



The Uniquely Abled Academy® Replication Guide

Element 2: Establish and Manage the Training Program

Exhibit 2.7NL: Identify and recruit an educational institution as a Host School for a UAA

Publication Date: July 29, 2023

Summary:

A Uniquely Abled Academy (UAA) is often built on an existing skills training facility. Particularly for CNC operation, it would be prohibitively expensive to establish a CNC operator training facility.

Thus, an early step is to identify and recruit an educational institution that will provide the skills training, i.e., training in CNC operation and host the UAA program.

Many community/junior colleges have recognized the need for CNC operators and have established CNC training classes. Thus, identifying community colleges that have CNC training is a good start.

Then determine whether CNC instruction is available during the weekdays (the typical time the uniquely abled population is available). In general, one would like instruction to be available 4 days a week, around 8am to 3pm. Of the community colleges with CNC instruction, many have treated it as an extension course, and thus classes are often in the evenings and weekends, leaving the CNC machines idle during the day. This is an ideal situation for a UAA.

Finally, determine the level of support by the educational institution for a UAA, including their support for a uniquely abled population, holding Project Team meetings, etc.

Benefits to Host School

- Increase in student population
- Tuition income
- Recognition by state agencies. Typically, there has been increased emphasis by funding sources that educational institutions serve challenged populations, e.g., those with autism.
- In some states, the funding agencies are increasingly asking for evidence that the school's programs lead to employment. The UAA can easily demonstrate.
- Positive relationships with local businesses.
- Often extensive positive TV and print press.



Needs of the UAA

- Existence of a CNC operator training program.
- The availability of CNC machines during the day is ideal.
- Demand for CNC operators within 1 hour travel time (by car or public transportation).
- Supply of potential students living within 1 hour travel time (by car or public transportation).

Notes:

- The Host School receives its normal tuition. No financial contribution is needed from the Host School.
- A UAA program is typically 4-5 days a week over a semester, although there is no requirement that its timing match that of a semester start and end time.
- Each day is typically 8-3 or 9-4 to start having the students acclimated to a full day's work.
- The UAA curriculum is normally created based on the educational institution's existing courses, although taught in a different timeline. Where a course might be normally scheduled two or three times a week, the courses for a UAA are joined together in a program. Thus, a course might be completely covered over a number of weeks.
- A typical UAA curriculum includes safety, blueprint reading, metrology (use of calipers, measurement devices), manual machines, introduction to CNC machine programming, CNC mills, and CNC lathes.
- Ideally, but not required, is that the UAA program result in industry recognized certifications, e.g., NIMS.
- Cohorts typically range in size from 7 to 15 students, size generally determined by the number of CNC machines. A significantly larger cohort and may become distracting to students.
- Schools often start their UAA with a cohort of 5-7 students as a pilot program.
- The staff-student ratio should be around 1-5. Staff can include one instructor and multiple Teaching Assistants.
- The curriculum includes Job Readiness training, which may be provided by the Host School or one of the UAA Project Team partners and takes place at the Host School.
- The UAP provides resources to help CNC instructors learn how to teach the UAA population. Our experience is that this does not take a lot of time, and that CNC instructors really appreciate the students' focus and desire to learn.
- Often the UAA Project Team meets at the Host School for its monthly 2-hour meeting.