

# Workplace-based experience - The way to go

By False Bay College Spokesperson, issued by False Bay College

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This country has a shortage of skilled people in the field of Information Technology and Business Studies. False Bay College, one of the Further Education and Training Colleges in the Western Cape, is working hard to narrow this gap. The National Certificate (Vocational) programme has already produced some outstanding graduates, who were snapped up in the local market - "and the best is yet to come."



"An important element in the programme is the inclusion of a 5-day Workplace-Based Experience (WBE), which gives students the opportunity to gain experience in real workplaces relevant to their field of study. This develops their understanding of the industry they are training to work in, and improves their competence and work-readiness," says Melanie Vermaak, False Bay College Programmes Manager: NC(V) and Nated.

Employers are reluctant to having students at the workplace, as there is a perception that they require too much supervision, which will affect productivity. The WBE course, she says, is carefully designed to minimise this, and is not at all onerous on the employer.

Each student is issued with a fully detailed Task Book, allowing them to manage their time in the workplace. The student will be asked to describe a full job-cycle from planning to completion for at least one task they were involved in during the WBE experience.

They will also need to comment on the host companies operations, health, safety, security, environmental and/or legislative concerns that affect the workplace, and how these apply to their career field; how does the company they worked in ensure the quality of its work and what practical skills did they develop during their placement.

"The students taking part in the WBE programme are young, skilled and very keen to get ahead. They have shown this by the work they have already done at the college, and are certainly not looking for a free ride," Vermaak comments.

"Employers will have these students on their premises for a full working week, free of charge and will have first crack at employing him/her after graduation - in a scarce market, that is well worth considering."

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