

## Working Higher: Foundation Degrees for the science-based industries

### Workforce development for the real world

**Cogent the Sector Skills Council for the science-using industries is supporting the development and roll-out of modular, work-based Foundation Degrees (FDs) for the chemical, polymer, petrochemical, bioscience and nuclear industries.**

The £3m project piloting bespoke courses for the technical workforce is being led by the University of Hull. Entitled 'Working Higher' it is a collaboration between Cogent, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Physical Sciences Subject Centre, the University of Hull and Semta. Working Higher is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).



### What do Foundation Degrees offer employers?

- Improving the skills base and flexibility of the workforce means increased productivity
- They allow your employees to continue working while they learn on a modular basis, at the higher level your company needs, at a pace to suit you
- FDs are shaped by employers and are designed to meet current and future skills needs
- With FDs the workplace is considered to be a learning environment just as much as the lecture theatre
- FDs support and build on existing industry recognised qualifications
- Instead of looking outside the company to close skills gaps, employers can grow talent internally
- Training recognises and rewards employees and supports recruitment and retention

### What do Foundation Degrees offer employees?

- Foundation Degrees can be delivered around existing work patterns and commitments
- They offer a work-based career path which is very attractive to young people looking at a vocational route
- FDs are a natural progression route for people with work experience or vocational qualifications
- FDs unlock the potential of people and value the practical alongside the theoretical
- Importantly skills can be applied in the workplace
- FDs develop important management and leadership skills as well as training employees to deal with new technology.

# What are Foundation Degrees?

Foundation Degrees combine technical and work-based skills with academic knowledge. They represent a cost-effective way of developing the high level skills employers increasingly need for the Cogent science-using industries. The Working Higher Foundation Degrees will consist of a number of core common modules, as well as bespoke elements for individual sectors and employees, and will be a mixture of university and individualised work-based learning. The FDs are being designed with employer champions in collaboration with the following universities:

- University of Hull (Petrochemicals)
- University of Portsmouth (Nuclear)
- University of Central Lancashire (Nuclear)
- University of Kent (Bioscience)
- London Metropolitan University (Polymers)
- Manchester Metropolitan University (Chemicals)

## How are Foundation Degrees delivered?

Foundation Degrees are delivered in innovative and flexible ways, often designed around the requirements of the workplace and the commitments of the employee. Credit bearing modules can be studied flexibly and usually involve a blend of learning opportunities, including:

- Distance-learning
- E-learning
- Local delivery
- Credit based assessment
- Workplace-learning

## Who's eligible?

The entry qualifications for Foundation Degrees take into account relevant work experience and in many cases don't insist on formal educational qualifications. Much of the assessment is through portfolio building or work related assignments. Work based learning and application of skills in the workplace is the common thread.

## Step on, Step off

FDs offer a step on, step off approach to flexible provision. For employers it's recognised that the objective is to have competent, highly trained employees. Modules will be packaged with particular learning outcomes as the goal, so that that the employee develops and captures new competences as they work towards their qualification.

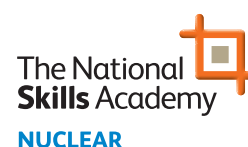


For more information on on Working Higher visit our website, or contact us on:

**01925 515 200**

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

Cogent SSC, Unit 5, Mandarin Court,  
Centre Park, Warrington WA1 1GG



The strategic skills alliance for the Science-based Industries

Pauline Madden  
Cogent  
Higher Education  
Curriculum Manager



*The Working Higher Foundation Degree Framework will allow learners to develop the competencies needed by industry to improve performance and productivity. By bundling learning into bite-sized achievable awards employers get tremendous benefits including transferability of skills across industry, the ability to attract the right employees with a solid training offer and increase staff retention through reward.*