

News story: New National College for the nuclear industry launches

A new college that will train thousands of technicians and engineers to support Britain's future nuclear programmes, create cleaner energy and provide a highly skilled workforce has opened its doors today (7 February).

The National College for Nuclear has hubs in Cumbria (Lakes College) and Somerset (Bridgwater & Taunton College), and state of the art facilities that include virtual, simulated laboratories. The college will help thousands of young people and learners gain the knowledge and skills they need to work in the growing nuclear sector, that provides vital low carbon power to businesses across the country.

The facility is one of five National Colleges being established by the government. The colleges are a key part of the Industrial Strategy, the Government's plan to develop the technical skills of young people, provide industry with a skilled workforce across a range of sectors and support the country's long-term economic growth. Other colleges already open include the College of Creative and Cultural Industries; Digital Skills and High Speed Rail.

The growing nuclear sector will see the development of twelve new reactors across five sites in the future, and with approximately 6,000 people each year needed for technical and professional roles, the National College for Nuclear will key part of producing the workforce and expertise required.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

I am thrilled to announce the launch of the National College for Nuclear.

This College will provide our nuclear industry with the highly skilled engineers, scientists, technicians it needs to grow – as well as giving more people the opportunities they need to get on in today's competitive job market.

The impressive training facilities in Somerset and Cumbria demonstrate what can be achieved when Government, employers and providers work together to deliver high-quality education. I wish all the trainees and apprentices the very best of luck for the future as they embark on this exciting journey.

Leading nuclear industry experts Sellafield Ltd and EDF Energy will work alongside the University of Cumbria and the University of Bristol to train up to 3500 learners by 2020.

Stuart Crooks, EDF Energy's Hinkley Point C Managing Director, said:

EDF Energy is proud to be a partner in the National College for Nuclear. It will support the new nuclear renaissance in Britain and is a prime example of industrial strategy in action.

The southern hub in Somerset will stand alongside the excellent training facilities at Bridgwater & Taunton College which are already helping to provide essential skills needed for Britain's economy. Together they show the big and positive impact new nuclear is having on jobs, skills and industrial capacity.

Chairman of the National College for Nuclear Colin Reed said:

It is with pride and expectation that we open the Northern and Southern hubs of the National College for Nuclear today. The journey to this point has been challenging and rewarding. We have students in place at both hubs benefiting from high level vocational education in state of the art facilities that were funded through Government vision.

From this start we are poised to grow to meet the challenge of nuclear skills in the years to come, both in student numbers at the existing hubs and also as we add further training deliverers at other locations to support the National demand.

Business Minister Richard Harrington said:

This is a pivotal moment for the future of nuclear energy in the UK. Through our Industrial Strategy, we are building a Britain fit for the future. These new learning hubs will give young people a fantastic opportunity to enter a highly skilled and well paid industry.