The process to identify the appropriate furniture supplier for the Technology Hub project started in 2012. EEF researched a number of furniture suppliers and products at other training facilities within the EEF to gain a better understanding of their requirements.

Due to the nature of the centre, the existing EEF furniture suppliers were not suitable for an apprentice training environment. Identifying a furniture solution that was robust and up to the rigours of day to day student, activity-based working whilst still accommodating the technology requirements of a modern classroom environment, was key.

The Solution

The Technology Hub opened its doors in September 2016 and incorporates a number of learning zones dedicated to developing key technological skills, including robotics, electronics and rapid prototyping. It boasts an industry standard CAD (computer aided design) suite, an automated factory and an industry standard tool room.

The move keeps the centre at the forefront of new manufacturing and engineering technologies, ensuring that apprentices continue to learn both traditional and the most cutting-edge techniques to ensure that the Midlands continues to hold onto the British manufacturing crown.
It was important to EEF to source products created in the UK to support British manufacturing, therefore they were keen to find a local supplier in the Midlands. Dalen TOP-TEC had an existing relationship with EEF and had successfully demonstrated their ability to design and manufacturer furniture that allows for fully integrated AV. TOP-TEC had provided a range of Versatile Electric Flip-top Desks to the EEF’s first training centre at Nexus Point.

Consistency was important, as this was the second training centre it would important to use the same furniture as Nexus Point. Therefore, the decision was made to use TOP-TEC desking throughout each classroom.

A champion of maximising space, the Versatile Electric Flip-top desks allows students to partake in a wide range of activities switching from written study to IT activities at the push of a button. The desks provide a secure workstation with a flip-top that provides access to monitor screen, mouse and keyboard when required but could also be safely concealed when not in use, allowing a clear workstation surface for written work.

IT security was also a key factor within the classroom environments due to a PC distributed throughout the centre. TOP-TEC had to consider that different PC sizes required security cages suspended from the workstations and created a ‘one size fits all’ security cage to support different size PCs.
TOP-TEC demonstrated a range of products to meet the number of different requirements that EEF had, including different teaching areas where training disciplines varied. At each stage of the discussions TOP-TEC were able to identify particular products to meet their needs.

The Outcome

“The service and support from Dalen TOP-TEC has always been excellent from the initial sales and product demonstrations through to purchase, supply and install processes. 2016 presented us with particular issues as the whole project was condensed into a very challenging timescale.

This resulted in our working closely with Dalen TOP-TEC to coordinate a delivery and installation programme that allowed us to assemble and position furniture almost as soon as our main contractor would allow us access to specific classrooms or other training areas. I certainly would have no hesitation in recommending Dalen TOP-TEC as a supplier of furniture for environments for the EEF.”

Ian Christie
EEF Manufacturers Organisation