

Coleg Cambria: A “Doubly Excellent” College

With more than 7,000 full-time students and 20,000 part-time students, Coleg Cambria is now one of the largest colleges in the UK. Yet it's not just the intake of students that is large; so too is its impact on the local community. According to the results of a 2014 Emsi Economic Impact Study, the College contributes around £401.1 million per year to the local economy.

One of the many purposes of an Impact Study is to act as a benchmark for future performance, inspiring a college to make even greater efforts to improve their value. In the case of Coleg Cambria, this appears to be exactly what they have done, and that hard work has just been rewarded with an extremely rare “double excellent” award from the Welsh education watchdog, Estyn. Amongst the qualities highlighted by inspectors were the “exceptionally positive ethos and culture,” “exemplary” student behaviour, and the “comprehensive range of provision that meets the needs of learners and employers well”.



Unique Insight Using Labour Market Information

Part of the College's success in meeting the needs of learners and employers stems from their extensive use of local Labour Market Information (LMI) – something that was singled out for praise by the lead inspector, Gill Sims:

“*The College makes good use of detailed and well-analysed labour market information to identify the skills needs of employers, including identifying potential gaps. Overall, the College has adapted and rationalised its curriculum well to meet the needs of learners at all levels*”

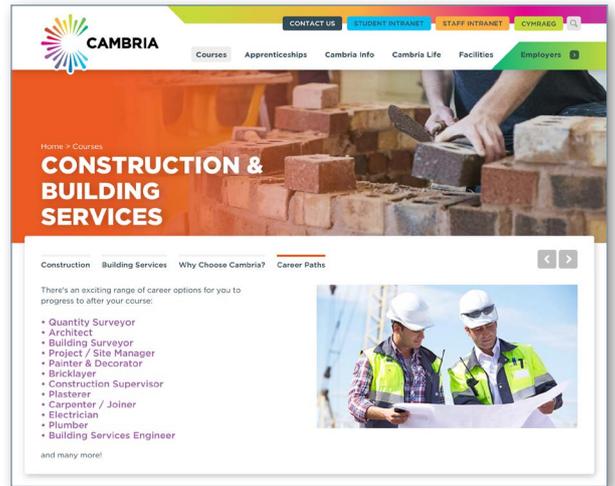
According to the College's Principal, David Jones OBE, key to this is the College's active use of Emsi's LMI tool, **Analyst**, which is being used in curriculum and strategic management teams, and is proving of great value:

“*Analyst has given us a unique new insight into trends and longer-term demands in the socio-economic region that we serve, as well as providing intelligence and a bigger picture overview of wider “key sectors” for Cambria. It has informed the development of a North Wales Education & Skills Strategy linked to the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, and also supports planning in the context of cross border training needs in the Mersey-Dee Area and into the work of the Cheshire Warrington LEP.*”

Giving Unique Insight to Students

Using LMI to shape a curriculum that is more in tune with the local economy is only one side of the coin, however. The other is to ensure that prospective and existing students are directed into sustainable careers. This is not an easy task at the best of times, but the task became all the more difficult for the College when budget constraints meant that they could no longer employ careers officers. To fill the gap, the College has invested in Emsi's careers API.

Like **Analyst**, the careers API also uses local LMI, but whereas the purpose of **Analyst** is to help the College understand the needs of the local economy, the aim of the API is to help give current and prospective students a better understanding of demand for careers they might be interested in, and to showcase the link between those careers and the College's courses. Coleg Cambria is now using the tool in a number of ways, both internally and externally. Internally, the tool has been included on the student app, so that students can access the data wherever they are, and it is also being used by personal tutors to help give students careers advice. Externally, the tool is being used to market the College and its courses to prospective students at open events and school events.



Coleg Cambria and Emsi: An Active Partnership

Estyn's recognition of what the College is doing is a wonderful testament of the senior management team's determination to bring even more impact and value to their learners and the local community. Emsi is thrilled to be partnering with the College – a partnership that David Jones sees as playing a big part of the success:

“ Estyn do not hand out any ‘Excellents’ without forensic scrutiny and huge challenge. For us to achieve 12 ‘Excellents’ out of 15 Grades was remarkable and unprecedented in FE. We secured straight Excellents for all leadership areas, with planning being a key strength, hugely supported by our use of Analyst and our active partnership with Emsi. ”



To discuss how our unique insight can help your college rationalise its curriculum planning and direct students to careers, email us at info@economicmodelling.co.uk or phone us on **01256 614 885**