



news

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GLASS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY DECEMBER 2003

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Training - It's a KnockOut (at Project Management Training, Stoke on Trent)

Sir Henry Cooper reached and stayed at his pinnacle of boxing competence through training. It was therefore appropriate that Project Management should, after twenty-one years as a training company, invite Sir Henry to join in their celebrations.

The quality of training provided by Project Management has resulted in the vast majority of trainees going into full-time employment with the centre's employer group comprising of more than 100 local companies. As well as preparing young people for work in key sectors which include: construction, engineering, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, the organisation has developed a national reputation for Workforce Development - performance improvement training. This has resulted in a number of its client companies seeing different significant gains in productivity - 50% in some cases - as well as helping the companies avoid high levels of staff turnover.



GQA's Ray Potter and Sir Henry Cooper at the 21st birthday celebrations of Project Management at Stoke on Trent 17th October 2003.

The centre has received many accolades, not just for its success in motivating young people, but for its focus on quality which has been borne out by the excellent results following inspections by the national Adult Learning Inspectorate. The local area Inspection cited

the centre as being one of the best of its kind in the UK. Project Management Training extended its industry sectors to include glass in 2002 when it became a GQA centre. They are supported by GQA External Verifier Ray Potter.

NATIONAL TRAINING AWARD ACCOLADES FOR MCMULLEN ARCHITECTURAL SYSTEMS (of Moira, NI)

McMullen Architectural Systems (MAS) have won National Training Award recognition for its commitment to staff training.

McMullen Architectural Systems are a GQA Approved Centre in partnership with the CITB-NI and have successfully implemented Fabrication and Installation NVQs. The first Fenestration Installation & Surveying Level 3 NVQ awarded in NI was to MAS employee Martin Beatty.

McMullen Architectural Systems who undertook a massive training programme ie wider than NVQs, to create a skilled workforce, was rewarded for its efforts at a NI National Training Awards ceremony. Not only did MAS win a regional training award, their achievements were further rewarded when it was presented with a special award for training in management development by the Management and Leadership network.

After setting new targets to try and expand further throughout the British Isles, the company realised it would need to produce trained and professional staff if it were to meet its objectives

and sustain its competitive advantage. MAS decided to develop a two-tier training and development programme to help meet new targets to try and expand further throughout the British Isles. The company established a structured programme to build a pool of highly trained and professional staff. The results were outstanding, with significantly increased levels of productivity, profits and customer and employee satisfaction.

Congratulating McMullen Architectural Systems on its success, Employment and Learning Minister, Rt Hon Jane Kennedy, said: "Once again Northern Ireland has proven itself as the torchbearer for training excellence in its outstanding achievements in the National Training Awards. The success stories that I have heard tonight highlight the importance of investing in people in order to achieve success in business.

"Using training to capitalise on better business performance, improve customer service and develop personal skills is a guaranteed recipe for success and paves the way towards establishing

a better future for the individuals, organisations and the economy in Northern Ireland."

MAS Human Resources Manager, Orla Rafferty said that the company now had a strong policy of staff development which had resulted in a skilled and content workforce. She explained: "Investing in our staff at all levels was vital to increase our market share outside of Northern Ireland. We knew where we wanted to go and what we wanted to achieve. We used training and development of our staff to increase staff's capabilities and improve our overall professionalism and now as a final result we have matched and exceeded what we set out to achieve."

MAS have had another reason to celebrate as they recently won the NI Specify/CEF Construction Excellence Award in Training in a Gala event held in Belfast in October 2003, proving once again that their commitment to training and their ability to achieve results through training is now recognised as one of NI Construction Industry success stories.

South Yorkshire Construction Exhibition

Linda McAvan, MEP opened the South Yorkshire Construction Industry Exhibition at the Don Valley Stadium on 14th October 2003.

GQA and fifty four (54) other key players working with or supporting the construction sector took part in the successful one day exhibition.

The benefits to GQA included:

- Raising the GQA profile to key players
- Improving relationships with strategic organisations such as the CITB, HSE, LSC, educational establishments, training providers etc
- Increasing contact with employers, employees and potential employees.



Quinn Glass Scoops National Training Awards

Quinn Glass opened in 1998 and produces flint, amber and green glass containers for the food, beverage and spirit industries.

The factory currently employs around 340 people and operated a four, 12 hour continuous shift system and is a GQA approved centre offering glass specific NVQs to its production employees.

Quinn Glass in Derrylin was one of 24 regional award winners at the Belfast City Hall event which is widely regarded as the training industry 'oscar'. Since it opened, the factory has employed local staff and invested heavily in training them to produce a high quality product. The factory has had major benefits for the local economy.

Congratulating Quinn Glass on its award, Employment and Learning Minister, Jane Kennedy, said: "Investment in training is one of the ways that participants in the competition can give themselves the cutting edge that is needed to bring about success. The need to set their products and services above those of their competitors is the goal and I believe it is people power that will make this happen. It is through events such as the National Training Awards that training and investment in people is given the priority it deserves. As well as recognising the achievements of companies, agencies and individuals, the awards help us to promote the concept of training as an essential tool to enhance business growth. The people that have won awards this year are real success stories and proof of the rewards that training and personal development can bring. Their success stories deserve to be promoted and I hope that their achievements will lead to more people rising to that challenge!"

Emma McCaffrey, Training and Development Manager with Quinn Glass said she was delighted that the company's hard efforts had been rewarded. She said: "Quinn Glass are delighted to receive such a prestigious award. Quinn Glass believe and have demonstrated over the last five years that continuous investment in training leads to a highly skilled committed workforce which is a prerequisite for business success. This award is a significant recognition."

Their second UK award was presented at the Guild Hall in London.

Progress Report - Ms T Westlake, NVQ Achiever at the University of Oxford



In the late 1980s glass specific national vocational qualifications were introduced across a wide spectrum of the sector. Companies and specialist organisations such as the British Society of Scientific Glassblowers (BSSG) and the Glass & Glazing Federation (GGF) cooperated in the production of the standards that became the basis of NVQ/SVQ qualifications. In September 1990 the first glass NVQs were awarded including one to Ms T Westlake, the first female to be awarded a glass NVQ. The NVQ was in Scientific Glassblowing supported by the BSSG.

Thirteen years later Terri, after continuing to develop her scientific glass working skills, is still enthusiastic about her work and the advantages that the early NVQ programmes provided. We have tracked Terri down to the University of Oxford and persuaded her to contribute to this issue of GQA News. Terri has provided this account:

"I became interested in science at a very early age, dare I say as a result of watching programs such as Quincy and Colombo. I discovered the skill and beauty of the work of the scientific glassblower at a University of Bristol Open Day for Chemistry. I had planned to join the ranks of the Forensic Scientific Officers but by chance, during the summer holidays, I came across an advert for a Trainee Scientific Glassblower. I applied with the idea that if it didn't work out I could still fall back into Forensics. I joined Bristol University as a Trainee Scientific glassblower and needless to say I've never looked back.

"As a trainee at Bristol University my mentors Mr Rex Garrard and Mr Fred Porter, who are both Master Glassblowers of BSSG, coached me in the art of scientific glassblowing using the BSSG syllabus as a foundation for my training. During this time I became aware of the existence of the NVQs in Scientific Glassblowing. I was initially registered on the Level 1 NVQ, Fred Porter was my assessor.

"Thereafter NVQs provided an entirely complementary, comprehensive element of my ongoing training. With some years experience in a University glassblowing environment, I passed NVQ Level 1 in 1990 and Level 2 followed in 1992.

"For the past 12 years I have worked as a Scientific Glassblower at the University of Oxford, Inorganic Chemistry Lab. The role of the Scientific Glass blower is a vital component in securing the desirable, high Departmental grading of a University research establishment. The NVQs I had achieved helped provide testimony of my competence and contributed to my appointment at the University.

"My duties include the design and construction of all aspects of research apparatus and a comprehensive understanding of their application, repairs, glass identification and fault assessment, advice on all aspects of glass safety, glass handling and teaching on a one-to-one basis as necessary. I have continually utilised the skills and knowledge gained via NVQ 1 and 2.

"I have of course, continued to develop new skills and knowledge and, as indicated above, have contributed to the training of others. I have had the privilege of being able to demonstrate my skills at BSSG symposia, University Open Days and at demonstrations at my daughter's school. I have also developed the complementary skill of artistic glassblowing and bead making from my small private workshop. I feel I am privileged to be able to work with such a fascinating material and I am very fortunate to have the continued support of my family and employers in my many new glass ventures."

Below is a photograph of Terri at work and, above left, an example of her art work (commissioned by the Combined Forces Culinary Team)



NVQs lead to Promotion at BHD Windows

Since embarking on a series of training programmes through the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC), 25-year-old Jason Wakefield (above) has completed two GQA NVQs and been promoted twice. After completing the Level 2 NVQ he was promoted and undertook, with the assistance of NECC, a GTL Advanced Modern Apprenticeship framework programme.

Earlier this year he completed the AMA programme and again earned promotion. He now works within the Quality function and is expected to undertake further specialist training.

John Stelling, training advisor at the NECC, said: "Jason was an exceptional apprentice and his work is of a high standard. Since joining BHD Windows in 1998, he has shown determination and dedication throughout and has proved to be a valuable member of staff."

Still No Sign of Central National Funding for Glass Related Occupations!

Many GQA Approved Centres including colleges and private training providers are successfully implementing GQA NVQs across wide geographic areas, but at considerable administrative and bureaucratic costs to themselves. Some have negotiated contracts with numerous LSCs and other organisations that have accessed Government funds. However, thousands of companies, mainly SMEs, are finding it difficult to locate a GQA centre locally that has access to NVQ related funding and offers the GQA NVQ that is appropriate to their needs. Even large multi-site companies sometimes operating throughout the nation are holding back on the comprehensive implementation of GQA NVQs because of the need to liaise with a dozen or more LSCs on funding issues.

Every issue of Yellow Pages or the Thompson Directories list hundreds of companies that employ individuals with glass related competences. The dispersed nature of these individuals with glass related competences would make them an appropriate target group to acquire and prove their underpinning knowledge via 'IT' (including the Internet).

As some centres will be aware, GQA, whilst a relatively small Awarding Body, has piloted a Health and Safety Self Assessment CD ROM and is currently in dialogue with Prometric, a worldwide leader in computer based testing.

Prometric are the organisation that provided and implement the CITB Health and Safety Test at driving theory test centres. It is unlikely that GQA financial resources will in the short term enable the establishment of Internet based learning and computer based testing for its range of NVQ qualifications.

In the past, the National Training Organisation (NTO) arrangements would have addressed such issues for each sector (as indeed happened very successfully in the glass sector). However, central support for NTOs ceased last year prior to the introduction of their 'replacements', the Sector Skills Council (SSCs). Many industries including ours await anxiously, developments that will enable embryo SSCs to come to life and contribute to the development of learning and education for all (particularly those in SMEs and the self employed).

It would appear that even the recent white paper '21st Century Skills, Realising our Potential (Individuals, Employers, Nation)' with its commitment to 'create a new entitlement to free learning for anyone without a good foundation of employability skills to get the training they need to achieve such a qualification' has not been supported by 'new money' from central Government.

However, we must all wait and see!



The NLTG, 100 and Not Out

The North Lancs Training Group (NLTG) has been a supporter and implementer of GQA NVQs for many years. They have worked extensively, but not exclusively, with SMEs. Through the GQA NLTG Approved Centre, candidates from over one hundred (100) companies in the North West and Cumbria have achieved GQA NVQs. One such company is Window World (UPVC Systems) based in Carlisle, to whom eighteen NVQs have been awarded. The latest achiever is Andrew Broatch, shown in the picture above with Paul Fairhurst (Glass Scheme Co-ordinator), left, at the Cumbrian Awards ceremony at the Crown and Mitre Hotel, receiving an award after completing his FMA in Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications. Window World recognise the value of workplace learning and utilise the NLTG to provide a wide range of education and training.

Spec-Al Design a qualified success

Spec-Al Design Ltd, in conjunction with Schüco International Training Department, has enabled the majority of its workforce to achieve the GQA Level 2 NVQ in Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications.

On Friday 3rd October Mr Ray Potter, GQA's External Verifier, Mr Martin Sadler, Schüco International's Training Manager and Internal Verifier and Grenville Bramley one of Schüco International's Product Trainers and NVQ Assessors visited Spec-Al Designs premises. The purpose of this visit was to present 12 of Spec-AL's workforce with their NVQ certificates.

The company Spec-Al Design Ltd are acutely aware that there has been a distinct lack of quality qualification within the industry. Spec Al's Managing Director Mr Carl Goodall stated that the Spec-Al - Schüco Training Department partnership has provided an opportunity for their workforce to develop and progress their skills, knowledge and experience.

Schüco International, in addition to being a GQA Centre, are a Centre of Excellence with the Aluminium Training Alliance.



NVQ Implementation at GQA

Sarah Stewart, an Administration, Office and Technology NVQ Level 2 student at The Sheffield College, Parson Cross, has joined GQA on a day release basis for the academic year 2003/2004.

During her secondment to GQA, Sarah is putting into practice some of the administration skills and knowledge she is acquiring at Parson Cross College. She will become involved in the provision of normal office administration services and activities including the use of the PC, fax machine, telephone, photocopier and archiving machine, etc.

Both GQA and Sarah are audited by members of the college staff throughout her training at GQA.



A&V Awards

All new assessors and verifiers must in 2004, register and achieve the appropriate A&V Award(s), i.e.

- Level 3 Award in Assessing Candidates using a Range of Methods (A1)
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Candidates' Performance Through Observation (A2)
- Level 4 Award in Conducting Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process (V1)
- Level 4 Award in Conducting External Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process (V2)

It is not necessary for existing 'D' units qualified assessors and verifiers to achieve the 'new' qualifications. However, to remain recognised and licensed by GQA they must, work in accordance with the appropriate 'A&V Award(s)'

NB Registrations on 'D' units ceased in December 2002 and a deadline was set for achievement of D unit candidates as being 31 December 2003.

GQA CSCS Cards

All GQA External Verifiers are committed to the acquisition of a Regular Visitors CSCS Card. To date, four External Verifiers have passed the Prometric CITB Health and Safety Test with flying colours and have received or applied for their CSCS card. The other External Verifiers are signed up and are awaiting the opportunity to take the Health and Safety test at their local driving theory test centre.

GQA has produced an account of the experience of applying for and sitting the test called 'The CITB Health and Safety Test (an account of the experience)'. This can be found on the GQA website under GQA Approved Centre Support Materials in the GQA Info section. Alternatively, a copy can be obtained on request, by contacting Rebecca at GQA.

EYDP and Equal Opportunities in the Work Place

Skillhouse, the commercial arm of Derby College, is working in partnership with Bradford County Council to help people with disabilities achieve recognised qualifications.

The Council's dedicated Industrial Services Group aims to bring equal opportunities into the workplace. Nearly all employees have some form of disability. The Industrial Services Group bases its mission on giving a career path to everybody and encouraging staff to develop their skills. Bradford County Council are knocking down the barriers for people with disabilities by making their work accessible and easy.

Skillhouse has been working with the Industrial Services Group in Bradford to help employees receive a nationally recognised qualification with successful results.

Paul Dickinson works for the Industrial Services Group, he has achieved his NVQ in the Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications (Level 2) despite being visually impaired. He is regarded by his assessor, Andy Carrington, NVQ Co-ordinator, as an 'outstanding candidate'. Andy Carrington said: "When watching him work, you wouldn't know he is visually impaired as he identifies the type of profile to be reinforced, measures the length of reinforcing by feel, clamps the reinforcing into place and cuts to the required size, etc."

GQA Qualification Statistics Overview

Almost 8500 national vocational qualification (NVQ/SVQ) certificates of competence have been awarded by GQA since September 1990. These have been distributed across over 650 companies/organisations. The vast majority of which are SMEs.

2003 NATIONAL AWARDS FOR GQA NVQ SUPPORTERS AND ACHIEVERS

Glass Training Ltd as part of its 20th Annual General Meeting presented a number of glass sector Oscars. Among the award winners were individuals who had supported the implementation of Glass Qualifications Authority Ltd (GQA) NVQs or themselves had achieved GQA NVQ certificates of competence.

The award winners included:

Services to the Glass Industry Awards to:

Mike Morris

Mike is the Chairman of GQA and a Head of Department and Director of St Helens College.

Nigel Rees

Nigel is the Director General of the GGF and a active member of the GQA Board.

David Attwood

David is a workplace assessor at the GQA approved International Glass Centre at Brierley Hill in the Midlands.

A Vocational Excellence Award to:

Anthony Williams

Anthony of Mila Maintenance and Project Services has achieved both the D32 and D33 Assessor units of competence and was one of the first individuals to achieve the GQA Glazing Installation and Maintenance Level 3 NVQ.



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