

EXPERT SESSIONS HELP APPRENTICES GO FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Date of issue: 19 May, 2008

A series of expert classes are to be rolled out across the South West this summer giving some of the best vocational learners an insight into the latest technology and innovation used by global businesses.

The *From Competence to Excellence* programme – spanning a range of sectors and skills – will give specially selected 16 to 24-year-olds an insight into what world class skills look like, delivered by expert tutors in state-of-the-art premises.

The sessions, run by leading training providers and employers, are targeted at talented young people already on Apprenticeship programmes or in vocational learning. The City of Plymouth College, Bournemouth & Poole College and Somerset College are among the first to have signed up to host the classes which will also give attendees an opportunity to receive one-to-one coaching and tuition.

Running until June 2008, the *From Competence to Excellence* programme aims to hone the skills of apprentices from *good* (or competent) to *great* (excellent) and will cover industry sectors such as hospitality, engineering, IT, business administration, hospitality and the creative arts.

In the South West, there are more than 42,000 young people on Apprenticeships at over 13,000 companies with construction, customer service and hairdressing standing as the top three most popular industries to run the programmes.

The *From Competence to Excellence* programme is being funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and supported by UK Skills, the organisation which champions skills and learning for work through competitions, awards and events. Nationally 5,000 apprentices and 1,000 tutors are set to take part in the programme which will be delivered at 500 events.

Dr Paul Pettigrew, Economic Development Director at the LSC South West, said: "There is no substitute for experience, and the expert classes mean hundreds of the region's apprentices will be given the opportunity to listen to, learn from and aspire to be the very best in the business."

As well as gaining expert tuition, master class participants will receive information on how to enter regional and national skills competitions in the run up to WorldSkills competition to be hosted in London in 2011. The competition brings together hundreds of specially selected young people, accompanied by their teachers and trainers, from more than 49 different countries to compete in the skills of their various trades and test themselves against the best the world has to offer.

Paul continued: "The *From Competence to Excellence* expert sessions have been designed to demonstrate the quality of skills needed at a world-class level and inject excitement and dynamism into learning. With so many high profile companies and expert tutors involved in this programme, the tuition and inspiration on offer will help to increase young people's own aspirations, heighten awareness of the need to excel and demonstrate the real value of an Apprenticeship."

Over the last decade, Apprenticeship places in the UK have risen by 220 per cent from 75,000 to nearly 240,000. Earlier this year, Gordon Brown announced plans to increase

this number to 500,000 by 2020 to ensure Britain is equipped to compete in the global skills race with the burgeoning economies of China and India.

Dawn Ward OBE, South West champion for WorldSkills and Principal of Royal Forest of Dean College, said: “The *From Competence to Excellence* programme will help to raise awareness and aspiration among young people and hopefully encourage them to take part in skills competitions. With the help of the Association of Colleges, we are establishing a group of College Principals with a focus on the WorldSkills competition and putting the South West and the UK on the map.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

From Competence to Excellence classes in the South West:

Provider	Class	Date
Buttercup pharmaceutical	Counselling for excellent customer service	23/05/2008
City of Plymouth College	Developing accuracy in the setting out of Competition pieces	23/05/2008
Bournemouth and Poole College	Robotics Introduction	23/05/2008
Bridgwater College	Mechanical Engineering CADD Using Parametric Modelling using Solidworks	27/05/2008
Bridgwater College	Mechanical Engineering CADD Using Parametric Modelling using Autodesk Inventor	27/05/2008
Bournemouth and Poole College	Barbering Workshop - Mens Street Fashion 'Cut and Colour'	28/05/2008
Bournemouth and Poole College	Engineering (CAD design)	30/05/2008
Buttercup pharmaceutical	Counselling for excellent customer service	04/06/2008
Weymouth College	Letter Carving - Carving a Monogram	18/06/2008
Weymouth College	Low Relief Stone Carving - a heraldic design	21/06/2008
Bournemouth and Poole College	Barbering Workshop - Mens Street Fashion 'Cut and Colour'	21/05/2008 and 28/05/08

All media enquiries, please contact:

Kelly Davis or Richard Cook at Bray Leino PR

T: 0117 973 1173

E: kdavis@brayleino.co.uk / rcook@brayleino.co.uk

Note to Editors:

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country. For more information visit: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/westofengland>