



Good Practice: UK GP2

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"16-19 VET Programme"

Main features of the GP programme:

Type of programme	Type of organisation	Field of practice for organisation	Programme scope	Programme duration	Programme occurrence/frequency	Type of funding for GP
Vocational and basic skills	Non-profit organisation [faith-based charity]	Education, including further education, youth work and early years provision	local	Varies depending on individual needs	Continuous	State and local authority funding

Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP) is a Horizon 2020 research project focusing on adult education among young adults at risk of social exclusion. Particular attention is paid to educational policies and practices needed to foster active citizenship among vulnerable young people.

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1. What – Focus (theme, orientation)

UK_GP2 is a (pre-) vocational programme leading either to further training (such as a course at a higher level or an apprenticeship) or employment. Learners study key skills subjects (English, Maths, ICT and Personal Development) alongside a vocational focus (e.g. childcare, business and administration, computing, sports and youth work) at different levels. The programme runs on a continuous 'roll-on, roll-off' basis, allowing young people to join throughout the academic year. The duration and intensity are flexible and depend on learners' previous qualifications and their ability to reach the next skills level. Alongside the main programme, a number of students are enrolled the following alternative schemes: (1) ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) for young people who require English language support; or (2) a supported internship scheme for young learners aged 17 to 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), run in conjunction with the Local Authority and offering learners work experience placements with selected employers.

2. For whom – Target group(s)

The programme is open to learners aged 16 to 19 (and beyond, in some circumstances) who wish to study one of the available vocational qualifications at the level offered by the college. Young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan studying on the supported internship scheme are aged 17 to 25. There is also a separate cohort of young people studying ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages); these young people tend to have arrived in the UK more recently as asylum seekers, refugees or migrants. In practice, most of the young people attending the college tend to be from the local area or from neighbouring boroughs. Some young people are referred by their secondary school or by the local authority, while others hear about the college through word of mouth or because they have visited the youth club run by the same organisation (a charity with religious roots and ethos).

3. Requirements and access

Learners wishing to join the programme go through an initial assessment process and interview. There are separate access processes for learners on the supported internships scheme and for those on the ESOL programme. Some learners on the main vocational programme also re-sit their secondary school leaving certificates (GCSEs) in English and Maths or other accepted qualifications (such as Functional Skills in English and Maths). This is a government requirement for courses for learners aged 16 to 19 (unless they have already achieved a certain grade level in these subjects). While the programme is not specifically limited to any particular learner group, in practice, those who choose the college / programme tend to be more interested in vocational rather than academic subjects and a significant proportion have personal or social difficulties as well as previous negative experiences in the education system.

4. Elements of good practice

The main elements of good practice in this programme are that the curriculum can be personalised for individual young people; that the setting of the college promotes a familiar and community-oriented atmosphere (not least because it is a fairly small college in comparison with other, much larger colleges in the wider area); and that learners and educators agree that the college's ethos and approach foster a sense of belonging for young people. There is a recognition that many young people may have had negative and disempowering experiences in education previously, compounded for many by being in large classes in their previous schools, where teachers had insufficient time to tailor the learning experience to their needs. The college tutors are also aware that young people face a number of challenges, ranging from growing up in a socio-economically deprived neighbourhood through to personal experiences of vulnerability (e.g. family problems, learning difficulties, mental health or drug problems, or being at an increased risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of crime). The setting allows tutors to respond to the unique individual needs of learners, including through informal conversations and pastoral care.

APC-related competencies are promoted throughout the programme:

Socio-economic competences: this is at the forefront of the vocational programme and links back to the charitable ethos of the overall organisation that young people should be empowered to economic self-sufficiency by learning a trade. For young people on the supported internship programme the socio-economic aspect has a particular significance, because young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly at risk of exclusion from the job market.

Socio-cultural competences: examples include enrichment experiences such as visits to sights or theatres which many young people have had very limited exposure to; there are also efforts to promote diversity-related learning both through supporting interactions among students from diverse backgrounds and through specific lessons with relevant guest speakers.

Legal-political competences are promoted within a learning module on personal and social development, which addresses subjects such as extremism and terrorism, as well as youth crime. For the latter, guest speakers who talk about their experiences as victims of crime is described as having a particular impact on their views and attitudes by some learners.

5. Perceived challenges

While the interviewed participants in this GP example do not report any major problems affecting the programme, there are a number of issues at practice and policy levels which can provide challenges. These include:

- A changing (and competitive) policy landscape for further education providers overall, which some colleges have responded to by increasing in size (through mergers with other colleges) and offering as much diversity in

qualifications as possible. The approach of this programme (college) runs counter to this trend by keeping the learning environment at a small and familiar scale and offering only a handful of qualifications. So far this has worked to preserve the qualities which learners and educators specifically appreciate about the programme.

- There are also some challenges associated with maintaining the personalised and flexible approach appreciated by learners and tutors whilst having to follow government guidelines (for example the requirement that learners aged 16-19 must study certain qualifications in English and Maths, which can be a challenge for some learners).
- While the programme prides itself on offering a particularly supportive context for learners, balancing this with working within the right level of support capacity can be a challenge. The college addresses this by carefully considering whether the specific support needs of individual students can be met before they enrol.

6. Testimonials

...the course just motivates you more to do more outside, not just in college but outside as well. Like personal development as well, that really has you going like. Because we were learning about terrorism and youth, the youth and their crime, and it just like...I don't know but it just helps you. Like when I'm outside I'm very wary of what's going on around me, because before I started this college I knew about terrorism but in the way that I'm being taught I never knew it was like that.

Smaller classrooms, better teachers, students are more friendly and happy. There's zero bullying tolerance, there's no conflict, there's none of that here. This is a great good college.

I think I've got more than what I expected out of this college. Because I've made quite a few friends, I've got all of the qualifications that I wanted and more. So I'm really happy with...probably the best decision of my life was coming here.

[the teachers] help a lot more. So if you've got any issues in your personal life they'll hear you out, and they have an open door policy so you can say anything that comes to your mind if you've got any concerns or anything

[attending this course] has had quite an impact on life because I feel a lot happier about myself, I carry myself in a lot more respectful way, I have a lot more respect for myself because I know I'm doing something that matters with my life. Because my main concern was me sitting down and doing nothing, but that's never happening because this is what is right for me, it's given me so much motivation to just carry on



7. More Information

EduMAP project's publications:

[Books and articles](#)

Academic publications that address key themes of the EduMAP project

[Deliverables and reports](#)

EduMAP's official deliverables, related reports and publications

[Good practice cases](#)

Key features from 40 'good practice' cases from 20 countries

[Working papers](#)

A selection of findings from desk and field research in 20 European countries

[Other resources](#)

Other types of resources made for the project (illustrations, comics etc.)