

FURTHER EDUCATION WORKS



Skills for Learning Professionals

9 November 2009

THANKS TO FE... APPRENTICESHIPS ARE STRONGER THAN EVER

You may have noticed the FE Works advertising campaign which has been running in the national media recently, acknowledging the achievements of those working in adult and community learning, colleges and work-based learning providers, and highlighting the value their work adds to UK Plc. One of the key messages within the campaign is 'Thanks to FE... there are over 190 types of Apprenticeships suitable for hundreds of job roles'.

But why pay tribute in this way to all those delivering apprenticeships?

The FE sector has the skills and experience to deliver outstanding work-based and work-related learning, enabling young people to take advantage of apprenticeships. Recently released official figures show that a record 234,000 people started apprenticeship courses in the last year, with 126,900 learners completing the schemes*.

The highest ever number of starts and completions in a year is a real sign of the public's confidence in apprenticeships as a route to better career prospects and a brighter future.

Unprecedented opportunities now exist for learners to improve their skills and confidence and gain a nationally recognized qualification wherever their career interest lies. The number of industries offering apprenticeships is growing, and includes professions as varied as accountancy, agriculture, business administration, design, education, engineering, healthcare, leisure and tourism, and roles in media.

Thanks to the work of the staff in the further education sector - the people who help to design and deliver apprenticeships - they are now so well respected that over 100,000 companies offer apprentice places. Companies understand the benefits that apprentices bring to their business - increased productivity, improved competitiveness and a committed and competent workforce.

Dr Alison Birkinshaw, Chair of the FE Reputation Strategy Group which supports the campaign, says: "Apprenticeships offer young people the opportunity to build their skills, knowledge and experience at the same time, and the fact that we are seeing ever-greater take up of them is real evidence of the esteem in which they are held – by businesses as well as learners. It is thanks to the people delivering apprenticeships that they have been such a success and will continue to be so."

To find out more about how FE Works, visit www.feworks.org

Case study: Jack Lynch

Jack Lynch feels lucky to be doing an apprenticeship in the current economic climate and says it has renewed his enthusiasm for learning after not really enjoying school.

He is studying electrotechnical technology to NVQ level 3 and works for TK Installations in Brighton.



"I didn't really like school," he says. "It was good but I wasn't. I've always wanted to do electrics ever since I went on work experience from school, and I had a little Saturday job. I just liked doing things with my hands which are practical. My family are proud of what I've achieved.

"It helps a lot being around blokes who have been in the electrical industry for a long time. And I think college helps build confidence up, makes you more aware of what's going on at work.

"I end up teaching some of the blokes things they've sometimes forgotten, and that makes me feel good. If I do a job at work that I've done at college I am more confident. You need to understand the theory."

So what does he think of his tutors? "My tutor Ali is brilliant," he says. "She knows her stuff and puts it across well in a way you can understand."

Most of all, he praises his employer for giving him the opportunity to train and believes the company is genuinely committed to his career and increasing his future earning power.

"I am the only apprentice," he says. "When there isn't work, Tony , my employer, sends me off to study and gets me doing my college work, which is good. It's important that he wants me to study rather than just sitting round at home. He wants you to qualify and get out earning some money."

To find out more about how FE Works, please visit www.feworks.org

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Notes to editors:

Figures

- *Office for National Statistics, 23rd October 2009
All other figures referenced are available as part of the *This is How Further Education Works* Communications Toolkit, available at FE Works
<http://www.feworks.org/sites/default/files/FE%20Key%20Messages%20PDF.pdf>

About the Further Education Reputation Strategy Group (FERSG)

- The Further Education Reputation Strategy Group (FERSG) was established in November 2007. The Group is chaired by Dr Alison Birkinshaw, Principal of York College. FERSG is working with FE stakeholders to develop a national voice for the high quality work of the sector.
- For more information, visit <http://fersg.lsc.gov.uk/>

About Lifelong Learning UK

- Lifelong Learning UK is one of 25 Sector Skills Councils that make up the Skills for Business Network and is a member of the FERSG.
- Lifelong Learning UK aims to encourage teachers, trainers, librarians and other staff in post-compulsory education to gain new skills and qualifications so that they offer a better service to young people, adult learners, employers and the wider community
- Lifelong Learning UK also promotes lifelong learning as a career so that employers in the sector have less difficulty recruiting and retaining staff
- In addition to developing sector-wide occupational standards and qualifications frameworks, Lifelong Learning UK also produces labour market intelligence so that lifelong learning employers can identify skills gaps and shortages among their own workforce.
- For more information, visit <http://www.lluk.org/>