

Case Study



South and City College Birmingham is a vocational college which offers students part time, full time and Apprenticeship courses from level 1 to higher education in a range of subjects.

Company Profile

Company: South and City College

Contact: Dawn Francis-Jones

Title: Assistant Director - Health & Safety

Location(s): Birmingham

Award: Education & Training Services Industry Sector Award

Dawn Francis-Jones, assistant director discusses what achieving a RoSPA award means for the college.

Why did you enter the RoSPA Awards?

When entering the RoSPA Awards, you are determining whether you are achieving the highest standards in health and safety. To do well, you need to have a passion for doing the right thing and aim for perfection – striving for these goals also allows me to improve my professional development, which in turn brings health and safety progress to the college.

The main aim is to maintain communication links between our team and everyone else, to encourage a positive safety culture and to ensure everyone is kept informed, safe and protected. High standards develop through ensuring that we adhere to legislative compliance, and that we improve and promote best practice.

Health and safety in any organisation is about identifying potential hazards using management systems, considering potential effects, and promoting efficient delivery of that system. Through the Awards we can then benchmark ourselves against the highest criteria in the industry.



Why is achieving a RoSPA Award important to your business?

The Award means everything – it is the ultimate benchmark, and reflects our hard work and commitment. It enables me to seek to improve against those high standards, to develop individually as a practitioner, and to maintain a leadership culture ethos.

It allows us to:

- Develop and follow a set of values
- Be a good communicator
- Take a longer term view
- Show commitment
- Show concern for staff
- Demonstrate commitment to quality
- Demonstrate personal integrity
- Demonstrate a positive attitude to the job
- Accept responsibility for failures
- Share responsibility for success



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How is health and safety managed in your organisation?

As a health and safety manager, I work with the executive director of human resources and the principal of the college to ensure that everyone is safe and that all needs are catered for.

My role within the college is far reaching. Like every organisation we strive for excellence, but failings do occur – it is important that you accept that, rectify the issues and learn from them.

Our basic needs are ensuring that we have effective buildings of a high specification, and eliminate risk to provide adequate premises to the public and our staff. We deliver a variety of courses including in construction, so we have to ensure that we comply with the latest developments within that industry.

Through our innovative schemes and ongoing staff training, we aim to provide safety, good health, and a secure working environment in which everyone can thrive.

It is my responsibility to support the senior management from a strategic level, and at the same time ensure the college functions effectively at an operation level. I provide expertise on health and safety-related projects, guide management on regulatory compliance and programme development, investigate health and safety complaints and problems, and sometimes administer some of the health and safety programmes in the college.

I also:

- Provide information and advice
- Support the management with the co-ordination of health and safety efforts
- Monitor the effectiveness of actions to meet responsibilities
- Identify problems (including hazards)
- Assess the need for action
- Assist with the assessment of risks
- Design and develop strategies and plans
- Advise on relevant current best practice for prevention

- Promote and communicate health, safety and welfare advances and practices
- Assist with the implementation of these strategies and plans
- Evaluate their effectiveness
- Maintain key records relating to health and safety performance.

How will you build on your RoSPA Award going forward?

I am enthusiastic, passionate and caring. Of the three, caring is possibly the most important trait. You need to care about your role, your organisation, and most of all you need to care about people. The moment you start seeing people as statistics, you can't do your job.

I will do whatever is necessary where health and safety is concerned. To succeed you need to have three things – passion, resources and support. With one missing component you will not succeed. Being passionate is crucial as it is often said that a practitioner should move on every five years to develop. This is not so if you always have your eye on the ball.

For me, building on the RoSPA Award means applying for the next award. No-one can do everything; it is the constant striving to attempt to win the award again and again, and to maintain the standard this sets, that must be the focus. Just because I have won the award, it does not make me better than anyone else.

What advice do you have for other organisations entering or thinking of entering the RoSPA Awards?

Support your health and safety manager, make them feel their work is valued, enter to set the benchmark for yourself, because if you want to see if you are doing what you should be doing, then a realistic summary of what you actually do in your organisation will be assessed. What you will do, going through the criteria, is identifying gaps – we all have them. It is identifying what those gaps are and striving to do better that helps to improve performance. In entering you are reaching the ultimate potential of your organisation.

