

skillsNorthern Ireland

7 & 8 November 2018

Titanic Exhibition Centre, Belfast

An exhibitor explains what it's like to be involved in Skills Northern Ireland - "There is nothing else quite like it within Northern Ireland"

The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) exhibited at Skills Northern Ireland and found the experience "invaluable." Dean McCoy was on their stand and explains why they decided to exhibit and what impact the event has had.



Why did you decide to exhibit at Skills Northern Ireland?

Skills NI offers a fantastic opportunity to showcase what CAFRE has to offer to a large number of students over the two days. While we have well established links with all the post primary schools in NI, through careers talks and careers conventions, we don't always get to meet the Year 11 / 12 pupils. Skills NI gives us the opportunity to meet these students and showcase what CAFRE has to offer.

Tell us about your stand at Skills Northern Ireland?

CAFRE had a small stand and we used pull-ups and a plasma screen to show the range of courses on offer. In addition prospectuses and course leaflets were available. In order to encourage the young people to engage with us we encouraged pupils to "try their hand" at a practical skill – laying paving stones.

What is the benefit of attending Skills Northern Ireland as an exhibitor?

There is nothing else quite like it within Northern Ireland for Year 12 students. The opportunity to reach so many pupils in the one place is invaluable and a great start to our season. We visit many schools up and down the country over the coming months and many pupils will mention to us that they first saw us at the Skills NI event. We also got to speak at one of the industry insight talks that are held at regular intervals throughout the two days. Teachers also approach us and ask if they can visit any of our Campuses or if we can come out to them for a Careers Talk. Meeting with these influencers is invaluable to us. All the emails and phone calls in the world cannot beat shaking someone's hand and talking to them face to face.

Did you have any meaningful conversations with any visitors that you can remember?

Too many to mention! From the minute the doors open until the end of the day we speak to so many prospective students that it really is impossible to think of one particular conversation. However, I can tell you about a student who I have since met at our own Open Day and at his school. On both occasions he told me that he had a go at laying paving at our stand at Skills NI!!