

LSC Searches for Apprentice of the Year 2007

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The deadline for the fourth LSC Annual Apprenticeship Awards is looming, with the closing date for entries to the prestigious awards on Friday 23 February 2007. A special London Regional Apprenticeship Awards event will take place at the Savoy on 30 May 2007. Winners will automatically go through to the National Awards event taking place at the Hilton Park Lane on 20 June 2007.

The Awards, sponsored by the Learning and Skills Council, are designed to recognise apprentices who have excelled throughout their training and in the workplace, contributing directly to their employers' success. It also recognises employers who are committed to training and developing the skills of their workforce through Apprenticeships.

David Hughes, LSC Regional Director for London says, "Today's apprentices are valued members of the workforce whose skills, effort and ideas are contributing directly to their employers' success. Recognising excellence is a vital part of the investment in skills. The Awards provide us with the opportunity to recognise the outstanding contribution apprentices and employers are making, raising our country's skills levels and supporting our ability to compete on a global stage.

"The increase in the numbers of applications and calibre of entrants over the past four years is testament to the fact that Apprenticeships are now viewed as a highly respected alternative route to a successful career by both young people and employers alike."

Apprenticeships are a huge success story, with the number of apprentices up three and a half times since 1997, from 75,000 to over a quarter of a million today. With over 180 different apprenticeship programmes, whose content is determined by industry, they provide a real solution to addressing skills shortages within organisations. Gordon Brown announced, in his pre-budget speech in December 2006, that in the years to 2020 the number of apprenticeships will rise to 500,000.

There are three apprentice categories recognising those whose contribution to the workplace has exceeded their employers expectations and resulted in measurable benefits; Apprentice of the Year, Advanced Apprentice of the Year and Young Apprentice of the Year. A personal Achievement award will also be awarded to an apprentice who has successfully overcome a barrier or obstacle – personally or in the workplace – in order to achieve their goals and exceed expectations.

Employers are also eligible to win awards and can enter one of four categories depending on their company size. They are assessed on a number of criteria including implementation of the Apprenticeship programme, clear demonstration of the way Apprenticeships have benefited their business and the level of support provided to their apprentices.

Last year's 2006 Advanced Apprenticeship of the Year winner, John Vickery summed up his delight and pride at being recognised for his achievements "It was absolutely amazing to win the award. It was a brilliant bonus and brilliant start to my career."

To download an application form or for more information visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards or call the Awards helpline on 0800 019 2083.

Ends

**For further information please contact: Lynn McSweeney, Regional Press Officer,
LSC London on 020 7904 0663, email: Lynn.McSweeney@LSC.gov.uk.**

Notes to Editors:

LSC

The Learning and Skills Council exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.