

News

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Students gain placements at first of its kind motorway services development

Leeds College of Building students have been perfecting their craft after gaining work experience placements at a 'new concept' Motorway Service Area.

Leeds Skelton Lake Services, a £60m Morgan Sindall Construction project, located to the east of Leeds (Junction 45 of the M1), is being billed as a landmark development that will set a new standard for Motorway Service Areas in the UK and meet high environmental standards on sustainability. The project is being delivered by leading owner, developer, and operator of Motorway Service Areas, Extra MSA Group.

As part of the Aire Valley Green Infrastructure Network, the new services has a 'living green roof,' improved pathways linking Skelton Lake's walking routes, cycle paths and nature trails, an RSPB visitor centre and viewing deck, a dog walking and picnic area, an electric vehicle charging station, and an outdoor seating terrace.

During the first phase of the development, 15 Level 3 Construction & Built Environment students from Leeds College of Building shadowed the Enabling Works Contractor, Henry Boot Construction Limited on site management, design, engineering, and quantity surveying.

Since January, the work-placement programme for all Trade and Level 3 Construction & Built Environment students has been overseen by second phase contractors, Morgan Sindall Construction. The scheme will run until the end of the academic year and has at least one student per week attending a work placement across specialisms such as painting, decorating and plastering, and two student groups site visits per month.

Both companies pledged extra support during the College's Careers Month and for International Women's Day, offering additional placements and industry talks on site and at Leeds College of Building, and further visits for prospective and current students.

When the project concludes later this year, a total of 41 Leeds College of Building students will have worked on site, with some potentially offered full apprenticeships by the construction partners, and 100 students will have attended sites visits throughout the development.

Mujtaba, a Leeds College of Building student who worked on site, said: "It was an amazing experience, and I learnt lots of new things. I started to think about my future and what I would like to do when I complete my BTEC Level 3 course".

Derek Whitehead, Leeds College of Building Principal, said: "Projects such as Skelton Lake Services give our students remarkable insight into cutting-edge developments in the construction industry. Partnerships such as those with Henry Boot and Morgan Sindall are fantastic at maximising employment opportunities and valuable work experience. This industry collaboration is vital to address the skills needed for developments to happen quickly in the region and beyond."

Dennis Enuson, Group Planning and Development Officer at Extra MSA Group said: "Over the course of construction, we've been working closely with our appointed Contractors, Consultants and Leeds City Council to ensure that we maximise the local work experience, apprenticeship and employment opportunities arising from this £60m investment in the Leeds City Region. We're

passionate about delivering local community benefits from this project and are delighted to have engaged such a large cohort of Leeds College of Building students to date, providing them with valuable opportunities to gain on-site experience and insights into the multitude of careers options within the construction industry.”

Ian Gresser, Operations Manager for Henry Boot Construction Limited, said: “We are committed to providing opportunities to young people through our work experience, training and employment opportunities. By partnering with Leeds College of Building, we have provided students with valuable hands-on experiences in the built environment. These placements help ensure students are well equipped as they seek employment in the industry.”

Sarah Muscas, community engagement manager at Morgan Sindall Construction, said: “A project of this size can play a key role in boosting skills across the region it is located, and one of the most rewarding aspects for our team has been collaborating with Leeds College of Building to develop programmes that help students bridge the gap between education and employment. There is no substitute for site-based placements – they bring what you’ve studied to life and help you understand how your trade fits in the overall success of a project. We’ve been really impressed by all the students that have worked with us at Skelton Lake Services so far and hope to work with them again on Morgan Sindall Construction projects in the future.”

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