



EPLAN Education

LCA Group supports Coleg Cambria's electrical engineering training programme

LCA Group based in Hawarden, Wales have a long history of recruiting apprentices from Coleg Cambria and identified EPLAN's Education solution as a potentially great opportunity to help local students get on the path to a successful career in engineering.



Customer Application Story



EPLAN provides software and service solutions for electrical, automation and mechatronic engineers. Founded in 1984 and owned by the international Friedhelm Loh Group, EPLAN is now one of the world's leading design software solutions with more than 50,000 customers, supported by local teams based in more than 50 countries.

The company is committed to encouraging and supporting new entrants into the engineering profession, offering its software free of charge to higher education colleges and universities to help support apprenticeship training. The only cost to the college is an annual charge for access to both the expert team on the EPLAN helpdesk, access to the EPLAN Data Portal, and for annual software updates.

EPLAN's Coleg Cambria & LCA Partnership

After working with EPLAN since 2017 and establishing a strong relationship, EPLAN's offer to higher education establishments was brought to the LCA Group's attention by their account manager, Simon Jackson. From there, and in a UK first, LCA Group and Coleg Cambria agreed that the college would use EPLAN in their upcoming courses, and that LCA Group would financially support the annual charge for students to gain access to EPLAN support, which includes software updates and helpdesk facilities, for the next 5 years.

Coleg Cambria is a higher education college with six sites across North East Wales. Rated Excellent by Estyn, Coleg Cambria is one of the highest performing colleges in Wales, and it's anticipated that more than 200 students each year, five engineering courses (BEng, HNC, BTEC Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Enhanced and Extended groups) plus IMA (Day Release) will benefit from this partnership.

In addition to software and support being provided, EPLAN will also be providing lesson plan materials to ensure that students have an identical learning experience to that which EPLAN provides direct to its customers, and full training on the software for the course lecturer.

Teaching students to use ECAD (electrical computer aided design) software is a new venture for the college – and a relatively new development for UK engineering. Prior to EPLAN's software, electrical engineers had to use mechanical engineering CAD (computer aided design) packages to create their designs. EPLAN's software offers a bespoke system, with a proven capability to increase efficiency and facilitate an easier path between design and production.

Dan Jones, Lecturer in Electrical Engineering, at Coleg Cambria IoT advises: “Having access to EPLAN will mean our learners now have the opportunity to understand how modern industrial electrical panels are designed. Using an industry-standard ECAD software system will provide them with valuable experience in creating and interpreting industrial panel electrical schematics.”

“Coleg Cambria has a long history of working in partnership with employers across North East Wales and we continue to develop our teaching resources in line with advances in manufacturing technology.”

“We (Coleg Cambria Institute of Technology (IoT)) hope to further develop our training to include advanced fault-finding skills and techniques, in order to better prepare our electrical engineers for the future; EPLAN will undoubtedly assist in this area.”



LCA Group’s EPLAN Implementation

LCA Group is a leading engineering company based in Hawarden, Wales, and can testify to the efficacy of the EPLAN ECAD software having been an EPLAN customer since 2017.

The company has implemented a suite of EPLAN systems during that time including:

- EPLAN Pro Panel. Generates 3D electrical system models, creating a digital twin as the foundation for panel production.
- EPLAN eVIEW. Cloud-based, cross-team system allowing real-time collaboration.
- EPLAN Smart Wiring. Provides engineers with routing, end points, cable designation, plus the size and colour of each wire.

All these solutions interface seamlessly with LCA’s other investment on the shop-floor - its Rittal manufacturing automation systems. The combination has transformed the company’s product development and manufacturing processes, however, the issue the company faces is finding skilled staff to maintain its workforce.

Alan Sheppard, managing director of LCA Group, advises: “Finding the right talent is a perpetual challenge for every business, but for electrical engineering companies like ours there is the additional shift in how we deliver for the requirements of Industry 4.0, and the challenges and opportunities that brings.”

“Our teams will be required to manage systems and data to develop, design, read and understand engineering concepts and systems as well as using this information in ever more automated environments. CAE software packages such as EPLAN will become standard in the very near future and it is critical that those coming into engineering adopt these now so they are industry ready.”

“Full automation is a long way off, if ever truly achievable so we will still need skilled technicians and engineers to use and operate these systems and equipment – and to do the skilled work that can’t be done through automation.”



Coleg Celebrated Software Launch

The EPLAN software and partnership with LCA Group, was unveiled to students at the college's Learning Centre on Thursday, 21 October 2021.

The event included presentations by Alan Sheppard and Nick Tyson, Vice Principal of the college's Institute of Technology. It also provided students with a foretaste of the system's capabilities, including its automated data input, how to create 3D electrical system design models, and developing a digital twin as the foundation for efficient production.

Alan continues: "LCA Group already supports a robust apprenticeship programme to grow the talent and teach the future workforce how to compete in today's environment. The partnership with EPLAN is a first step in a wider LCA Group programme to help now establish even closer ties with the college. We want to also give students additional, first-hand experience of electrical engineering, with visits to our facility, access to our experienced engineers and, of course, the continuation of our apprenticeship scheme."

Ken Christie, EPLAN UK Country Director concludes "the partnership with LCA Group and Coleg Cambria lends itself perfectly to aligning student skillsets with that of current industry trends and requirements. By supporting students with their use of EPLAN software, students will have experience of using relevant tools, therefore building their confidence as they prepare to join the workforce."



EPLAN

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