

Northampton, UK
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South West Trains apprentices are Midlands-bound thanks to new training contract

South West Trains first train operating company to sign up to new National Training Academy for Rail

South West Trains will be the first train operating company (TOC) to benefit from the new National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR).

Under a rolling contract that starts in September, the entire intake of engineering apprentices from South West Trains will attend the National Training Academy for Rail and over a period of 36 months to be trained in a variety of subjects including BTEC Level 3 Electrical/Electronic Engineering, NVQ Level 3 Engineering Maintenance, and HNC Level 4 Electrical/Electronic Engineering.

NTAR will be responsible for the administration of South West Trains' apprenticeship programme, including framework registration, qualification provision, learner enrolment, college management, certification, scheme accreditation, Skills Funding Agency (SFA) arrangements, and Ofsted preparation and measures as well as providing scheme enrichment in the form of technical and professional development modules.

Announced last year, NTAR is a joint project between the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE) and industry partner Siemens contributing the other 50 per cent.

The Academy will be housed in a bespoke state-of-the-art facility adjacent to the Siemens train maintenance depot in Kings Heath, Northampton. The Academy will combine the use of unique practical equipment and workshop facilities in addition to classroom-based teaching using state of the art technology.

The Academy was established in response to a forecast skills shortage of around 4,000 people over the next five years, caused by factors such as an ageing workforce, the technological advancement of rolling stock, and investment and growth in the industry.

Simon Rennie, General Manager of the National Training Academy for Rail, said:

“The UK rail industry is at an exciting junction, with many million-pound projects such as Thameslink due to create thousands of jobs across the country. But the skills gap remains a challenge, with far too few children and young people dreaming of an engineering career, and fewer yet looking to specialize in rail. There is therefore a great need for NTAR, and I am looking forward to welcoming South West Trains’ apprentices at the Academy later this year.”

Christian Roth, Engineering Director for South West Trains, said:

“I am delighted to announce that our apprentices are first in line to study at the National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR), providing them with the kind of bespoke training that will allow them to hit the ground running.

“The academy will also encourage cross-pollination across the industry; our apprentices will get to meet and study alongside apprentices from other TOCs and industry-leading companies such as Siemens. This kind of cross-industry partnership has long been a priority for us, and builds on our long-term partnership with Siemens.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

For images, build and fly through video animations and additional materials, visit www.ntar.co.uk

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About the National Training Academy for Rail - NTAR

At NTAR, our ambition is to be recognised as an international Centre of Excellence for training in traction and rolling stock – to be the source of pride for the rail industry, acting as a flagship for skills development and for collaborative working, delivering a successful and sustainable model.

Born from an immediate need to train a workforce to maintain the new Thameslink rolling stock, a unique and more ambitious public/private partnership across government, agencies and private enterprise has been developed to address the Traction and Rolling Stock training needs of the market more widely. From this partnership, NTAR has been created with a core objective of playing a leading role in the new Railway Skills development programmes being driven by NSARE – all underpinned by strong collaborative working and consultation with the market to make sure prioritised needs of the industry are met.

Our immediate focus is on consulting with a wide range of potential customers across the industry so that when we open our doors in the autumn of 2015, we are truly responding to the immediate needs of the industry - while also developing what we will offer and how over the medium and long term horizons. We will be attending a wide range of events over the remainder of the year and we are consulting widely so that we really do offer what the industry needs.

- NTAR will establish a hub of core in-house expertise as part of a wider hub and spoke model at a world class facility in Northampton – currently in its build phase – providing a blended learning model, combining use of unique practical equipment and workshop facilities in addition to classroom based teaching
- During the build period, we will consult with the industry to understand and prioritise demand that matters most when finalising our curriculum
- We will build a network of trusted and qualified partners to deliver our syllabus, adopting and reinforcing NSARE's accreditation and skills recording
- We will collaborate with the training businesses, universities, colleges and professional organisations at different locations to help build a complementary ecosystem of training expertise – including delivering to other strategic organisations such as the National College for High Speed Rail. This will include building international relationships to harness knowledge and skills and expand the reach of our catchment.
- We will also make available our facility as a route to support both local and national training organisations in broadening their reach across the industry

About the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering - NSARE

Following two years of research and development, the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE) was established in November 2010, when the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills, Vince Cable, announced that the UK Government would support the Business Plan. NSARE Limited was incorporated in January 2011 as a 'not for profit' company, wholly owned by its Members and 'opened for business' from its National Office in central London.

The corporate Membership scheme was launched at its first national conference in June 2011; today it has over **350** Member organisations and is still growing. Membership includes railway companies, private sector training companies, Further Education Colleges, Universities, Qualification Development and Awarding Organisations. Two-thirds of NSARE Members are SMEs.

The five key areas of activity are:

- Forecasting the skills challenges to deliver the railway of the future
- Promoting the rail industry in schools, colleges and universities
- Developing the railway engineering skills standards and qualifications
- Accrediting the railway engineering training provision
- Supporting competency management processes and systems