 - producing a video for Amnesty International
 - curating an exhibition of work
 - developing of material for a 'Show Racism the Red Card' campaign
-

Learners work in teams to complete the projects and deliver their pitches to college management, practitioners, and other staff. The team presentations are filmed and used for review. Once the ideas presented during the pitches have been agreed, learners allocate roles within their teams and continue with the production of the project.



A recent notable project involved learners curating an exhibition of work created throughout their year at college. Works included paintings, self-portraits, sound installations, videos, sculpture and written pieces. The learners had to negotiate with external venue staff to secure the spaces, ensure that risk assessments were carried out, hang and display the work, promote the event, and supervise the exhibition during opening hours. Learners worked autonomously throughout the duration of the project and took great pride in their achievements.

Partnership arrangements

Although there are no formal partnerships in place to support this course, Forth Valley College uses its extensive network of creative practitioners — including artists, designers, film makers, and music industry professionals — to provide direct input to the projects. This network of industry professionals gives learners access to working environments where they can meet employers, thereby reinforcing what is being learned at college. Employer engagement is a crucial factor in any Skills for Work course, and so these visits are pivotal components of course delivery, rather than additional experiences.

Benefits for learners and centres

The flexibility of the National 5 Skills for Work: Creative Industries course means that it can be delivered in a wide variety of contexts. Assessment evidence can also be gathered and presented in a multitude of ways, which suits both learners and staff. The *Creative Industries: Skills Development* unit enables learners to take ownership of their learning, reflect on their achievements, and plan their progression. It also enables them to develop evidence of their skills for assessment purposes.

Learners who achieve the Skills for Work course are well equipped for progression to further study or employment in terms of both their practical skills and their attitude to learning and work.

Learners enjoy the course and find that the *Creative Industries: An Introduction* unit, in particular, clarifies their career and progression options and helps them with the self-evaluation process.

Taking part in the course provides learners with an integrated set of skills along with a solid foundation from which they can progress both personally and professionally. The employability aspects of the course give learners a deeper understanding of how the creative process integrates with business and the workplace. Job roles across the various sectors within the industry are analysed to identify the skill sets that employers and clients require.



This is reinforced when learners research job roles and take part in the simulated 'live' projects. One learner commented that this process had helped them to identify the skills they needed to improve, and had given them more confidence.

Future delivery plans

Forth Valley College will continue to embed the National 5 Skills for Work: Creative Industries course within the NC in Creative Industries at SCQF Level 5. This will enable staff to deliver subject-specific tuition to help develop appropriate skills in relation to the final project.

The course will be delivered using live briefs and commercial projects, allowing learning to take place in a realistic workplace environment. Where possible the required evidence will be gathered where it occurs naturally.

Advice to other centres

We recommend providing learners with a live project, which allows them to develop skills in response to the research carried out in the *Creative Industries: An Introduction* unit. Individual learners should consider the live project before agreeing their team response in the *Creative Industries: The Creative Process* unit. This pitch should then form the basis of the *Creative Industries: Creative Project* unit, allowing the learners to work towards a tangible creative output. This holistic approach to delivery helps to contextualise learning and allows learners to see the value in the course as a whole.

For the *Creative Industries: An Introduction* unit, it is helpful if the learners produce the required evidence in the form of, for example, a leaflet, poster, podcast or video to promote the creative industries. We also found it helpful to use the assessment support material from SQA to gather information before presenting it to learners in a creative way.

