



NFEC REGIONAL SEMINAR – North East FRIDAY 30th January 2015

AIS Group, North Shields

Attendance at the end of this document.

1) Welcome and Introduction to the seminar

John Lockey welcomed everyone to the seminar on behalf of NFEC. Thank you to AIS for hosting the seminar. Charlie Guthrie welcomed everyone on behalf of AIS Group. There is the launch event on 5th February for their new Renewable Energy Centre between 12 pm and 4 pm and there was an open invitation to everyone in the room and their colleagues.

2) Overview of developments at AIS Training

Rob Storey gave a short presentation to explain the training facilities as well as the skills and education part of the Organisation. Paul Stonebanks started the company by developing materials which enabled the production of fire proof jackets 6 times thinner than standard. The profits from this have been reinvested to start a Training Section of the Group which concentrates mainly on offshore training, in one learning village. The Engineering and Manufacturing department still continues on the same site, with teams going offshore to take measurements for jackets. The new area of skills and education is being developed to integrate with the business and its offshore role, and to deliver bespoke training which is currently up to 90 skills and competency courses being on offer. AIS are trying to match what happens in the North East England with that taking place in Aberdeen.

Their strength is in oil and gas, wind and maritime but they are growing in areas such as construction, sub sea, nuclear, medical and emergency response. AIS have several buildings at this site, all dedicated to different skills areas such as:

- offshore sea survival and maritime training facility with simulators, Norwegian escape route, boat transfer and covering what to do in emergency
- specialist rigging area with rope access and confined space training
- renewable energy centre
- fireproofing facility working with International Paints, and NDT training
- Medipro offshore first aid
- H&S training.

There is emergency response and fire training carried out in conjunction with Newcastle Airport, based at the Airport. They have their own hotel on site which is also able to offer an offshore experience centre.

AIS are beginning to work in collaboration with policy makers, employer groups, SSC and BIS, schools, colleges and universities. They wish to be unique and focus on the sector, whilst becoming training partners for various groups. What is here now has been built on business rather than on funding. Their manufacturing facility will be moving to different premises in July 2015. All growth will be based in the NE, but they do have facilities in Aberdeen, Lowestoft, Yorkshire, Humberside, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Arabs Emirates.

They are currently doing apprenticeships at low levels for the unemployed. They would like to work with colleges in this sector.

3) Updates on Qualifications from Awarding bodies

Steve Donaghue – from EAL but covered Trailblazers developments for all Awarding Organisations

Steve is involved in the Aero Trailblazer following an invitation from the lead Employers on the panel for Awarding Organisations to become involved. There must be 10 Employers interested in the same apprenticeship and then they can set up a Trailblazer panel. They must first write a 2 page standard which is then approved by BIS. Aero apprenticeships will start in September and must last a year as a minimum. The Awarding Organisations are working collaboratively, and the Employers will make the decisions on the qualifications. In terms of Engineering and the Employer Units of Competence (EUCs) which have been developed, they are not too far removed from what is being used currently but does include a behavioural assessment.

As much of the feedback is currently from Aero and Auto Trailblazers, there was discussion on developments for other sectors. The Rail Trailblazer has just started. Siemens are piloting Mechatronics – this started as line maintenance within Automotive but it was then made more general so skills were transferable and has been called Mechatronics. There is a need to try to keep standards between the different schemes and employers for the various apprenticeships. There will be need for some sort of new organisation to carry this function out long term. Machining covers all sectors and the providers want to keep the same apprenticeship across them. There is a CNC machining apprenticeship being developed that will be applicable to all sectors. NFEC did put out a request for pathway preferences for this and the responses were passed onto the panel and were taken on board in the decision process.

Mark Jones, with Mark Shepherd, from EAL

Mark highlighted changes for KS4 and KS5 for the 2017 performance tables. There are 4 parts with Tech Awards, Applied General, Tech Cert and Tech Level. There will be Foundation and 1st Cert available for Sept 2015 delivery. The attached slides give which subjects are available. Grading and mediation are changing with just one allowed retake. Again this grading is more fully explained on the attached slides. There will be on screen exams, with synoptic assessment during the last third of programme including assignments and practical tests. Some will be marked externally and some by

the centres. There are new VRQs in Engineering Technology at levels 1, 2 and 3, ready for September 2015. Level 3 is available at Award, Certificate, Sub Diploma, Diploma and Extended Diploma depending on GLH. They do look different from previous qualifications in format and styling of paperwork.

The Trailblazer VRQS have been dictated by employers so many are being more specific to the sector but there are others which are more generic aimed for Colleges and pre apprenticeship programmes. At the moment Trailblazer apprenticeship requirements are stating GCSE on entry rather than VRQ type qualifications. Trailblazers are being based on NQF again and it is hoped that other qualifications will return to NQF too rather than QCF.

Amanda Murphy from Pearson

BTEC changes for 16-19 year olds will be ready for 2018 whilst Higher Nationals for Engineering maybe 2016. Feedback is required from providers and if anyone would like to be involved please contact John Lockey who will pass details onto Jane Baker at Pearson. The Applied General qualification will have 60% mandatory content. Technical level will top up and nesting will happen within the Tech Level. Pearson are proposing 6 Tech Level qualifications including at 360, 540, 720 and 1080 GLH in a selection of subjects such as electrical/electronics, mechanical, manufacturing, computing, aerospace, automotive and mechatronics.

There will be a difference in the external assessment, but this will include project based assessment as well as exams. The "softer" skills will be included in the Tech Level. The Technical Baccalaureate has 3 components; the tech bac, level 3 maths and an extended project. The specifications will be available by late August 2015, will be submitted in September and so be ready for teaching delivery in September 2016.

If you would like to be on Amanda's mailing list for information emails please contact her on Amanda.murphy@pearson.com.

The newly published Functional Skills reports are showing that problems are more with validity and competency of marking and require an action plan from the Awarding Organisations. Maths and English GCSE reforms have been proposed as alternatives but nothing happened on this.

Liam McGurk from C&G

The Tech Bac qualifications start in September 2015, with 14 year olds and an award certificate of 120GH for schools, the equivalent of 1 GCSE. There will be levels 2 and 3 introduced to meet the raising age of participation requirements. It is trying to get the right attitude instilled for the workplace. There is no real link in from level 2 tech bac to the level 3 apprenticeship. Assessment will be harder with just one retake or the learner starts again. There is a skills zone for which includes a business challenge and a CV builder. All apprenticeships are to be reviewed by 2017 and after that every 3 years. There will be synoptic tests included. You can use those provided by C&Gs or write your own and have them moderated. These will be scenario based so they fit into the workplace. Some qualifications such as vehicle maintenance do not have entry requirements but Maths and English must be achieved during qualification itself.

Letters of support from centres are required to keep qualifications or to develop new ones.

There was discussion as the Level 3 has UCAS points associated with it but these do not allow progression towards apprenticeships so there are going to be difficulties for Colleges to offer this. There are no issues with offering the Level 2 and these will be introduced into the College provision.

4) Higher Apprenticeships and LEP developments

Gillian Brown from the SFA covered this agenda item. Engineering is a LEP priority area. There needs to be collaboration with providers and employers and capital is available.

The SFA are working with LEPs on increasing higher apprenticeship numbers, with now 9 000 apprentices on programme, this is a 30% rise. They are aiming for 20 000 starts by 2015. There are more 16-18 year olds being taken on as higher apprentices.

Government has earmarked funding of £60 million for higher apprenticeship this year for levels 4 -7 and this funding is available until July. This will fund all 16-18 years old Higher Education costs and 50% of any HE commercial costs for 19+, but the employer must pay the difference not the individual. They are working to try to get providers and universities to get involved as contractors. Any further information may be gained from Jon Cunningham, jonathan.cunningham@sfa.bis.gov.uk The SFA have had events for HEIs to disseminate this information, but it is not guaranteed that this money will be available after July and if money is not there after July, it could be difficult for providers to use as a marketing tool with employers. A copy of her slides are attached. Gillian may be contacted on Gillian.brown@sfa.bis.gov.uk

Lunch was taken.

5) Trailblazer and Conference Update

There will be 3 briefing seminars for providers on the Trailblazer developments which are being organised by GTA England and NFEC. All will provide the same information and ran by essentially the same team.

- Wednesday 25th March at BAE Systems, Preston, chaired by Nigel Austin BAE
- Wednesday 15th April at Toyota Manufacturing UK, Burnaston, chaired by Andrew Parsons, TMUK
- Wednesday 22nd April at Marshalls ADG, Cambridge, chaired by Richard Hamer, BAE.

The starting time is planned for 10am at all venues, through to 1.30 to 2pm, ending with lunch and networking. The purpose is to give as much general information as possible to cover all sectors. Speakers will include provider feedback on running pilot schemes such as from North West Training Council (JLR, Auto), EEF (JLR, Mechatronics) and Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMW, Mechatronics), Awarding Organisations, SEMTA, Professional Status Awarding Bodies and Rebecca Rhodes from the SFA on funding. Further information will be sent out shortly.

Bob Millington ran through the slides which were delivered by Rebecca Rhodes at the National Conference in December. NFEC are represented on 4 Trailblazer panels with Bob Millington (Aero and Auto), Warwick Hall (Electrotechnical) and Kim Holland (Maritime).

- Bob works closely with Mark Maudsley from GTA England, to try to get the involvement of SMEs because in Engineering, they employ two thirds of all apprentices. Currently most of the Trailblazer work is being completed by the big employers.
- The apprenticeship pathways will vary in structure.
- Initially there is a foundation, off the job, phase which is supported by VRQs, similar to the current PEO. This will act as the gateway to the development phase. An apprentice can fail the foundation based on competence, behaviour and attitude.
- Government wanted all competences to be graded, but these trailblazer panels fought this and so competence will not be graded, just a binary outcome of pass/fail on Aero and Auto panels. VRQs will be graded, and this will be the grade given against the overall apprenticeship.
- Auto Mechatronics is looking at an assessment model of a 3 day practical test with knowledge, understanding and competence at level 2. Aero are looking for a different model for assessment.
- Since CNC Machining links with High Value engineering, there will only be one CNC machining pathway across all industries.
- Funding is up to £24 000 for advanced Engineering apprentices. Engineering has the maximum funding contribution from Government (MGC). £2 from Government for every £1 from employers. There are incentive payments available such as for SMEs £2700, taking on 16-18 apprentices £5400 and £2700 for completion. Funding is secure for 2015 and will survive the election.
- Employers can ask for bids from providers and contracts will be set up. This tendering process is not going to help the learner.
- Money will go to employers, who will then pay the training providers. The administration of money for employers is a worry especially for small companies. There have been 3 delivery options put forward
 - employers contract out everything
 - employers contract out some
 - employers do everything
- There is a suggestion for SMEs to use training provider/GTA to do all of the administration for them. Government is taking SME as 50 or less not European standard of 250. There are no decisions yet if this situation may occur.
- Money will not be paid by Government to providers until employers have paid some money. This means that providers are having to fund this until that point which may mean potential cash flow problems.
- Will that £1 be a barrier to many SMEs? Nick Boles is looking at the situation. Are the incentives for 16-18 and for outcomes of success be sufficient to offset this payment upfront? If the Government gives a payment in kind, this does not fund tutors so the money would still be needed to be found from somewhere in the system.
- 3 Awarding organisations, Edexcel, EAL and C&G are working together on their qualifications to ensure common grading criteria.

The Government wants all apprenticeships to be Trailblazer standard by 2017/8 with full implementation for funding by 2016/7, but this is not likely to happen. Any higher apprenticeship will be based on advanced programmes.

There was discussion on how employers may use the money they are given. Potentially employers could take ownership, keeping the money for their own resources and just paying £4 000 for a provider to deliver the tech cert whilst they do the rest. There is concern that SMEs may also look at training their own apprentices and share facilities between themselves to make money out of the system. The point of who then undergoes the Ofsted inspection was raised.

If you have comments or anything else, as a provider, you want covered please let NFEC and Bob Millington know.

John thanked the speakers for their time, delegates for attending and AIS for hosting.

John proposed that the next event could be a North mini conference in June, located around the Leeds area in Garforth. There would be the chance to stay over the night before for networking opportunities followed by a full day conference. This would include the NW and NE. This was favourably accepted as a good idea.

Topics could include:

- trailblazer funding changes and how post election may affect things
- potential Ofsted statements on trailblazers
- feedback from the Spring seminars
- LEPs
- best practice on schools liaison
- Women in Engineering, gaining and keeping them
- Tomorrows engineers

NFEC is able to continue its work with providers based on its membership. This costs £365 annually but there will be charges made for attending regional meetings as non members in the future. Membership is what is wanted rather than this so please become a member. This can be done via the NFEC website and the "join" tab.

ATTENDANCE LIST

Name	Organisation	
Andy Stephenson	Newcastle College	
Bob Watmore	Derwent Training Association	
John Brockett	Derwent Training Association	

Andrew Wood	Cussons Technology	
Amanda Murphy	Pearson	
Dave Porter	Boxford	
Mark Jones	EAL	
Jill Mustard	NFEC	
Ian Gaskill	New College Durham	
Graham Plant	Hartlepool College	
Geoff Lindridge	Hartlepool College	
Ian Smith	Middlesbrough College	
Dave Yarwood	Carlisle College	
David Hedgcock	Sunderland College	
Chris Elliott	Hull College	
Graeme Barker	Carlisle College	
Colin Luhrs	Carlisle College	
Brian Hall	TTE Technical Training Group	
Jim Hubbard	Newcastle College	
Steve Donoghue	EAL	
Michael Burton	Tyne Metropolitan College	
Neil Dorwood	Tyne Metropolitan College	
Robin Lockwood	SETA Sunderland	
Charlie Guthrie	Marketing Manager, AIS Group	
John Lockey	NFEC Director and Regional Coordinator	
Liam McGurk	CGLI	
Mark Shepherd	EAL	
Mark Jones	EAL	
Rob Storey	Skills and Education Manager, AIS Group	

Gillian Brown	SFA Employer Delivery Services Manager	
Bob Millington	NFEC Life longer member – NFEC National Liaison	