

Press release: Rolls Royce seals deal at UK-Lebanon Business & Investment event

- Rolls Royce signs \$300 million deal with Middle East Airlines to provide engines and support to new fleet of aircraft
- More than 200 Lebanese contracts open for UK companies to bid on
- Lebanese PM Saad Hariri to meet with Cabinet Ministers during visit

Senior Cabinet Ministers, including International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox and International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt, will meet with Lebanese PM Saad Hariri, as he leads a delegation to the inaugural UK-Lebanon Business Investment Forum in London today.

The event saw a deal signed between Rolls Royce and Middle East Airlines (MEA), who have announced that the Airbus A330-900 will be the face of a new fleet of aircraft. The deal will see the British company providing support for the Trent 7000 engines which power the Airbus aircraft. The combined value of the engines and services to Rolls-Royce is approximately \$300 million.

The economic relationship between UK and Lebanon is growing stronger, with a range of significant opportunities opening up for British companies in recent months. Lebanon's \$23bn Capital Investment Programme, with more than 200 projects in transport, power-generation and water supply is open for UK companies to bid on.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

This is great news for British business – and the largest UK-Lebanon trade deal in recent history demonstrates the strength of our ties.

Our relationship with Lebanon is hugely important – covering security, the economy and aid to support it with its refugee crisis – and today's Forum is a vital moment to support Lebanon and celebrate our strong trade and investment links. A stable and prosperous Lebanon is vital for the wider security and stability of the Middle East.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

Today's Forum comes as the UK looks to broaden its trading relationships around the world, as we take control of our

independent trade policy for the first time in 40 years.

I'm delighted to see so many opportunities for British businesses in Lebanon, and my international economic department stands ready to assist any business that wants to expand or start their export operation to the country with strong package of support.

Prime Minister Designate of Lebanon Saad Hariri said:

I look forward to the opportunity of discussing our ambitious reform and capital investment program with leaders of the UK business community.

This program entails a large participation by the private sector, and I hope today's agreement between MEA and Rolls Royce opens the way for an increase in partnership between our two countries.

The relationship between the UK and Lebanon has never been stronger. British companies have supported infrastructure development in the country, the UK has provided assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces and investment to help create jobs. Total trade between the countries currently stands at £586m a year, with British exports making up the vast majority of this.

There is already a thriving UK business scene in Lebanon. The Port of Beirut is the busiest port in the Eastern Mediterranean thanks to the Beirut Container Terminal Consortium, a joint venture with Mersey Docks and Harbour UK. And, more Jaguars and Land Rovers are sold per head in the country than anywhere else in the world.

Today's event aims to develop this relationship further in the context of transitioning to a new bilateral agreement with Lebanon as the UK leaves the European Union. Speakers include FCO Middle East Minister Alistair Burt, and Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner Simon Penney.

Prime Minister Hariri and the Lebanese delegation will meet with the DIT and DFID Secretaries of State and HRH the Prince of Wales, making this the most senior bilateral interaction in recent years.

Further Info:

- Just last month we welcomed the launch of a unique partnership between the UK and Lebanon: the new London Stock Exchange Group' ELITE programme for helping Lebanese businesses attract global investors.
- The Forum will focus on elaborating the Government of Lebanon's Vision for Stabilisation, Growth and Employment, announced at the CEDRE conference in Paris earlier this year.
- The UK welcomes the recommitment to this CEDRE economic reform vision,

with its focus on improving the ease of doing business, tackling corruption, reforming the electricity sector and putting the country on a sustainable fiscal path

[News story: Second round of £5 million Taking Teaching Further programme opens](#)

The second round of the [Taking Teaching Further](#) (TTF) programme has opened today (12 December) inviting bids from colleges and post-16 providers to attract industry professionals to teach in further education.

The scheme forms a key part of the Government's wider investment in the further education sector as it prepares to introduce the first gold standard T Level qualifications from 2020 – high-quality technical courses equivalent to A levels. T Levels will provide young people with the cutting-edge skills and experience they need to secure a good job or progress into further training.

Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills Anne Milton, said:

We are transforming technical education in this country with the introduction of new T Levels from 2020, so more young people have access to high quality qualifications which include high-quality training opportunities with a clear path to skilled jobs.

The Taking Teaching Further programme will help attract talented and inspiring people with industry expertise to teach in the further education sector. These are the teachers who can inspire, energise and bring on the next generation of highly-skilled young people

I'm delighted the second round has begun and I would urge colleges and post-16 providers to apply and take advantage of this.

The first round of the £5 million scheme was [launched in June](#) to further boost the quality of the post-16 teaching workforce by bringing in more people with diverse experiences so students gain the skills and knowledge that employers demand. The 37 successful providers, who will support 80 industry professional to retrain to work as teachers in their institutions, were announced in October.

Good progress is being made to recruit and appoint these new teachers. This includes Buckinghamshire College Group, who have already recruited five

teachers through the programme in priority areas such as Digital, Maths, and Childcare. More appointments are expected to be made by first round providers in the new year:

Paula Kavanagh, Senior Lead at Buckinghamshire College Group said:

The trainee teachers taking part in this project are benefitting enormously from the support they're receiving from experienced teachers within Buckinghamshire College Group. However, this is a two-way street and the College recognises and appreciates the value of recruiting industry professionals from these hard to recruit areas. > This has enabled a professional exchange between trainee and teacher which is reciprocal and benefits everyone, not least the students.

The first application round is also funding 20 innovative projects to explore how industry and the further education sector can work together to make sure students gain the knowledge and skills businesses really need.

TTF has been designed with the Association of Colleges, and the Education and Training Foundation who are also delivering the programme on our behalf to create further links between the education sector and industry.

Steve Frampton, President of the AoC, said: > We know all too well the impact that great teachers can have on students. College staff work to transform the lives of 2.2 million people daily, so it is great that so much work is being put into the further education sector to boost the teaching workforce. We are delighted that our discussions with DfE have yielded a programme of this quality.

David Russell, Chief Executive of the ETF said: > We are delighted to be opening the second round of Taking Teaching Further which will continue to develop and build the country's future through attracting bright industry talent into the FE sector alongside increasing collaboration between the sector and industry. > > The first round has started to set the standard for recruiting world-class teachers and trainers into FE who combine teaching excellence with hands-on industry experience. The successful second round applicants now have the opportunity to follow in their path. > > I encourage all colleges and FE providers to consider taking part in this important programme that will make a real difference to their organisations, learners and local employers.

Simon Bigrigg, Head of Teaching Academy, EKC Group, a successful applicant from strand 1, round 1 said:

As a Group we are fully committed to recruiting and retaining teaching staff in hard to fill areas, and Strand 1 of Taking Teaching Further is providing an excellent opportunity to engage and support new teachers. To date we have recruited some very promising industry professionals into teaching roles, as we are

able to offer the enhanced support package provided by the scheme.

David Evans, CECAMM Managing Director, Isle of Wight College, a successful applicant from strand 2, round 1 said:

CECAMM, part of the Isle of Wight College, is delighted to have been selected for Taking Teaching Further Strand 2. Recruiting and retaining lecturing staff in Engineering has become a national issue, one which we have experienced in our first year of operation. We feel the Taking Teaching Further Project will allow us to ensure our staff feel connected with industry and that industry feel that their requirements are embedded in the Engineering curriculum.

Further information about TTF and how to apply can be found on the [ETF website](#)

News story: Powerhouse praise for Sellafield apprenticeships

The comment was made during the 'Northern Powerhouse Apprentice Summit', which gathered more than 150 apprentices and business leaders from the north, at MediaCity in Manchester.

Degree apprentices from Sellafield Ltd, Nicholas Mars and Simone Wilson, mixed with trainees from companies like Barclays, Co-op, Bentley Motors Ltd, Manchester Airports Group and Nissan.

Sellafield Ltd joined the Northern Powerhouse Partnership a year ago, to connect Cumbria and Warrington with other northern towns and cities helping to drive economic growth via investments in skills, innovation, transport and culture.

Former apprentice and now Director of Transformation for Sellafield Ltd, Angela Seeney, spoke at the event.

She said;

It was great to see Sellafield Ltd praised for our apprenticeship programme.

I was delighted to share the story of my own apprenticeship and career, and also what Sellafield Ltd is doing to help shape the

UK's future workforce.

Sellafield has always been a powerhouse in its own right, but our greatest challenge is ensuring we leave a positive legacy not only for Cumbria, but the country.

From trailblazing new degree apprenticeships to creating a project academy and funding apprenticeships for small businesses in the community, we are proud to be driving skills for the north.

With 42% of apprentices at Sellafield being female, the company was also praised for driving gender balance in the nuclear industry.

Simone Wilson, Control, Electrical, and Instrumentation Degree Apprentice from Risley said:

I've really enjoyed the opportunity to speak to apprentices from other industries.

What I found most encouraging were the female role models, both business leaders and trainees, sharing their stories and discussing how we can work together to encourage young people to pursue apprenticeships.

Earlier in the year, Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry, visited Cumbria to find out more about the region's contribution to economic growth in the north and was 'impressed by the range of high quality apprenticeships being developed in Cumbria'.

You can read the full story here [Minister powers up Cumbria's potential](#)

[News story: Post 16 funding arrangements published for 2019 to 2020](#)

We have published our first combined [post-16 funding letter](#), for the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

The letter brings together the 16 to 19 and 19+ funding in a single letter, rather than them being sent separately at different points of the year. This has been enabled by bringing together 16 to 19 and 19+ allocations, funding and contracting teams into a new post-16 funding centre to improve our service offer to customers.

Last academic year, we allocated a total of £8.6 billion to around 4000 institutions, which enabled 4.6 million students to participate in further education.

Building on this significant investment, in the 2019 to 2020 academic year, we have protected the national base rates for 16-19 learners at £4000 per full time student aged 16 to 17 and £3,300 per student for 18 year olds.

The government continues to invest in further education so that more people have a wide choice of high quality education and training. This includes:

- up to £20 million to March 2020 to help providers prepare for the delivery of new, gold-standard T Levels. This includes through the [Taking Teaching Further programme](#) and [T Level Continued Professional Development Offer](#) – to plan for September 2020 provision, we will provide funding information before the summer break in 2019 and will make firm allocations by the end of March 2020, in line with the usual 16 to 19 funding timetable
- up to £74 million in 2019 to 2020 financial year to build capacity to deliver industry placements for 16 to 19 students
- £50 million to improve post-16 basic maths through new [Centres for Excellence programme](#) and a basic maths premium pilot
- £16 million for an [Advanced Maths Support Programme](#) to raise the quality and take-up of Level 3 maths
- [£38 million in capital funding](#) for the first providers of T Levels to fund equipment and facilities, to be allocated in 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021
- funding of £170 million to support new [Institutes of Technology](#) from academic year 2019 to 2020 to deliver higher-level technical skills
- the [£15 million Strategic College Improvement Fund](#) to help weaker colleges improve
- access to the one-off funding from the [Restructuring Facility](#) until end-March 2019 (for those who submitted an application prior the deadline of 28 September 2018) to enable colleges to make the structural changes required to put them on a sustainable financial footing

The letter also sets out information on how we funded AEB allocations will change as a result of devolution from 2019 to 2020. AEB providers will be given more information about this through illustrative allocation letters being released this month.

The letter also outlines our continued work to increase scrutiny to protect learners and public funds and how it is supporting colleges ahead of the launch of the new insolvency regime, early next year.

News story: Strengthening vocational and technical qualifications

Ofqual is today (Wednesday 12 December) publishing [research](#) that identifies evidence of grade inflation associated with internal assessment in some 'older style' Applied General qualifications.

The research shows that over time, there has been a significant increase in the number of students securing the top grades in some qualifications, which has not been matched by students' prior attainment or their subsequent degree or employment outcomes.

As such, Ofqual is calling on awarding organisations to act on the findings of today's report to address the risk of grade inflation in these legacy qualifications.

More generally, and recognising the important role that this group of qualifications plays in both widening participation in higher education and as a route into employment, Ofqual believes there is a need for awarding organisations to consider how best to strengthen their controls around internal assessment across a wide range of technical and vocational qualifications.

Phil Beach, Executive Director for Vocational and Technical Qualifications, said:

As the regulator, our primary role is to maintain the integrity of standards in qualifications, and wherever we find evidence that this may be threatened, it's important that we step in. This research shows that there are unwarranted increases in results in some of the 'older style' Applied General qualifications, and this has the potential to undermine public confidence and devalue the achievements of students. Although the Department for Education has indicated its intention to review these qualifications, we must take appropriate steps to manage the potential for grade inflation while they remain in use.

We are therefore calling on awarding organisations to strengthen their controls on internal assessment in any qualification where there are potential risks to standards. We will also be considering whether additional bespoke guidance or additional regulatory requirements are required to ensure qualification standards are maintained.

Bill Watkin, CEO, Sixth Form Colleges Association, said:

This report makes clear that there are great differences between

the old and new versions of the Applied General qualifications.

The new version is more rigorous and demanding, and, like A level, it has an examination component. It is considerably harder for students to get the top grades in them, but it is quite right that more and more sixth forms – in schools and colleges – are choosing them. They prepare young people for the workplace and for university, they represent an essential pathway for students to acquire skills that our economy and society desperately need, and they provide the kind of stretch and challenge that are needed to engage and motivate young people to be aspirational and successful. The new version should ensure the continued opportunity to study applied general qualifications which are critical for students, for the acquisition of skills essential for the workplace and higher education, and for social mobility and widening participation. If the old version is to be discontinued after the government's review, as seems likely, students, colleges and schools will need reassurances that their remaining concerns about the new version have been addressed.