

National Skills Academy for Nuclear to Evaluate Innovative Apprenticeship Scheme



This is an exciting time for the Nuclear Industry, with skills development and growth vital requirements to help the industry meet the challenges ahead. Providing opportunities for young people to be trained and achieve a skills qualification is one of the key priorities for the future success of the industry, and in direct response to this challenge the National Skills Academy for Nuclear is delivering a brand new 'Community Apprenticeship Scheme' (CAS).



Roland Fletcher is the Skills Academy National Community Apprenticeship Scheme Manager and he explains: "The Scheme has been introduced to enable supply chain companies working within the nuclear sector to take advantage of additional funding to take on Apprentices for the first time or grow additional Apprentice skills for their business, enabling continued and better resource capability to support the Nuclear Site Licence companies to achieve their delivery objectives safely to time and cost. The scheme aims to initially provide up to 75 Apprenticeships, spread across five regional areas (NW/NE; SE/E; SW; Scotland and Wales). Funding will be provided direct to the employer to help cover Apprentice wage costs over the period of the Apprenticeship, with minimal bureaucracy to make this a realistic opportunity for Small and Medium Employers (SMEs) in the supply chain for nuclear."

CAS is being funded by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), and it is being seen as a major initiative that could have significant implications for the wider industry if proved successful. With that in mind, the Skills Academy has entered into an exciting evaluation partnership with Skyblue Research between 2008 and 2012.

Roland says: "We recognise that evaluation has an important value from the very start of the Scheme as we hope it will help us identify learning lessons, good practice and indeed any areas that are not working so well in order that we can continually improve the programme for the participating businesses, learners and quality assured training providers. We decided to commission Skyblue because of their experience in carrying out formative evaluation programmes and we are sure that Skyblue will work well with our Employers, Learners and Providers to really enable us to improve our newly introduced scheme making it more attractive for others to join."

Alan Graver, Skyblue's MD says: "We are delighted to be selected as the Skills Academy's official evaluation partner for the next 4 years, particularly at a time when we know small businesses like our own face uncertain futures. The CAS evaluation project provides a sustainable period of time in which to develop an excellent understanding of the skills and employment challenges facing the nuclear industry, and we hope to make a positive contribution to Roland's project and the wider aims and objectives of the Skills Academy and its businesses during this period."

- If you would like more information about the Community Apprenticeship Scheme please contact r.fletcher@nuclear.nsacademy.co.uk
- If you would like to know more about Skyblue's research, strategic consultancy and evaluation projects for a wide range of National Skills Academies please contact alan@skyblueresearch.co.uk