



## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

### **National Skills Academy for Nuclear Approved by Government**

An employer-led proposal has won government approval from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) for the creation of a National Skills Academy for Nuclear.

The announcement made by the Skills Minister David Lammy, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007, follows the evaluation of a detailed business plan which was submitted to the DIUS in May 2007. The business plan has been completed by a dedicated project team led by Project Director Jean Llewellyn, and steered by an employer-led Shadow Board in close consultation with Nuclear employers across each of the regions, Scotland and Wales.

The Skills Academy, will be a wholly owned subsidiary of Cogent, the Sector Skills Council for the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, nuclear, oil and gas, petroleum and polymer industries. It will assist Nuclear employers in tackling the current and future skills barriers and challenges facing the Nuclear industry not just in relation to the Government's £65bn clean-up programme but also for waste management, defence, fuel processing and enrichment, power production and to ensure the sector has the skills and additional resources available for potential new build.

The National Skills Academy for Nuclear will play a transformational role for the sector. Using the Nuclear Credit Framework developed in partnership with Cogent, the Skills Academy will develop a standardised and coordinated approach to education, training and skills development in the nuclear sector. From its head office in Cumbria, the Skills Academy will operate via a network of Regional Training Clusters, developing and accrediting local high quality provision, and creating "centres of excellence" for the delivery of nuclear specialised training, enhanced where appropriate to respond to specific skills gaps as identified by employers. First courses will start in early 2008 and will create a framework for career progression and development across the sector.

Work has already commenced on what will be the flagship centre of this National Skills Academy. The Nuclear Academy development in West Cumbria is a collaboration/partnership between the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA), the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), West Lakes Renaissance, British Nuclear Group and the National Skills Academy for Nuclear. The facility will be a dedicated centre of excellence and innovation that will provide a wide range of education and training facilities to the nuclear sector, alongside business support services.

**David Bonser, Chief Executive of BNFL and Chair of Academy Board said:**

*"I am absolutely delighted that approval has been given for a National Skills Academy for the nuclear sector. The Skills Academy means that employers will be able to determine the programmes on offer and to shape the content, design and delivery of training and development, taking intelligence-based decisions. The industry has some unique requirements and the Skills Academy will ensure that these are met in consistent ways as we move forward into the future."*

**Jean Llewellyn Project Director of the National Skills Academy Nuclear said:**

*"Throughout the planning stage, nuclear employers have been at the forefront of this National Skills Academy. It is their Skills Academy; which has been developed to meet their needs, and going forward, it will continue to be steered by an employer-led Board, which will ensure the nuclear industry has the skills it needs to continue as a World-Class industry."*

**Mike Graham, National Secretary, Prospect North – Union representative on the Shadow Board.**

*"The nuclear trade unions have had major concerns about the high age profile in the industry and the ability to resource not only nuclear decommissioning but also the planned nuclear renaissance."*

*The Skills Academy has the ability to bridge the skills gap and set common standards rather than rely on the present multiplicity of standards; the Business Plan is a credit to the wide cross section of employers, and the unions who have collectively got their act together with a coherent strategy. The Business Plan is a first class piece of work which will help deliver a highly skilled workforce for the Nuclear industry"*

**Joanna Woolf, Cogent CEO said :**

*"The go ahead for the National Skills Academy for Nuclear is excellent news for industry and for its future workforce, and we acknowledge the tremendous efforts of Jean and the business planning team. Thanks also go the Skills Academy employer-led Board for their inspiration and leadership and to all those companies who have shown faith and commitment to the project and also contributed financially."*

*She added: "It is vital for our industries to be able to recruit and equip people with the right competencies and skills and Cogent's National Skills Academies have the expertise, the authority and the close relationship with employers to make this happen."*

**David Lammy, Skills Minister said;**

*"It is great news that we are able to welcome the Nuclear sector to the National Skills Academy Network, and this moves us a step closer to reaching our 2008 target for National Skills Academies. I congratulate the development team for the National Skills Academy for Nuclear in meeting the rigorous criteria required for approval, and I welcome the proposed investment commitment from employers. National Skills Academies are vital for the future productivity of this country as they address the real need for industry-specific training that is developed by employers and delivered in a way that best meets individual sector requirements."*

Employer & Partner Support

Employers and partners who have already provided financial support to the Academy include BNFL, Fluor Ltd, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, NWDA, Serco, UKAEA and Washington Group International.

The Skills Academy Shadow Board has representatives from multinational organisations, large employers, SME and Unions including AMEC, BNFL, British Energy, British Nuclear Group, Centronic, Doosan Babcock, Fluor Ltd, MOD, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Prospect, Serco and UKAEA.

**-Ends-**

**Notes to editors**

1. The National Skills Academy network will be the new gold standard for industry training, aiming to improve productivity and tackle skills shortages across England. Each National Skills Academy puts employers at the heart of skills training for their sector: they influence the curriculum to ensure it reflects employers' needs; get involved in the Academy's management; set standards and influence strategic direction.

National Skills Academies aim to:

- deliver high quality training for a specific sector
- provide first-class teaching in a modern learning environment
- be centres of innovation and creativity in skills development for their sector
- be flexible, sustaining the closest possible relationships with employers of all sizes

- build specialist networks with a range of other learning providers, so that new thinking, new methods and higher standards are shared, to the benefit of learners and employers.

The National Skills Academy network was initiated by the Government to address the need for a world class workforce with better skills than ever before. It is managed by the Learning and Skills Council working in partnership with the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills, (DIUS), the Sector Skills Development Agency and the Department for Business, Enterprise, and Regulatory Reform, (DBERR),.

For more information see: [www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk](http://www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk)

## **2. Notes to Editors**

Cogent is the Sector Skills Council for the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, nuclear, oil and gas, petroleum and polymer industries. It is the voice of employers in these sectors and is working with them to create a skills environment that businesses need to be innovative, competent, productive and sustainable.

[www.cogent-ssc.com](http://www.cogent-ssc.com)

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## **The development of the NSA concept**

The NSA policy initiative was first announced in the 2005 Skills White Paper which included a commitment to establish a network of Academies covering each major sector of the economy. The White Paper referred to the need to build on existing models, and it also gave a commitment that employers were going to be given the lead role in developing Academies. The White Paper said that beyond some general principles the Government 'will not prescribe what an Academy should be' and 'it will be for the employers in each sector to take the initiative in working out the approach that will best meet their needs'.

3. The Nuclear Academy is a brand new facility to be built on the Lilyhall Industrial Estate in West Cumbria. The facility will be a dedicated centre of

excellence and innovation. It will provide a wide range of education and training facilities alongside business supports service.

**Notes and Contact Details**

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