

A Typical Day

Students arrive between 08:25 and 08:40am, meeting in a classroom that doubles up as a recreational base. A morning briefing is given, setting out the plans for the day and reviewing achievements from the previous week. The emphasis on achievement and publicly celebrating student successes helps to foster a positive work ethic and a collective sense of pride in the workings of the farm and gardens.

External students form part of one group, working with one member of staff and an ancillary support teacher. The other internal group made up of Oathall students form a second group and work with another member of staff and support teacher. The groups therefore have lessons and experience in either Agriculture or Land-Based activities, swapping teachers for the afternoon programme. This gives them a very broad and balanced curriculum, making for an interesting variety of activities for students to enjoy throughout the day.

A portfolio of evidence has to be completed in support of the course, convincing external verifiers and examiners that levels of competency have been achieved. Students therefore will spend a small part of each working day writing up evidence or calling up photographic images demonstrating practical work undertaken throughout the course. Students are given much guidance and support with any written work and only need very basic I.T. skills to complete their folder.

At 10:30, students have a short mid morning break, with lunch between 12:30 and 1:00pm. A canteen service is available, with many students also bringing a packed lunch.

As the farm has numerous animals offsite, very often a group uses the farm minibus to check animal welfare or to move animals to new locations around Mid Sussex. Going offsite is an enjoyable task for students and helps to add further variety to their day and adds realism to the working environment.

Due to the short break and lunch, students officially finish at 2:45pm. However, many choose to stay on and help with other farm duties, including milking, further adding to their experience and levels of responsibility.

Each day is very different, and we find that students respond equally well to both teaching staff and the working day. It is hugely rewarding to see the personal development of students over the two year course and it is often sad to see students moving on to pastures new. Staff take a great deal of pride in seeing their development and achievements in a range of real life working practices. Mr Wood and Mr Blackholly are long standing and dedicated members of staff who take personal pride in seeing the progress of students whilst on the Work-based Vocational Course.