News story: Cumbrian firm boosts project academy

Cumbria Operation and Maintenance Services (COMS) has developed a course in pre-operations & commissioning, which they are providing to prospective project professionals in the area.

The Cleator Moor based company specialises in pre-operation, engineering and maintenance, and was co-founded by Dave Garratt & Cliff Woodman in 2014.

Dave is a former Sellafield Ltd employee having honed his skills at the Sellafield nuclear site for more than 30 years, while Cliff spent many years in the pharmaceutical sector.

Andy Smith, pre-operations capability lead from Sellafield Ltd said:

> It's great to have Cumbrian companies helping to develop the next generation of project professionals, not only for Sellafield, but the UK.
>
> Course feedback so far is 100% positive and 100% recommended if you want to understand pre-operations and commissioning and how it can help project and task delivery.
>
> This is a great example of collaboration between supply chain and Sellafield Ltd in both development and delivery, drawing on the skills of both to produce something better than either could have achieved alone.
>
> The expertise that exists in COMS shows that Cumbria and the UK remain at the forefront of project education and skills.

Business Director for COMS, Cliff Woodman said:

> We are proud to be supporting the Project Academy for Sellafield and the University of Cumbria in the development and delivery of the Commissioning and Pre Ops Fundamentals Awareness course.
>
> It has allowed us to couple our pre-operations & engineering expertise with our training capability to produce a quality product to support project delivery on Sellafield site – and hopefully beyond.
>
> Also, through our success on this contract, we are very pleased to have been recognised as a competent & leading supplier of operations, maintenance and engineering services to Sellafield Ltd.

The Project Academy for Sellafield is the first of its kind in the UK.

It was launched three years year ago to help increase project capability across the country, and now has more than 1300 students on its books.

Delivered by the University of Cumbria, it is now becoming the gold standard model for project training, replicated by companies across the world.

Since formation in 2014, COMS now have more than 40 employees providing specialist services across West Cumbria. The company is now exploring opportunities to export skills across the nuclear sector and other industries.

You can find the Prospectus for the Project Academy for Sellafield here

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Speech: Science Minister speaks of the potential young people have in addressing the opportunities of the future

Chris Skidmore speaks at the Industrial Strategy Science Fair, part of British Science Week 2019.

Speech: Science Minister speaks of the potential young people have in addressing the opportunities of the future

Good afternoon everyone. I’m delighted to be here with you all, and as the Science Minister and I’m really pleased to see so many passionate, thoughtful and ambitious young people in the room today, particularly given it’s British Science Week.

This is a generation that I think will change the world – because you have shown that you want to.

Seeing your projects today, it’s obvious that you care about the future, and I’m delighted to see so many of you turning your enthusiasm towards solutions today.

We’ve got some big challenges ahead of us, and they’ve been the focus of the projects we’ve seen today, and of a lot of the work we do in government as part of our Industrial Strategy.

We now know some of what the future will – or should – look like:

- robots and artificial intelligence in our homes, schools and businesses;
- a waste-free world, tackling the plastics in our seas and the fumes in our air;
- self-driving cars taking us from A to B in low-carbon comfort while drones deliver our packages;
- and people living longer than ever before.

It’s going to take a lot of effort to make this exciting vision a reality. So we need you and your ideas.

I’ve already seen what you’re capable of, and I’m honestly blown away by the ideas I’ve seen today.

But I know that there are more people out there like you – young people with great potential – but who think that the STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and maths – just aren’t for them.

And I want to tell you all – that’s never the case.

Take me as an example – I always loved history: reading about 16th century kings, shadowy plots, assassinations and great battles.

But today I am the Science Minister, and I am lucky enough to spend my days naming the latest Mars Rover after Rosalind Franklin with astronaut Tim Peake and talking to scientists like Jim Al-Khalili.

Better yet, look at Jim’s example – what was football’s loss was physics’ gain.

But he knew what he wanted to do and worked hard. And today he’s one of the country’s most admired and inspiring physicists.

So I never want you to think that you can’t do it – I know you can.

STEM subjects are for everyone. And if you take them on, they can give you the tools you’ll need to design the programmes, build the machines and find

the cures of tomorrow.

And they will set you up for life too.

In this room today, we have people from some of the most interesting organisations in the world, from scientific bodies to international companies – and they all value STEM skills.

These organisations will be focusing on building that same future, and I'm sure they'll be eager to get bright minds like yours onto their teams.

But, of course, that future is yours. Which is why we want you to shape it.

These fourteen projects in the room today have shown how much creativity and talent there is in the younger generation. So we're opening a new competition to get even more of you involved with these ideas.

The Youth Industrial Strategy Competition is open for entries from now until November 2019. Finalists will be announced in the new year, and will be invited to a special finalist event in March.

You have the ideas and the determination that we need to build a safer, healthier, better planet. And STEM subjects can help you to turn those ideas into reality.

The future is yours – all you need to do is decide what you want it to be. And I am absolutely sure you'll do brilliantly.

Thank you.

News story: Dstl's first virtual reality collaboration is a success

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory specialists successfully trial virtual reality collaboration

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News story: Dstl's first virtual reality collaboration is a success

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has held its first-ever

virtual reality (VR) collaboration – with staff based at different Dstl sites meeting in cyber-space to collaborate on building a virtual aircraft engine. This first trial was a success, leaving the way open for more virtual meetings, including supporting training for a wide range of law enforcement and defence agencies.

If there's a major incident or humanitarian crisis anywhere in the world, the police agencies and the military could come together in a safe VR environment to prepare for the challenges they will face before they arrive on-site. The technology can also support training together from remote locations.

This virtual collaboration can take place between multiple sites, without anyone ever leaving their office, and can be done over secure lines, allowing sensitive scenarios to be used.

Participating in this first trial, a Dstl tester said:

> I was standing in a warehouse and could see a table with items. I could move over to it by clicking on the hand controller. Suddenly, I'm near some engine parts, part of an aeroplane on a bench. It's hyper-real and totally immersive.

The VR headset and hand controllers allow people to interact, talk to each other, point at and pick up items, and even fist-bump at the end of a successful meeting.

Mike Ferguson, from Immersive Technologies at Dstl, said:

> This is the first time this has been done at Dstl. We've identified a technology to do it, which presents huge opportunities for shared training, meeting and even new design work.

> Collaborating in a virtual volumetric space, using the latest VR technology, is very new. We've tried other systems, but this is the first VR system that we've found which is really effective. It's still evolving; in the future we'll be in a virtual space as ourselves and be able to see lifelike avatars. It's connecting with people. It's making the world smaller.

> For us, we're really interested in how we can develop the technology to support our customers to train more smartly, efficiently and effectively in the future. We learn by doing – enhancing muscle memory. By actually doing it, it helps you to perform better. With ever-increasing demands on our Policing and Defence colleagues, finding the time for quality training is becoming a challenge. We think we can alleviate some of the burden

through use of this technology.

Using Augmented Reality (AR) and VR – Doctors could one day to operate remotely, connected to surgical equipment at other locations.

In response to a terrorism incident anywhere in the world, the UK could help using remote 360 degree cameras, virtually placing an expert on the scene who can assess forensic opportunities or advise on an unusual explosive device.