

## **REASEHEATH COLLEGE GETS A TASTE OF SUCCESS**

The Cheshire based college is to play a lead role in the new National Skills Academy for Food and Drink Manufacturing.

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Reaseheath College in Nantwich is celebrating following the announcement by Skills Minister, Phil Hope MP that it is to play a leading role in the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink Manufacturing. The news closely follows a recent Ofsted inspection which awarded the college top grades in every area and described its staff, facilities and training as 'outstanding'.

The National Skills Academy for Food and Drink Manufacturing will open in April 2007, and through five Academy Training Centres, including Reaseheath College, will provide training for 28,000 employees in the food and drink industry. The Food and Drink Academy is a joint venture between Improve (the Sector Skills Council for the Sector) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), which exists to make England better skilled and more competitive.

Reaseheath College will provide specialist dairy training and will invest £500,000 in its food processing plant to ensure its facilities are at the forefront of the industry. The college is already recognised as a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Food Chain Technology and its resources and expertise are used by many blue chip multinational companies.

The National Skills Academy programme aims to drive up the standard of industry training, improve productivity and tackle skills shortages across England in specific industry sectors. The North West is already playing a key role in the first three National

Skills Academies; a Financial Services Skills Academy, a National Manufacturing Skills Academy and a Construction Skills Academy.

Welcoming the news Liz Davis, Director of Area for the Learning and Skills Council in Cheshire and Warrington said,

“I congratulate Reaseheath College wholeheartedly on this achievement which underlines the high standards of provision delivered by the college. The food and drink sector has a major impact on the North West, employing over 100,000 people and contributing £9.5 billion each year to the region’s economy. The launch of a dedicated Food and Drink Manufacturing Academy will be a major boost for employers and learners alike across the sector, and will play a vital role in ensuring that our region’s businesses are equipped with a highly trained and motivated workforce that delivers improvements to productivity and performance.”

Reaseheath College Principal Meredydd David said,

“We are delighted that Reaseheath has been identified as the first centre of excellence for dairy food manufacturing. Reaseheath has earned national recognition for its training within the food industry, due to its team of expert staff and unique food processing and development halls. The college’s selection as an academy will enable us to continue to support the needs of the food and drink industry, both in training and in the development of new products.

“The excellent results Improve has achieved by working with training providers and colleges to enhance links with industry will enable Reaseheath to continue to support the Government’s re-skilling and upskilling agenda. We also applaud the efforts of the Learning and Skills Council in supporting the application and in helping to secure its approval.”

**Ends**

**Learning and Skills Council:**

The LSC 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.

1. The National Skills Academy network was initiated by the Government to address the need for a world class workforce and offer employers a totally new method of influencing the types of training and method of delivery.
2. The NSA network builds on the success of the Pathfinder Fashion Retail Academy now open in London.
3. The National Skills Academies will be focused on vocational education and skills training delivering to young people (16-19 year olds) and adults and be sector-based centres of excellence with national reach.
4. Two rounds for National Skills Academies have so far been run – both starting with the publication of a prospectus inviting expressions of interest, and followed by a panel assessment for the most persuasive and promising proposals. The assessment panel has government officials from a range of departments and agencies, but is weighted towards its employer membership, and has an independent employer chair. The panel selects those bids which it feels are sufficiently strong to go into a full phase of business planning. That phase may take up to a year and involves all the detailed preparation required to turn the vision of the Academy into a real life entity that can start delivering the required training. There is a final assessment made at the end of the business planning stage to verify that each NSA has a realistic plan for successful operations.
5. The third round prospectus can be found at [www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk](http://www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk) and the deadline for lodging expressions of interest is 5 March 2007. Employers should contact their Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) or the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) in the first instance, to co-ordinate an expression of interest, after which a formal bidding process will commence.
6. Sector Skills Councils are employer-led strategic bodies set up by Government to help raise business performance, meet skill needs and shape relevant learning supply within a given sector of the economy. Each one represents a sector with a workforce of at least 500,000. There are now 25 Sector Skills Councils covering around 85% of the UK workforce. They have a key role in National Skills Academies in pulling together bids and business plans, co-ordinating employer sponsorship, and working on curriculum content and liaison with learning providers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

**LSC website:** [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

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