

Adopting VISI and Edgecam is ‘Massive’ As College Moves Into New Era

Kirklees College in the UK recently started its second term after installing 35 seats of VISI CAD/CAM software to ensure apprentices are fully trained on 5-axis machining – which lecturers say is absolutely vital to the future of manufacturing in the area.

Its School of Engineering moved into new purpose-built £7.5m premises in the Summer of 2012 and also invested in more CNC machinery. They now have a total of 13 machines from a variety of manufacturers including Johnford, Haas and Hurco, with pride-of-place being a new Hurco 5-axis mill.



Realising they needed the very latest technology to get the best from those machines they upgraded from just using PEPS-Mill and Wire, and added VISI Machining 5-Axis, VISI Modelling, VISI Machining 2D and 3D, and VISI’s sister software, Edgecam, all from the Vero stable.

CNC lecturer Paul Lindley says VISI’s advanced 5-axis milling solutions are essential for the next phase of the College’s technical development. “We’ve had 4-axis machining for a few years, and an adaptor for one machine, but this is the next step in keeping up with the technology that’s becoming increasingly popular amongst local companies to take their businesses to the next level and stay competitive.”



How would he describe the College's move to take on a complete new software suite? "It's massive. Because we used PEPS-Mill and Wire on every course, we've had to rewrite everything we do on the syllabus. It's a massive operation when a college takes on new software on this scale, but it's absolutely the right decision. We really are moving into a new era. I anticipate the relationship between the College and Vero lasting for at least 30 years – I have every confidence it'll see my career out."

Design and Manufacture Curriculum Team Leader Dave Nichols agrees: "We're regarded as one of the region's best colleges for engineering, so we needed software which would keep us at the forefront. Our experience in the world of CAD/CAM and CNC manufacturing tells us the system we've now got is the best there is. The students will gain tremendous benefit from it."



At any one time the College has around 400 students undertaking a variety of courses such as an advanced Level 3 apprenticeship and B-TECH, which leads on to HNC and a degree. Currently there are 110 degree students from the University of Huddersfield on the College's Engineering Appreciation course. All students will be trained on VISI and Edgecam starting in their second year – having first learned about manual machining. Apprentices have one year full-time at the College, with day release for two years. VISI and Edgecam also feature on CNC evening classes, City and Guilds courses, and bespoke courses for companies who want to upskill their workforce.



Dave Nichols says the students' assignments with VISI and Edgecam are geared towards helping them understand machining processes and improve their programming abilities.