

Addressing the Skills Needs of the Energy Sector in North East England

Representatives from more than twenty organisations gathered at the Swan Institute for Energy Research, Newcastle University last month to debate the skills issues facing the energy sector in the North East of England.

The event, sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), saw an eminent panel of industry experts responded to presentations from Newcastle and Northumbria Universities on work being done in Higher Education Institutes to meet the anticipated skills requirements of the renewable energy and subsea engineering sectors.



L to R: Stephen Hope, AMEC Natural Resources; Malcolm Kennedy, New and Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC); Stan Higgins, North East Process Industries Cluster (NEPIC); Alex Fowler, One North East; Caroline Sudworth and Gordon Jackson, Cogent Sector Skills Council.

Many challenges were issued to employers, universities and careers advisers in what was a very healthy debate, and the representatives of Newcastle University, University of Northumbria, the Regional Development Agency, One North East and COGENT, the Sector Skills Council for Chemicals, Nuclear, Oil and Gas, Petroleum and Polymers committed to continue to work to ensure that the future skills needs of the energy sector in North East England are addressed.

A lack of awareness amongst young people of careers in the energy industry was cited by many as a barrier to meeting the skills shortages in the energy industry and employers were urged to take part in the forthcoming Energise Your Future event http://www.nofenergy.co.uk/view_event.php?event=104&read=7&parent=7 at Newcastle Metro Arena on 17th and 18th March.

Employers were also urged to take part in the second stage of consultation for the new Diploma in Science. A statement document containing a vision and aims linked to draft Topics and possible content will be placed on the Diploma's website, www.sciencediploma.co.uk, on the 9th Feb until 23rd Feb during which time comment is welcomed.