



CASE STUDY

02: CREST AWARDS THROUGH STEM-BASED WORK EXPERIENCE

CREST AWARDS CAN PROVIDE A TASK-ORIENTATED FRAMEWORK FOR STEM-BASED ORGANISATIONS OFFERING STUDENTS WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS.

SUMMARY

In the summer of 2008, BP piloted the use of CREST Silver Awards as a way to structure their student work placements. It was a great success, with both the organisation and the participating students benefitting from the scheme.

SCHOOL FACT FILE

Organisation: BP

Project Type: Work experience placements at BP Sunbury

CREST Awards achieved:

- Silver level: 10 Awards, Year 10-11 students (2008)
- 13 Awards, Year 10-11 students (2009)

Skills

- Time-management
- Creative learning
- Problem-solving
- Communication skills
- Qualitative and quantitative research
- Project management

Links to the curriculum

- How Science Works, Work-Related Learning

"HIGH QUALITY WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN INSPIRING STUDENTS IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. THE CREST AWARDS PROVIDE VALUABLE ACCREDITATION OF THESE PLACEMENTS IN A WAY THAT CONTINUES TO ADD VALUE TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE YOUNG PERSON LONG AFTER THEY HAVE COMPLETED THEIR PLACEMENT AT BP"

Ian Duffy, Manager of UK Education Programme, BP

WORK EXPERIENCE SHOULD BE ABOUT MORE THAN PHOTOCOPYING, ANSWERING PHONES, MAKING TEA, AND SHADOWING OFFICE-BASED STAFF TO 'LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK'

The challenge is to make the experience engaging for the student and worthwhile for everyone else involved. CREST Awards can be used as a value-added framework for students who have work experience placements with STEM-based companies.

PILOTING WITH BP

Each year, BP offers around 150 work experience placements to students from local schools through its Schools Link programme. They felt that the value of their placements could be enhanced if the project work undertaken by young people during their time on site was recognised with a CREST Silver Award.

There's nothing quite like seeing something in action to gain an understanding, so a CREST Awards accreditation pilot was organised – taking place at BP's site in Sunbury during the summer of 2008. Ten students, aged between 15 and 17, were involved – all on week-long work experience placements in a STEM-related business unit.

The students worked on a research project for the week. This involved around 30 hours of work – a mixture of independent research and interviews with staff in their host business unit. Some students were given a question to address such as "Energy Crisis – what should BP do?" or an investigative task such as "to find oil reservoirs by studying seismic data". At the end of their placement, students presented their research and explained what they had learnt from the experience.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

The students commented that the CREST Awards gave their placements structure – helping to build a sense of narrative into their time at BP.

CREST Awards are supported by:



we would also like to thank
Network Rail



British Science Association
www.britishsienceassociation.org

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This was particularly helpful during periods in which their supervisors were not on hand to give guidance. The placements were a great success, with students gaining a better understanding of the practical implication of what they'd learnt in school – the STEM subjects seemed more relevant to their 'real' lives. They also gained a valuable insight into STEM careers and opportunities at BP.

IMPACT ON HOST MANAGERS

The host managers at BP Sunbury were extremely supportive of the CREST Awards accreditation. They recognised that CREST's involvement enhanced the quality of the work experience placements (and will do so in the future) and gave students a nationally recognised award.

NEXT STEPS

Following the success of the pilot, CREST Silver Award accreditation is now offered to students on STEM-based placements at BP Sunbury, and also at BP's site in Pangbourne. CREST now also works in partnership with the National STEM Subject Choice & Careers project and the Royal Society of Chemistry to incorporate CREST Awards into their guidance on Work Experience.

DO YOU WANT CREST ACCREDITATION?

CREST Awards are flexible and dynamic: they can be incorporated into most work experience placements. We're now looking to build on our successful partnership with BP by developing links with other companies which offer STEM-based placements.

If you'd like to know more about CREST Awards through work-experience, or any other aspect of the CREST Awards visit:
www.britishsienceassociation.org/crest
or email: crest@britishsienceassociation.org

