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The Sector Skills Council for
Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, Nuclear,
Oil and Gas, Petroleum and Polymers

cogent

Cogent Focus

SKILLS, QUALIFICATIONS, COMPETENCE AND INDUSTRY STANDARDS



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From the CEO



Cogent is now well on the way with the roll out of its Sector Skills Agreement (SSA), which is making sure Cogent employers get the skills they need to prosper.

We are designing a range of high-level products and services to develop industry workforce skills which are the result of this major

research – during which we conducted 100s of interviews with Cogent companies around the UK. Our work is also bringing on board all the key stakeholders in education and funding, so it's a fully integrated approach – one which has been lacking until now.

Our skills plan for industry has been given even greater prominence by the recommendations of the Leitch Review which is giving all those who are involved in delivery the impetus to sharpen their offer. Becoming demand-led has become something of a mantra: one that the education and training infrastructure is taking to heart, with the input of SSCs like Cogent.

Helping, supporting and collaborating with organisations in the education infrastructure are employer-led Skills Academies. Cogent has been successful with expressions of interest for Academies for the nuclear and process industries. These will focus on employer-endorsed vocational learning and play a transformational role in driving up standards in learning delivery. They will also make sure that training is delivered in the way organisations and their employees actually want it – that might mean “bite-sized chunks”, via a Foundation Degree or in a Centre of Excellence. Indeed the options are as varied as the employers we serve.

Another important part of delivering training that is led by employer needs is an independent brokerage service designed to support employers in analysing and meeting their skills needs. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have now launched skills brokerage under the Train to Gain brand. As well as providing a skills analysis this service will give advice about local training suppliers and public funding – and it will drive up demand for skills to a more ambitious level. A major advertising campaign is now promoting this new and exciting offer to UK employers.

The skills and education landscape is in a state of unprecedented ferment. The stakes are high: skills gaps and shortages are the biggest challenge facing the industries in the Cogent sector. Employers are now competing on innovation in products and services and that means improving the skills base has become an imperative in our science-based footprint.

Hundreds of employers are closely involved in all our plans, supporting our work to identify sectoral and regional priorities. Inside this issue you'll find an update on our bespoke programmes. There are many ways to join in with our work – through our networks, at consultation events and via our regional experts. If you want to become a member of Cogent and get involved in making it happen go to our website www.cogent-ssc.com.

Joanna Woolf
CEO

Skills Academies set

The business planning phase for the employer-led National Skills Academies for Nuclear and for the Process Industries is now well underway. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) gave the green light to an expression of interest for both National Skills Academies back in October 2006, with plans for them to go live at the end of 2007. Cogent submitted the bids working with and on behalf of employers. Here we update on the work going on at both Academies.

Process now in business

The National Skills Academy for the Process Industries (NSAPI) project team is headed up by Project Director Craig Crowther who is being supported by an employer-led Shadow Board. Project team members John Browne, Chris Bayliss, Liz Rooney and Beverley Robinson are now on board.

Employers are already taking the lead in the management of NSAPI and a share of the funding during start-up. The Academy means that employers in the process industries will be able to drive the skills agenda and design skills development programmes specific to their needs on a national scale and have them delivered in a way that suits them.

The NSAPI Board is steering the business planning process and the second meeting took place in February. Chris Horton of Linpac Plastics has taken on the role of Chair while Paul Booth of SABIC UK has been appointed Deputy Chair. Craig said: “The increased competition in all sectors from overseas producers has been a key driver for the

Nuclear moves ahead

Work has also commenced on the in depth business planning phase for the National Skills Academy for Nuclear. The project team is headed by Project Director Jean Llewellyn and steered by an employer-led Shadow Board. She is supported by a project team of Jo Tipa (Business Manager), Tricia Austin (Nuclear Manager), Liz Rooney (Research Manager) and Mary Kinsella (Communications/ Administration).

Jean Llewellyn presented at the launch of The Nuclear Academy, Workington, Cumbria on 9 March. The launch marked the start of the building work on a new world-class centre of excellence for nuclear industry training and business support. The Centre is due to open in September 2008. A total of £15m funding has been committed to the Nuclear Academy which includes donations from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWRDA), the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and the British Nuclear Group. It is hoped that The Nuclear Academy will become a northwest flagship for the National Academy.

Employer consultation events are underway for the Southwest, Southeast and Northwest regions. These will identify the key training and skills needs facing nuclear employers including power generation, defence, de-commissioning and potential new build. The events will also examine the current

Delivering our aims

Cogent's employer-led action plan is based on its assessment of industry skills needs, as well as current training and education provision. Five key skills programmes are now in place. Underpinning these are four clear strategies essential to the delivery of our strategic aims:

- Cogent Career Pathways
- Cogent Apprentices
- Cogent Upskill
- Cogent Competence Assurance
- Cogent Passports
- Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS)
- Research and Policy Strategy
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Employer Engagement and Membership

To download our strategy go to www.cogent-ssc.com

to drive up standards

Academy as now, more than ever, a higher level of workforce skills can be a key differentiator in value terms where companies cannot compete on price."

Shadow Board member Tony Birch, former Site Director of BASF on Teesside and a member of the North East Process Industry Cluster's (NEPIC) Leadership Team said: "As an employer-led organisation, with a national remit, NSAPI will provide leadership and an injection of pace into the upskilling of our existing workforce and ensure provision of specific training modules for our sector members based on the

The National Skills Academy



PROCESS INDUSTRIES

industry Gold Standard."

To get in touch with the team or for information on the Skills Academy contact Craig Crowther on 07753 725226 or Bev Robinson on 07789 722170; email addresses for the Team are initial.surname@process.nscademy.co.uk.



Three of the new process team, l-r Craig, Beverley and John.

provision of skills development and training and identify what the future gaps and needs are.

Jean Llewellyn recently accepted a cheque for the development of the academy from Washington Group International. Jean said: "Contributions from employers such as this from Washington Group International clearly demonstrate the strong commitment of nuclear employers to the future of the Academy and the importance they place on skills development and training."

Iain Irving, West Cumbria Operations Director of Washington Group International added: "We are committed to ensuring that

The National Skills Academy



NUCLEAR

the nuclear industry in the UK has a workforce equipped for the challenges of new nuclear capability and the safe and effective clean-up of old nuclear activity. The National Skills Academy for Nuclear has a key role to play in this and we see this contribution as just the first step in our cooperation with it."

If you would like more information on the National Skills Academy for Nuclear, please contact phone the team on 01925 607044, or e-mail enquiries@nuclear.nscademy.co.uk



Commitment on show: (l-r) Jean Llewellyn Project Director for the National Skills Academy for Nuclear, Patrick Ryan a graduate Project Engineer with Washington Group International and Iain Irving Operations Director West Cumbria Washington Group International.

Get online for Cogent careers

Cogent's one-stop-shop web-based careers information advice and guidance centre is close to its official launch. The new portal has involved close liaison with the Cogent industries.

This dedicated website presents the roles, qualification requirements and career pathways associated with the main manufacturing categories in management, scientific, technical and professional roles across the Cogent sector.

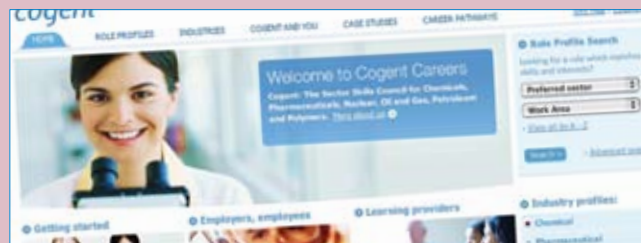
It provides access to real job profiles, case studies and the pathways are mapped out with entry levels, qualifications and industry standards. It will include relevant courses and providers, and in the future will

offer kite-marking of provision.

James Murdock, Cogent Director of Education and Qualifications said, "Cogent has worked with employers to define the skills, competencies and qualifications required for a world-class sector. Here individual companies can benchmark themselves against these industry standards-based roles and structure their job design and qualifications requirements accordingly."

The site is designed to meet the needs of employers, employees, those interested in a career in the Cogent industries as well as careers advisers and providers.

To see the new website go to www.cogent-ssc.com and click on career pathways pilot in the red box.



TUC launch for Cogent Skills Agreement

In January Cogent launched its employer-led Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) at the TUC's headquarters at Congress House in London, together with unionlearn, the TUC's learning and skills organisation who joined forces with Cogent by signing up to and endorsing the SSA. The unprecedented agreement is based on a two-year investigation into skills gaps and shortages, aimed at identifying what training inputs are needed to tackle the skills shortfall facing the Cogent industries.

Cogent CEO, Joanna Woolf, said, "the SSA is an unprecedented industry-led tool for getting employers committed to the drive for skills and will support all those who develop and fund education and training to work towards delivering skills around a common and agreed set of objectives."

Frances O'Grady deputy secretary general of the TUC, attending the launch, said: "The Cogent SSA recognises that trade unions' experience in the areas of equality and diversity, health and safety, and workplace learning is extremely important. The depth of the Cogent Apprentices'



Signing up to the SSA: Frances O'Grady deputy secretary general of the TUC, right Joanna Woolf, CEO Cogent

programme will give young people, older people and those who have not traditionally thought about a career in this industry, the chance to learn and enter a profession. This is a real partnership that will deliver real change and allow those working in the sector to unlock their potential."

Joanna added: "Skills gaps are one of the biggest challenges facing the Cogent industries. The UK will never match the low-labour costs of our fast emerging competitor economies. We must now compete on quality and innovation and that means improving our skills base. We have a number of key programmes in place to achieve this and it is now crucial that all parties work together to deliver them."

£1 million project funding secured to support industry upskilling

In the first month of the new year Cogent secured £1million in public funding in order to expedite a number of projects in its programme aimed at upskilling the UK workforce in its strategically important sector.

Joanna Woolf said, "we are delighted that we have been able to secure the funding to drive these projects forward and we will be working closely with employers to ensure that their employees fully benefit from what's on offer.

Peter Jackson, Managing Director of Reaxa and Shadow Board member for the National Skills Academy for the Process Industries said: "I hope the NSA will offer new solutions for SMEs to be able to improve the skills and knowledge of our workforce."

The projects are as follows:

National Skills Academy for the Process Industries

The Learning and Skills Council is providing up to £600,000 to fund the development of the Skills Academy for the chemicals, pharmaceuticals and polymer industries. It is intended to serve process companies which combined have a turnover of £67.1 billion and a Gross Value Added in excess of £23 billion, which is over 15% of total UK manufacturing GVA.

Chris Banks, Chairman of the Learning and Skills Council said: "It is a fact that having a motivated and skilled workforce improves the productivity of individuals and the performance of business overall. National Skills Academies put employers right at the heart of developing high-quality and relevant training programmes to improve the skills of the workforce for their own sector. The commitment of so many top employers to date has been impressive; this is because the National Skills Academies provide a golden opportunity for employers and Government."

Trialing a modular approach to NVQs

Cogent has secured over £150,000 from the QCA as part of its Vocational Qualification Reform Programme. Cogent employers have said that they need a system that is practical, cost effective, simple to operate and supports the existing qualifications that are endorsed by the sector.

This funded project relates to Cogent's Upskill project and will test out a modular "bite-sized" approach to undertaking NVQs in Polymers at Level 2 and in Chemicals, Petrochemicals and Pharmaceuticals at Level 3. The overall aim is to improve the access and uptake of these qualifications. These modular, individually accredited programmes will also reflect the requirements of the Cogent "Gold Standard" for the job roles in the sector. The Gold Standard is defining the skills, competencies and qualifications required for a world-class process industry.



South East composites training course

The South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA) is providing in the region of £200,000 to fund an important training programme that meets the needs of the composites industry, a high-growth, hi-tech sector which is critical to the economic success of the region and which sits within Cogent's footprint. Employers in the sector have a pressing demand for the training, which is not currently supplied by any of the local providers. This project also links to Cogent's Upskill programme.

The programme will address skill shortages at Level 3 and above. Cogent will work with partners (Isle of Wight College, Southampton City College and composites employers) to develop a specific qualification for Composite Technologies. This will be rolled out across the South East which is the home to over 170 organisations associated with composites. Composites are used in, for example, automotive manufacture and can reduce weight by up to 30%, improve corrosion and reduce fuel consumption.



Young scientists key to the UK's future

In March more than 100 scientists attended a reception held by the Prime Minister Tony Blair in recognition of the vital contribution that young scientists, engineers and researchers make to the UK's economic prosperity and quality of life.

The event, which was part of National Science and Engineering Week, celebrated scientists who inspire other young people to become the scientists of tomorrow.

Many of those attending the reception were Science and

Engineering Ambassadors who provide enormously valuable support to teachers and pupils across the UK, bringing into the classroom real-life examples of exciting work in science, technology, engineering and maths.

The Prime Minister said: "Science is vitally important to the future of Britain. We have to be a magnet for scientific endeavour, attracting the best people and turning scientific knowledge into commercial enterprise."

The Cogent industries need young people to embrace science and Cogent is working with

employers to promote careers in science as an exciting prospect.

Tony Blair, commenting on those

in attendance added: "These scientists provide the advice and practical examples to truly inspire."



Putting employers in the £80 billion driving seat

At the end of last year Cogent wholeheartedly endorsed the recommendations outlined in the Treasury-led Leitch Review of Skills, urging the Government to move forward quickly in implementing them, so that the UK makes much swifter progress on its journey to become a world-leader in skills. Lord Leitch said realising these ambitions would result in a potential net benefit of at least £80 billion over 30 years.

Joanna Woolf, said: "In recommending the further strengthening of the role of SSCs like Cogent, Lord Leitch has recognised that Sector Skills Councils are set up and well placed to articulate the needs of employers. Now we need to see action – particularly when it comes to further integrating the business agenda into FE and HE."

The Department of Education and Skills (DfES) recently announced proposals to consult on these sweeping reforms to seek views on

what this will mean in practice for the FE system.

Higher and Further Education Minister Bill Rammell said: "Our proposal is simple – place the power to choose in the hands of the individual and the employer, and empower and enable the best of providers to engage and excite more learners and employers."

"Our Further Education system is delivering ever greater success.

Our sweeping reforms are renewing its economic mission and making plain its central role in equipping people with the skills they need for productive sustainable employment in a modern economy."

Mark Haysom, Chief Executive, Learning and Skills Council added: "The LSC/DfES document sets out how we plan to build on the great successes already achieved and respond to the challenges set

out by the Leitch Review.

"Greater engagement of employers is also a critical part of this to ensure they are investing in training and using skills productively. Employer investment must match the best in the world."

The document, 'Delivering World-class Skills in a demand led System' is available on the DfES website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations

Employer views on Cogent's role:

Dr Michael Cross, Cogent Board member and polymer industry expert

"Leitch is another positive step in the UK's skills journey, and takes us forward in several ways. First, it starts the process of strengthening the employers' voice and helps to align supply with demand. Second, it helps to focus investment in skills programmes of greater relevance to employees and employers. And third, it clearly builds on Andrew Foster's review of FE and the development of the Skills for Business Network, so we have some real continuity of purpose and direction."

Stuart Harrison, UKAEA HR Business Compliance Manager said:

"Cogent has set up a Sector Skills Agreement with the supply-side in the education world. It has done this by assessing what skills the nuclear industry needs, what education and training is available, working out what the gaps are and producing an action plan with the education supply-side in order to deliver it."

No train no gain

Train to Gain is the new service from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) that provides free, specialist, impartial advice to employers. 21,000 employers are already reaping the benefits of the service which assesses what skills and training employers need and matches these with an appropriate training provider.

A Skills Broker will work with the company to work out what it needs based on a clear understanding of individual business goals. They will source suitable courses and funding available, and agree a tailored training package, with training delivered at a time and place to suit the business – including on site.

The service is free to all employers and some training may also have subsidised funding from Government – for example first full Level 2 qualifications, Apprenticeships, Advanced Apprenticeships and some Level 3 training. Each Broker is an independent specialist advisor trained to national quality standards who acts 100% in the interests of the business.

CASE STUDY: a sign of the times

Signature Ltd faced a business challenge: it needed to develop the skills of the workforce to comply with the Highway's Agency's mandatory standards of competence relating to the foundations, posts, sign plates, faces, construction and location of traffic signs.

Signature Ltd, based at Oldbury in the West Midlands is part of the wider Signature Group of companies, employing 2000 staff. It is a market leader in illuminated signs, traffic management furniture, equipment and signals. The company approached LSC Black Country after hearing about the Train to Gain Employer Training Pilot. A Skills Broker conducted a company training needs analysis and recommended Walsall College as the most appropriate provider. Nine employees were identified for development in relation to the Agency's standards and the programme moved ahead quickly.

Walsall College was able to implement the whole training and assessment programme at the Signature workplace using the NVQ Level 2 in Sign Making. The programme contained units on health and safety, engraving, spray painting, face design and finishing.

All nine employees who undertook the programme achieved their NVQ certificates at Level 2, funded by the LSC, enabling the company to comply with the Agency's

scheme and the employees to gain nationally recognised qualifications. Signature was delighted with the outcome of the programme and now plans to expand their training programme with Walsall College to further develop the team to progress to supervisory level using NVQ Level 3 Awards.

Stuart Harrison, Signature's Sign Shop Production Manager said: "Signature recognises that investing in people is just as important as product design for any business to succeed in today's competitive market. Continual product training and personal development ensure that our people are proficient in the latest design and manufacturing techniques."

Nigel Whitmarsh, the company's Quality Engineer added: "The NVQ awards are an important part of our training programme. They form part of our National Highways Sector Scheme 9A accreditation."

To find out about the benefits Train to Gain could bring to your company call 08000 15 55 45 or visit: www.traintogain.gov.uk



Fully skilled, the Signature team, from left to right: Ian Saddler, Sean Bradshaw, Michael Burstton, Martin Bassett and Stuart Harrison

Full STEM ahead in the North West

For Cogent and its partners it's clear that there is a need to coordinate the varied approaches that industry has in both informing and enthusing young people about industry and careers choices across the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) sectors.

This is a critical activity for the Cogent sector industries which will need to recruit 1000s of young people with technical and scientific aptitude over the coming years. A big step in bringing more co-ordination around all of this came last October with the publication (jointly by DfES and DTI) of The STEM Programme Report. This set out a framework for tackling this issue.

The Chemicals sector in the North West is already taking a proactive approach to the issue: the Sector Skills & Productivity Alliance (SSPA) has already recognised the importance of an integrated approach. As a result, in January Cogent, Chemicals Northwest and SETNET hosted the first STEM workshop to explore what a 'joined-up' system might look like. Key representatives from industry, schools, and the education-business link



The North West STEM community gathered at Cogent's HQ

communities were present, and a series of lively debates ensued.

The outputs from the day are informing Cogent's plans for its careers portal and the wider STEM strategy and delivery plan in the North West. Mervin Dadd, Cogent Director of External Affairs said, "this is an imperative for Cogent and dovetails with our work to establish our Quexis brand which will simplify access to STEM careers information and promotion. The North West is ideally placed to pilot this."

Quexis is aimed at bringing together education and industry to reinvigorate interest in science and technology; supporting pupils, students and schools with materials; promoting careers in industry and providing

opportunities for work experience.

Cogent and its partners will map the existing careers promotion and information services about its industries. This will help to develop a clearer picture and better access for young people and their advisers

Kevin Burke, Regional Director for SETNET said, "ask 10 teachers what is the best way to enhance their science, technology, engineering or maths curriculum, and you'll get at least 11 different answers. You'll get a similar response from those within industry who want a curriculum relevant to the world of work. This strategy will bring a much greater clarity of approach."

SETNET have agreed to explore the concept of delivering regional

workshops for teachers involved in STEM, and to develop a plan that would show where the expertise and resources lie across North West businesses, education and careers providers and regional stakeholders.

Kevin added: "The North West STEM centre will be established by end of June. The Centre will then map the existing provision of STEM enhancement and enrichment programmes by end of September."

Workshops are taking place around the region over the next 12 months. For more information regarding these or the STEM Support Centre, please contact Kevin Burke, Regional Director SETNET North West kevin.burke@setnet.org.uk

Scottish pupils get set for work

The Highland Skills Fund has awarded Cogent a grant to develop and implement a "Preparation for Work Programme".

The programme forms part of Cogent's work around Career Pathways and is aimed at senior secondary pupils who intend leaving school to take their place in the world of work.

The schools specifically targeted are in the rural communities of the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland.

Preparation For Work will

take the form of an interactive workshop comprising psychometric testing, occupational personality questionnaires, preparing and writing a CV, completing an application form, taking part in a mock interview and receiving feedback.

Walter Williamson, Cogent Skills Director said: "This is an ideal opportunity for young people in the rural communities of the Islands to become better equipped to enter the world of work that will hopefully lead to a bright and secure future for those who take part."



Welsh skills plan underway

Cogent's industry skills profile project for the chemical refining, storage and polymers sectors in South Wales, developed in partnership with the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and Skills (part of the Welsh Assembly Government) has now identified the critical skills gaps faced by the sector in the region.

Mike Lynham Cogent Skills Director for Wales said: "We have asked Cogent employers in South Wales to give us their in-depth views on their future skills and training needs, and we will be using the results to develop an action plan for the region."

The survey findings support Cogent's strategic plans for the footprint nationally, with upskilling seen as most important to the region's employers, followed by industry attractiveness then competency around Health and Safety.

Employers said that upskilling around supervisory training and IT skills was a pressing concern, followed by new skills for operations and business improvement techniques.

Mike added: "The industry is also

struggling to recruit skilled people and Cogent will promote and help to develop local apprenticeships into these industries."

For more information contact mike.lynham@cogent-ssc.com



Pioneering passport scheme for industry

Cogent is developing sector-wide "passport" cover for the industries in its footprint. The pioneering project is one of the outcomes of Cogent's Sector Skills Agreement, (SSA) which showed that employers are concerned about the skills base of the contractor workforce.

The Cogent Passport will be an easy to use, web-based service for individuals to assess, record and develop their skills and provide a transferable record of their training. The first phase is focusing on nuclear, where the need for a common and transferable site induction training (SIT) standard was identified by employers. Cogent has now drawn up a first draft of the standard.

Cogent conducted a survey of existing passports which revealed a wide range of practice and scope, everything from a record of completion of a single training course, to a comprehensive competence management system.

John Haddon, Project Manager Passports said, "a wide range of passport provision is available today and Cogent will build, cost effectively, on the excellence that currently exists. We will work jointly with a provider to deliver a

scheme that best matches what industry needs."

The National Skills Academy for Nuclear is the natural vehicle to deliver the industry passport and the NSAN Project team and Cogent are working together to roll it out as the Academy is being developed.

OPITO, the Cogent group company which services the oil and gas sector, already manages a common induction training framework for the offshore industry and maintains training records which are accessed via the "Vantage" passport system. The industry says it provides a better grasp of crucial safety issues which are essential to a safe working environment offshore.

John Haddon added: "The current passports project will benefit from the offshore experience and also from that of other Sector Skills Councils working on similar issues."

Cogent's "Upskill" product will eventually share the Passports web-based platform, and this will see an integrated approach to both recording and developing industry-specific skills.

For further information, please contact Cogent Skills Director John Haddon john.haddon@kogent-ssc.com



Cogent SQS: part of a new vocation

A major review and prioritisation of all the qualifications and learning provision right across the Cogent industries is now underway.

Dawn Hillier, Cogent Education and Qualifications Manager who is steering the Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS) process, says: "The review will provide all the information we need to develop a far reaching SQS designed to realign provision so that it directly meets what employers need to develop workforce skills."

Sector qualifications strategies are a key mechanism for the delivery of the Leitch vision of employer-driven skills supply. Cogent will be consulting extensively with employers and stakeholders to define a shared vision of the provision needed to meet the skills challenges coming from the Cogent Sector Skills Agreement.

The result will be a detailed action plan identifying the key activities, which will include:

- specifying what's required to implement Cogent's strategic programmes for industry
- the further development of Cogent's National Occupational Standards (NOS) which underpin sector qualifications development
- sector qualification criteria – a set of principles which future qualifications need to meet to be accredited
- a focused strategy for the delivery of Management and Leadership skills
- the development of specific sector qualifications to meet clearly identified need

The SQS will be in place by the end of September, with an action plan by the end of December. It's a key part of a much bigger programme to reform the vocational qualifications system in the UK.

The UKVQRP (UK Vocational

Qualification Reform Programme) will revolutionise the qualifications framework and the way they are delivered and funded.

The UK-wide programme is also aimed at rationalising existing sector qualifications and clearly defining those needed for individuals to enter and progress within the sector.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), who are overseeing the reform programme have stated that they recognise that employers have a central role in shaping qualifications that are designed to meet business needs, "the right mix of high-quality training, qualifications and other learning experiences will be essential if the potential of UK business is to be fully realised."

For more information on this work and how to get involved please contact Dawn Hillier, Education and Qualifications Manager, on Tel: 01925 515211 or email dawn.hillier@kogent-ssc.com.





Nuclear learning expanded across more schools

Energy Foresight and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) have announced their collaboration to develop and roll-out the Energy Foresight programme to a further 300 schools in the UK.

Energy Foresight brings an exciting new perspective to the teaching of



Radioactive Materials area of the Physics curriculum. The initial pilot of 130 schools during 2005 in the North West and London areas was highly successful and was endorsed by the Open University after a full evaluation of the materials and training.

The current phase funded by a grant of £750,000 from the NDA builds on that success, with a new film addressing nuclear waste and the NDA's activities, together with updated materials and website. As well as addressing the physics behind radioactivity, the materials highlight the employment opportunities in the nuclear industry in health, power, decommissioning, and waste management.

Delivery of this stage of the programme commenced last month and will run for a year. MD of Energy Foresight, Peter Waller said "We are delighted to be

working with the NDA to bring Energy Foresight to this wider audience across the UK. It will be a major step forward in bringing balanced information on nuclear matters - power production, radiation and health, and waste management - into the classroom to help deliver the national curriculum"

Cogent has been a supporter of the programme since its inception and Strategy Director John Holton recently communicated with industry contacts to urge their continued support, "Companies who sponsor this excellent work will have the opportunity to get involved with participating schools and strengthen their community relations. It raises awareness of the industry and we are encouraging employers to support the project in any way they can."

For more information email derekw@youngforesight.org

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Diplomas opening up new options

Cogent is a member of the development team for two of the government's new Diplomas: Engineering and Manufacturing – along with a number of other SSCs. Diplomas are brand new qualifications that will provide a broad programme of work-related and other learning, backed-up by essential skills. They are being designed to provide an exciting, stretching and relevant curriculum for young people and will offer a real alternative to traditional learning.

Ian Moores, Cogent Diploma Manager said, "It's clear that in order for the UK to prosper,

it needs to produce good engineers, scientists and technologists. These Diplomas will demonstrate what engineering and manufacturing is really all about, and we hope young people will be much more inspired to pursue careers in these critically important fields."

Engineering

The Engineering Diploma Development Partnership team (EDDP) has produced a new employer guide on the Diploma which includes an outline of the content, which was developed following extensive consultation. The EDDP is now also planning a number of events to take place around the country during April. These events will give employers an update on Diploma developments, including the final qualification title which is currently awaiting Ministerial approval.

Employers can download the guide and register for the events at www.engineeringdiploma.com or contact Jo Kelly at jkelly@semta.org.uk

Manufacturing

The Manufacturing Diploma is at an earlier stage. The MDDP team is now in the process of writing a "statement of content", once again following wide consultation with employers. This will be used by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Awarding Bodies to create the actual qualification for delivery. The development of sector-specific learning – for example in the case of Cogent, process technology – is also underway, due to be finalised for the QCA in April.

At a consultation event held at the end of January, Paul Pritchard, Head of JCB's 14-19 Academy Project explained the company's partnership approach with schools and colleges. JCB have made a significant commitment through an £18m sponsorship of a 14-19 Academy, to be established at its Headquarters in Staffordshire.

Sir Alan Jones, Chairman of Toyota and Diploma Champion for Employers said: "The 14-19 Diplomas provide the opportunity for Employers

to have a clear partnership route to ensure a stimulating curriculum that truly matches their needs. Equally students have the opportunity to study a range of subjects which they can have the confidence in knowing they will be equipped to match the requirements of employers."
www.manufacturingdiploma.co.uk/

National Conference Process Industries:

A major conference for employers in the process industry will take place on 16th - 17th July 2007.

The high profile event includes a networking dinner and is being held at the National Science Learning Centre at the University of York. It is aimed at all those interested in skills and education issues within the Process Industries.

Those wishing to attend or sponsor the event can contact Leanne McNamara: leanne@ycf.org.uk or book online at www.ycf.org.uk/events

BOOK NOW



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