

# QCF submitting organisation

SummitSkills has been approved as a submitting organisation for units and qualifications structures onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), the government reform of vocational qualifications for England, Northern Ireland and Wales designed to give learners and employers more choice and flexibility.

On 17 June, the regulating bodies approved our submitting status, giving us responsibility for ensuring that the units and qualification structures we develop for the sector are fit-for-purpose, and reflect relevant legislation, technological development and National Occupational Standards. We will also determine the assessment principles and endorse qualification packages produced by awarding organisations.

We have worked hard to ensure the new qualifications being reformed under the QCF continue to reflect the skills needs of the sector's industries, employers and individuals, as

well as the best parts of existing vocational qualifications for learners.

There has been a lot to do and we have seen some delays to parts of the process which have been outside of our control. SummitSkills was aware that, with September fast approaching and the training provider network wanting to offer courses, the position on funding needed be clarified quickly. We discussed our concerns with the Skills Funding Agency and the Young Peoples Learning Agency, and both have now extended the funding for existing NQF qualifications to 31 December 2010 for new starts. As QCF qualifications become available, providers will be encouraged to register new starts onto these qualifications.

Research arising from our Sector Skills Agreement enabled us to produce our Sector Qualification Strategy in April 2008. This details our vision for qualifications over the next 10 years, to improve the competence levels in our sector and ensure clients', customers' and consumer confidence in the technical abilities of the sector's workforce. SummitSkills views the QCF as a vehicle for the qualification of competence for the future in building services engineering.

The qualifications that SummitSkills has developed for the air conditioning, electrotechnical, heating and ventilating, plumbing and refrigeration industries to be included in the QCF are competence-based. This means they reflect the knowledge and skills needed by operatives to attain and demonstrate occupational competence relevant to their job roles and responsibilities. We have worked closely with certification and registration bodies in the sector, and continue to do so to ensure the qualifications dovetail with their requirements.

To find out more about vocational qualifications reform, please visit our website at [www.summitskills.org.uk/VQR](http://www.summitskills.org.uk/VQR) or email SummitSkills' development manager Trevor Hill: [trevor.hill@summitskills.org.uk](mailto:trevor.hill@summitskills.org.uk)

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Fresh new people and a fresh new look!



## The view from here

**SummitSkills' chief executive Keith Marshall OBE gives us his views on the news affecting building services engineering:**



There have been several significant changes since the last issue of Skills Insight, most notably of course, the election.

We developed good working relations with several members of the coalition Government while they were in opposition and are pleased they

have retained the same responsibilities in Government. We look forward to building on these and also with other members of the new administration.

Early signs from the Government indicate that they continue to be supportive of the sectoral approach to skills. Working with colleague SSCs we are making proposals to the Secretary of State as to how we can contribute to improving efficiency and effectiveness in the skills arena. Recognising the need to 'do more with less', we await the implications of the spending review in the autumn.

Our last edition included a major piece on the introduction of the QCF. This is a big, complicated project working to tight deadlines. There have, however, been concerns at the speed of implementation not only in our sector but across other sectors also. One of SummitSkills' main concerns is to ensure that there are appropriate fundable qualifications available for the sector. Due to a number of circumstances, several beyond our control, it became clear during June that we could not be certain that the QCF qualifications would be available for September. We agreed with the Skills Funding Agency that funding for the current qualifications should be extended thereby ensuring continuing fundable qualifications.

We continue to work on the implementation of the QCF with the benefits as described last time, and will be encouraging movement to the new qualifications at the earliest opportunity.

Probably the most exciting change has been acceptance of our Expression of Interest to develop a National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies. We are well into the business planning stage and hope to have the academy operating by the end of the year. This is a significant development for us and, more importantly, the sector.

The drive towards the carbon reduction targets and a low carbon economy is dependent on a skilled, successful and efficient building services engineering sector. This is at the heart of SummitSkills' activities and the academy is a key element of that strategic intent.

## Tommy's touching talk

TV personality Tommy Walsh added a touch of celebrity sparkle when he toured the skills competitions for several hours at the South East heats recently.

SkillELECTRIC and SkillPLUMB were held over two days in tandem with SkillBuild, utilising the excellent facilities provided by hosts Barking and Dagenham College.

Neil Collishaw, head of skills competitions at SummitSkills, said: "Tommy entertained us with stories about his own humble path to success, and his words of encouragement really touched a chord with competitors and visitors alike."



### Triple-header

The team scored an amazing triple-header when SkillELECTRIC, SkillPLUMB and SkillFRIDGE ran simultaneously over an exciting two-day event, enhanced by the superb facilities and hospitality of Coalville's Stephenson College. The electrical event was all the more remarkable when we were joined by guest judge Matt Derbyshire (pictured below left), last year's Midlands winner and UK finalist, who helped to test and trial this year's practical project. Another successful series of heats took the teams to Leeds College of Building, which hosted the SkillELECTRIC, SkillPLUMB and SkillPIPE North of England heats, again alongside SkillBuild.

### Women of the world

Some of our successful 2009 competitors are being reviewed for possible selection to WorldSkills 2011. One of these is Sabrina Thomas (pictured below), who won the 2009 South of England SkillELECTRIC heat and did very well at the UK final. Women like Sabrina are an inspiration for others to join what is often considered a male-dominated occupation. Chelsey White followed hot in Sabrina's footsteps, competing in the 2010 SkillPLUMB Midlands event, narrowly missing a place in the final three after a brilliant performance.



All the English regional winners join their counterparts from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at the UK finals later this year. Results and photos will be published on the Skill M&E website: [www.skillMandE.org.uk](http://www.skillMandE.org.uk)



# Merseyside green centre

Merseyside's first training centre dedicated to microgeneration technologies is due to open in a move that looks set to contribute to the transformation of the region's training and skills in renewable energy.

The Green Energy Training Centre (GETC) is the result of a partnership between the Skills Funding Agency, Stiebel Eltron a renewable energy product manufacturer; and Scientiam a Birkenhead training provider that has pledged support for SummitSkills' National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies.

The new centre on the Wirral will offer the highest standards of training on the latest equipment, helping installers to gain accreditation to the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS). Only property owners who use MCS accredited installers will be eligible for Government grants towards the cost of buying and installing energy efficient systems, as well as other proposed funding incentives.

SummitSkills welcomes the new GETC and hopes it will make a significant contribution to development of the sector's microgeneration and renewable skills in England's North West.

For more information about SummitSkills' work in the region, please email our operations manager Rob Wellman: [rob.wellman@summitskills.org.uk](mailto:rob.wellman@summitskills.org.uk)

South  
West

## Low Carbon High Skills

Low carbon businesses in England's South West are set to benefit from a multi-million pound initiative to develop higher level skills in the switch to an environmentally-friendly economy. SummitSkills is working on the regional Low Carbon High Skills project which is funded by the South West Regional Development Authority and co-ordinated by Universities South West.

The region has been designated as a Low Carbon Economic Area, with a focus on marine energy. The project aims to supply 250 part-funded graduate internships to low carbon businesses in marine energy, non-marine microgeneration, civil nuclear and sustainable construction.

SummitSkills will help to identify training needs and address bespoke solutions for the sector, in partnership with RegenSW, the South West Manufacturing Advisory Service, E&U Skills, the Association of Colleges and other related regional skills partners.

Further education colleges that have been involved in our South West Sector Skills Agreement Implementation Group have been recommended for specific roles and a three-day workshop is being held in July 2010.

For more information, please telephone our regional representative Barnaby Elphick on 07827 019133 or email him: [be.3bconsultancy@btinternet.com](mailto:be.3bconsultancy@btinternet.com)



Mark Clemson,  
Director,  
New World  
Solar Installations

## Employer Profile

Since its launch in 2006, New World Solar Installations has carried out 850 renewable energy installations for public and private clients across the UK.

### *How did you get involved in SummitSkills work?*

I met SummitSkills' operations manager Kevin Dowd at an environmental skills seminar organised by the West Midlands Regional Observatory. Kevin invited me to talk to the West Midlands Implementation Group so I could share our experiences as an employer in the renewable energy sector.

### *Why is it important to you to contribute?*

I believe it is essential that trainers and skills providers understand the requirements of the sector's employers.

### *How does your company get involved in training?*

Our company has a history of working with disadvantaged job seekers and working closely with not-for-profit community social enterprises. It is also important our people are fully trained to deliver our best-in-class philosophy.

### *Why is it important for employers to recruit and train?*

If we are to move towards a low carbon economy, it is essential that we have the necessary skills available to fit the technologies that will increase our fuel security and reduce our carbon emissions. Maybe then we can leave a decent legacy for the generations who follow us.

# New Board Members

We are pleased to welcome four new members to SummitSkills' board:



**Patrick Allen**  
director of Abel Alarms and vice-chairman of the Fire and Security Association



**Richard Clarke**  
National Apprenticeship Officer, Unite the Union



**John Miller**  
managing director of JH Shouksmiths building services engineers



**George Thomson**  
established The Shower Doctor in 1993 to focus on shower repair in the Edinburgh area

Details of all our board members is available on our website at [www.summitskills.org.uk/board](http://www.summitskills.org.uk/board)

# Skills Insight is changing...

We are launching a brand new look and style with our November edition. Fresh and innovative, it will still be packed full of the latest building services engineering news and views, so watch out for your copy!

Get Involved!

We want to hear from you – if you're a business in building services engineering, we need your views to develop skills and training for the sector. Contact us to find out how you can contribute and benefit:

Send us your details via:

- Fax: fill in your details and fax this page to 01908 303989
- Tel: 01908 303960
- email: [enquiries@summitskills.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@summitskills.org.uk)

# New Appointments



**Nigel Hollett – Head of Environmental Technologies**

Nigel has worked in the area of sustainable development for a number of years both in the public and private sector. He joins SummitSkills from The Utility Partnership where he was Divisional Manager involved with sustainability appraisals and renewable energy assessments.

**Michael O'Brien – London Employer Engagement Manager**

Following an extensive 20 year career in the downstream side of the oil industry, Michael also brings with him a wealth of valuable experience gained during the last 15 years as a contracts manager in the construction industry. He will be working closely with the SummitSkills' London team on various projects in and around the capital.



**Geraldine Craven – Development Manager**

Geraldine has worked for Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) for around eight years (and prior to that when they were National Training Organisations). As a key member of the development team, she will be working on a variety of projects including the Training Quality Standard.

## National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies

**Sheila Hoile and Michael Kilgour** will act as consultants during development of the business plan for the new academy.

Lead consultant **Sheila** is Visiting Professor at the School for the Built Environment, Salford University. She was formerly Director of Education and Strategy at CITB-ConstructionSkills, and has a Masters Degree in Education and Industry.

**Michael** will be providing consultancy support and brings a wealth of valuable experience to his role, having previously developed business plans for National Skills Academies. As a director of Kilgour Consulting Ltd, he has worked with top five global client organisations within the universities, management consultancies, pensions agencies and armed forces sectors.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

# National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies

Employers in the building services engineering sector in England are set to benefit from a new National Skills Academy that will co-ordinate skills training in design, installation and maintenance of environmental technologies.

The National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies will play a key role in transforming the ability for businesses in the sector to access training and skills needed to meet demand for installation of renewable and environmental technologies in the UK.

Keith Marshall OBE, chief executive of SummitSkills said: "The creation of a National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies is a critical step forward for building services engineering.

"Future jobs and employment in the sector depend on businesses and employers developing the skills to deal with the task of fitting the environmental technologies which will be commonplace as the UK meets its commitments to the low carbon agenda.

"The new academy will play a key role in ensuring that this skills capability is developed and that building services engineering can proactively promote the green agenda to consumers and be a trailblazer for environmental technology skills."

Currently in the business planning stage, the National Skills Academy is due to launch by the end of 2010.



## Pioneering launch

London's South Bank University is the prestigious setting for a pioneering new facility, the Centre for Efficient and Renewable Energy in Buildings (CEREB). It was launched at a special event in June attended by SummitSkills' chief executive Keith Marshall OBE and the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson (pictured).

Located at roof level of the brand new K2 teaching building, CEREB is at the forefront of low carbon building design. The multi-million pound project was established in partnership with City and Kingston Universities to study and demonstrate low carbon technologies in the built environment. The new facility is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the London Development Agency and industry partners M&E Sustainability.

The centre provides an exciting teaching environment for renewable and sustainable development. It is the first of its kind to be located in a city setting with a dedicated space for research and development of environmental technologies in urban buildings.

To find out more visit the CEREB website at [www.cereb.org.uk](http://www.cereb.org.uk) or email SummitSkills' operations manager Vince Glover: [vince.glover@summitskills.org.uk](mailto:vince.glover@summitskills.org.uk)

Northern  
Ireland

## Employers key to apprenticeships

SummitSkills has been talking to Northern Ireland's building services engineering employers to understand the skills issues they face. We found that, despite the recent economic turmoil, they remain fully committed to apprenticeship training, through Apprenticeships NI.

Here, around 13,000 people are working in 3,600 of the sector's businesses. These employers are leading the way on quality training through apprenticeships. They welcomed the 2009 Committee for Employment and Learning review of apprenticeships in Northern Ireland which recommended that employers should be the drivers of how apprenticeships evolve.

Derek Poole, CHC Ltd, said "The employed apprenticeship method of training equips our apprentices with the knowledge and skills to do the job better, enabling us to get the workforce we need now and in the future."

SummitSkills' apprentice cost-benefit analysis report published last year highlighted that effective use of apprentices can accumulate significant savings in labour costs.

Lewis Darragh, Darson Services, said "We employ apprentices as an essential part of our business and the employed apprentices are motivated and work effectively and efficiently for our business."

Although recruitment and retention of employed apprentices has been affected by the recession, the sector's employers remain convinced that this is still the best way to develop highly skilled, enthusiastic and committed future employees.



# Green events

## Where have we been?

- EcoBuild, Earls Court, 2–4 April
- Nemex at Sustainability Live! NEC Birmingham, 20–22 April
- Greenbuild Expo, Manchester Central, 26 & 27 May

## Why were we there?

SummitSkills is spearheading the sector's training and skills development for environmental technologies. With the introduction of the Government's carbon reduction measures such as Feed in Tariffs, and stiff competition from European companies, we are promoting opportunities for sector businesses wishing to upskill their workforce.

## What did we do?

We provided visitors with practical advice on expanding business potential and bridging skills gaps. Our skills seminars were extremely popular and we took part in the panel of experts to discuss the sector's opportunities.

We introduced the National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies and talked about funding support, the National Occupational Standards and labour market information.

## What's next?

We'll be following up the contacts we've made at the shows, keeping everyone up to date with the latest environmental news and views from the sector, as well as what's happening with the National Skills Academy and development of new qualifications.

## Scotland

### Promoting microgeneration qualifications

Ian Stirrat, SummitSkills' operations manager for Scotland, gave a presentation at this year's Scottish and Northern Ireland Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) conference to outline SummitSkills' development strategy for a range of microgeneration systems qualifications and training.

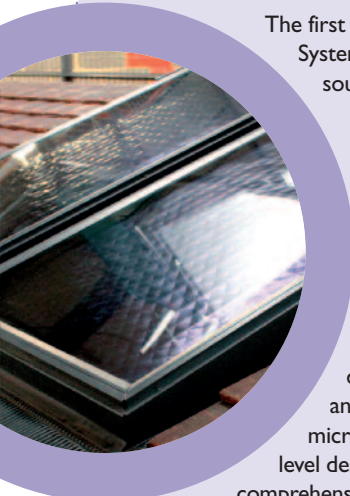
The first of these, the Certificate in Environmental Technology Systems, includes solar water heating, air and ground source heat pumps, as well as solar photovoltaics.

The qualification, available from July 2010, will be jointly awarded between the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the industry consortium of SNIPEF; Scotland's trade association for the electrical industry SELECT; and the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association.

Further competence-based units are being developed. These will cover biomass, water harvesting and recycling, micro Combined Heat and Power, micro/small wind and micro hydro. Complementary high-level design units are also under development to ensure comprehensive coverage of microgeneration technologies.

SummitSkills is encouraging building services engineering employers to become Accredited Installers to secure the business benefits of these expanding areas of work.

For further information on these qualifications, please telephone Ian Stirrat at SummitSkills on 0131 526 3151 or email [ian.stirrat@summitskills.org.uk](mailto:ian.stirrat@summitskills.org.uk)



# HE focus

SummitSkills is organising a building services engineering event in London this autumn that focuses on Higher Education. The day will include the launch of a scheme for endorsing the sector's Foundation degrees that have been developed in line with our Foundation degree framework specification.

This lively event will combine presentations and workshops on topics including funding and proposed Higher Apprenticeships, as well as skills development for environmental technologies.

Delegates are invited from across the UK Higher Education sector and places are free of charge so early registration is recommended.

Full details and booking information will be published on our website as soon as they are confirmed but in the meantime, to register an interest, please email SummitSkills' development manager Catherine Elliott at [catherine.elliott@summitskills.org.uk](mailto:catherine.elliott@summitskills.org.uk)

Wales

Skills Growth Wales

SummitSkills is encouraging Welsh companies affected by the recession to find out more about special funding designed to promote low carbon technology skills and help reinvigorate the economy.

Skills Growth Wales has been created by the Welsh Assembly Government to help businesses in Wales to grow in turnover, profit and/or employment. It can pay an average of £3,000 per person for higher level and new low carbon technology training. This builds on the success of ProAct, a scheme extended to include building services engineering to provide financial support for the sector's employers during the recession.

To apply for funding from Skills Growth Wales, growing businesses need to show how it will help them expand, or how the additional training would allow them to benefit from a significant growth opportunity.

If you want to find out if your business is eligible please contact the Business and Skills hotline on 0845 6066160. It can provide specific training advice and support, as well as guidance on other sources of government help.

For more information about SummitSkills' work in Wales, please email our operations manager Kathryn Hopkins-Morgan: [kathryn.morgan@summitskills.org.uk](mailto:kathryn.morgan@summitskills.org.uk)