

An Invitation to Transform a Young Person's Life Chances



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What is the UK Career Academy?

Established in 2002, the UK Career Academy aims to build the bridge between the classroom and boardroom, by helping support young people from all backgrounds to take their first step into the world of work. It does this by linking up local businesses with students on selected courses at colleges who have become members of the Career Academy. Almost 90% of Career Academy students progress to either university (often the first in their family), or into employment with further training.

Within South Cheshire it is Crewe-based South Cheshire College who belong to the UK Career Academy, with students participating in the Academy from Level 3 vocational programmes, supported by a wide range of local employers including Virgin Training Academy, Vodaphone, BT, Co-operative Group, Diamond Electronics and the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

How does it work?

The Career Academy model is special in the way it focuses employer support in the young people's studies, through a programme of lectures, workshops, visits, career mentoring and internships. South Cheshire College currently runs Career Academies for its Business and Engineering BTEC Level 3 Diploma students, all of whom have different career aspirations, and all of whom are encouraged and supported into work by the programme.

The South Cheshire Career Academy is supported by a Local Advisory Board, made up of leading local employers, who meet termly at the College.



Engineering students on employer visit at Siemens

Within an overarching Career Academy framework, the College works flexibly with each employer to best meet the needs of their particular business and our local community. But, for example, you or your colleagues might like to:

- Mentor a student
- Speak to a group of young people in their classroom (a guru lecture)
- Host a tour of your workplace
- Provide an internship placement over the summer
- Join the Career Academy Local Advisory Board in South Cheshire
- Provide financial sponsorship to help the programme grow

Some supporting employers offer one volunteer for just a couple of hours a year, while others embed the programme company-wide.

What are the benefits to your business?

Research and experience demonstrate that the programme also offers much to employers by developing their existing staff, improving morale and injecting new ideas into their organisation.

It can give employers much more than simply meeting their Corporate Social Responsibility agenda. Involvement is low cost and low risk: your business could engage as much or as little as you want – from a Guru Lecture to offering a six-week paid internship.



Career Academy students at Capital Experience event in London

Here are some of the other potential benefits to your business:

Providing Potential Employees

By offering internships to Career Academy students, employers can harness and help develop the skills that help make young people ready for the world of work. Many supporters from across the UK now employ Career Academy graduates who undertook internships with them in full and part time positions. Undertaking Guru Lectures also offers an opportunity to raise awareness of your organisation or sector.

Staff Development

Career Academies offer a number of valuable ways in which employees can demonstrate and improve their skills.

- As a Partner in Business, employees act as a role model, critical friend and advisor over an 18 month period. In doing so they develop their own skills in coaching and mentoring. This can help staff develop their leadership skills.
- Internship supervisors can gain practical experience in managing and coaching a young person.
- Becoming a member of a Local Advisory Board is an opportunity for more senior members of staff to use their leadership and management skills, and to enhance their networks inside and outside of work.
- Delivering Guru Lectures can improve presentation skills. Even chief executives report that speaking to inquisitive young people can be a challenge.



Injecting New Ideas

Young people can help companies and employees better understand their needs and can also provide fresh ideas into their organisation. Interns can also add value by undertaking projects for which organizations do not have sufficient existing resources.

In recent years, Career Academy interns across the UK have advised on marketing strategies for new media products, helped to develop a new student account for a building society, challenged and changed the name of a Local Authority's leadership development programme, mapped over half of the world's oil wells, and set up new databases for HR departments in a number of organisations.

How can you get involved?

If you are interested in joining this growing network we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch to let us know what you'd be willing to offer, or just to arrange a chat so that you can find out more detail about the Career Academy.

Our contact details are as follows:

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Local businesswoman delivering guru lecture to Business Career Academy students