

GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIPS

Outdoor Education and Development Training St Martins College

Graduate Apprenticeships (GA) have been designed to enhance the employability of Graduates and to promote partnerships between Employers and Higher Education (HE) establishments. Through a structured programme of learning and development the GA scheme allows Graduates to gain vocational skills and experience of work adding to the knowledge they have gained at University.

SkillsActive is working with Employers and Higher Education Institutions to develop a GA Framework to meet the needs of Employers in the Active Leisure and Learning Sector. The Framework includes:

- An Honours Degree.
- National Governing Body (NGB) awards.
- Level 3 NVQ.
- An Employment Project which benefits the Employer the Graduate is placed with.

The Outdoor Education and Development Training Sector

Outdoor Education and Development Training is concerned with personal and social development within an outdoor setting. Some of the key features of Outdoor Education and Development Training include: social inclusion; leadership; life skills and values development; physical, environmental and social education; preparation for employment and using outdoor experiences as a vehicle for learning.

Employers in the Sector have in the past, not seen Graduates as employable due to their lack of experience and relevant vocational skills. NGB awards, meaningful work experience and networking are quoted as key factors for securing future employment in the Sector. Following a feasibility study, St Martins College, Cumbria, developed a GA programme to provide a structured pathway for Graduates into employment in the Outdoor Education and Development Training field.

St Martins College

The GA programme at St Martins College is aimed at Graduates who have completed their HE studies. The GA programme includes:

- Choice of NGB awards.
- Nine months mentored work placement.
- Level 3 NVQ in Outdoor Education or Development Training.
- QCA Key Skills.
- Structured inductions.
- Review and facilitation skills course.
- Industry and organisation awareness award.
- Employment project.
- Self employment workshop.
- Training day

The GA programme at St Martins is supported by the Cumbria Learning and Skills Council which was central to securing funding from the European Social Fund for 2002/03.

The GA programme will contribute to meeting the aims of the Cumbria Learning and Skills Council Strategic Plan:

- Closing skills gaps such as interpersonal skills and management skills]
- Promoting a culture of lifelong learning and continuous professional development
- Involving employers in developing workforce skills and overcoming barriers to training
- Developing learning opportunities tailored to individual and employment needs and taking into account regional issues.

The Employers

The GA has received significant interest and support from local Employers in the Outdoors Sector. Employers were involved in the design of the programme and to date 11 Employers have taken on one or more Graduate Apprentices to work for them in a variety of roles. One employer involved in the GA programme is Brathay Hall in Ambleside. Brathay Hall is a charitable educational trust founded in 1946 which aims to provide development activities for young people, research the processes of youth work, and educate and develop the trainers in the development training sub-sector of the Outdoors.

Following a presentation to Employers at the College, Jon Owen and Scott Umpleby from Brathay agreed to become partners in the GA programme and have six Graduate Apprentices undertaking their nine months work placement with them.

Jon and Scott are pleased to have a good relationship with St Martins College and believe that the GA programme will provide structured opportunities for employment in the Sector where historically entry to employment has been on an ad hoc basis. Training the trainers is one of the aims of the Brathay Trust and the organisation provides mentoring and support for Graduate Apprentices as they work through the NVQ and other qualifications and training which make up the GA programme.

Of all the training schemes which Jon and Scott have seen in the Outdoors Sector, they believe that the GA scheme is the first one to contain the right mix of training and experience to enhance employability in the Sector whether this is through existing employers or through the self employment and enterprise training which forms part of the programme.

The Graduate Apprentices

Twenty six Graduate Apprentices registered on the programme in 2003. They carried out their employment experience at a variety of Employers throughout the Cumbria region. The Employers included; YMCA Lakeside, Lowbank Ground OEC and the Calvert Trust.

The Graduate Apprentices at Brathay Hall were Oliver Brown, Chris Frampton, Gavin Fance and James Whitham who shared a cottage together in the Brathay Hall Estate. Oliver and James heard about the scheme through industry magazines and the Institute for Outdoor Learning website whilst Chris and Gavin were former students at St Martins on the outdoors degree programme. They all agreed that the programme allowed them to develop as individuals in addition to the training and work experience.

For more details of the graduate apprenticeship programme at St Martins College contact **Annie Owen, Graduate Apprenticeship Programme Manager, St Martins College** – a.owen@ucsm.ac.uk

For more details of the GA programme for the Active Leisure and Learning Sector contact **Ben Gittus - Qualifications and Standards Manager, SkillsActive** – ben.gittus@skillsactive.com