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Hertford
Regional
College



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Pioneering print for a cutting-edge college

A flexible print solution from Océ to facilitate the very best in local educational provision

When East Herts College (in Broxbourne) and Ware College were amalgamated to form Hertford Regional College (HRC) in 1992, improvements from economies of scale were anticipated. But since the merger HRC has grown out of all recognition (it now boasts some 900 staff), acquiring a dynamic that has transformed it into a vital bridge between formal education and local industry.

The busy home county of Hertfordshire is strategically positioned between the industrial Midlands, Cambridge, Stansted airport and north London. An area of high employment, Hertfordshire is a combination of high-tech and service industries. BAE occupies a large site at Hatfield, the Cambridge silicon valley is within commuting distance and the nearby motorway network makes it an important distribution centre, where Tesco, among others, has its headquarters.

Working with employers

HRC offers a wide range of vocational courses for students aged 16+, and a growing range of provision for 14-16-year-olds in work-related learning programmes and apprenticeships, which allow students to 'earn as they learn' and get a recognised qualification. Industry sectors range from Construction, Hair and Beauty, Hospitality and Catering to Business. The College has an excellent learning environment with purpose-built facilities and training provided by industry-experienced staff. This ensures students gain the results needed by employers.

The continuous demand for skilled labour threw down a challenge that HRC has assumed with aplomb. Long gone are the days when the goals of education and the needs of business were on different planets. Today colleges and employers cooperate far more closely. HRC has taken this cooperation several steps further with initiatives designed to align education and training to specific industry needs.

Facilitating learning

For established employees, HRC has a range of skills-development courses tailored to particular sectors and one of the ways in which the college has built up credibility with external organisations is through its cutting-edge communications. HRC Reprographic Manager Sandra Phelps oversees a small print room team that manages the requirements of both academic staff and approximately 20,000 students. And as is often the case in educational establishments, at the backbone of the printroom's success is Océ.

Print output is varied and intense. "We print student assignments, lecture notes and college handbooks as well as information sheets and teaching material," explains Sandra. "And of course we collate and bind." The print room has four Océ machines including an Océ CPS800 and an Océ CS230. "These do the colour printing, and the possibility of having materials in colour makes all the difference to lecturer and students," she goes on. It also boasts an Océ VarioPrint 2110, an Océ VarioPrint 2090 and Océ's IntraLogic software tool.

Managed savings

There are 22 Océ copiers around the college: each of these is linked to a PC so that it doubles up as a printer too, an intelligent solution that saves on space and equipment costs. HRC is moving to a point where all its reprographic equipment will soon be provided and managed by Océ in line with a £63m redevelopment of the college. By the end of that process 40-45 departmental devices should be in place. There are obvious maintenance and management benefits in using only one manufacturer, but Océ did not become favoured supplier by chance.



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Sandra Phelps, Reprographics Manager, Hertford Regional College

Approachable, attentive and responsive

"In 20 years in the print room, you find out who to go to for quality and service, and that's Océ," says Sandra. Back-up is particularly important and she knows she can rely on the company's famed four-hour call-out should a challenge arise. Beyond simply keeping the machines "on the road," Sandra also appreciates the intelligent dialogue she is able to have with her Océ contacts: "Océ is a very approachable company and it has been attentive and responsive to my questions."

Sandra sees HRC as a business like any other and in a competitive market its communications must attract attention through the design, layout and quality. In parallel, vast amounts of internal documents also have to be printed. It is a constant challenge, but thanks to Océ, it is one that Sandra relishes: "Even after all this time," she says, "I'm still excited by working here!"

