



## Trinity St David

### APEL for Oil Refinery Process Operators

We are pleased to present a collaborative project between Murco Petroleum Ltd, Pembrokeshire College and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David for consideration for a UALL award.

This project brings together Murco's comprehensive staff development programme, professional subject expertise from Pembrokeshire College, and education development and APEL expertise from staff at Trinity Saint David. The outcome has been the accreditation of experiential learning for a specific group of Murco employees who have not had access to Higher Education qualifications.

Murco in Milford Haven have developed a comprehensive in-house training programme for Process Operators but no recognised university level qualifications are currently available in this field.

The company is committed to high-quality training and wishes to allow their motivated staff the opportunity to gain credit for the extensive training and learning they have undertaken and achieved. Their in-house programmes include an intensive eight week classroom based induction course which leads to a non-accredited Profile of Achievement certificate, followed by practical training over a longer period (which can extend to three years). The training programme is endorsed by the relevant Sector Skill Council (Cogent), City and Guilds and the National Skills Academy for the Process Industries (NSAPI), but does not accrue HE credit. It lasts approximately 2,400 hours over two years.

The training team at Murco have had extensive discussions with other educational institutions, but these institutions lacked the experience of accrediting prior experiential learning, and wanted the learners to evidence their ability through examinations or to repeat the prior learning. Clearly a more responsive and innovative approach to mapping prior learning to accredited learning outcomes was required and the three institutions worked together to successfully achieve this.

This accreditation has been accomplished within a short time frame, after Trinity Saint David and Pembrokeshire College were successful in winning a national tender for the work in April 2011. This is a credit to the commitment of all involved. No less than six months after the first meeting twenty-three employees from Murco, whose ages range from 29 to 53, successfully gained credit for their work-based training and now have 60 level 4 credits to put towards a Foundation Degree in their own vocational field.

#### **David Smith, Murco's Support Services Manager at Milford Haven Refinery commented:**

"The content of Foundation Degrees should meet industry's requirements, it is very valuable to us that our in-house training has been acknowledged in this way. We have worked together to find an accredited progression route for our process operators. We found that there was an understanding of our needs from an institution here in our own community."

Staff from all three institutions are delighted with the progress and other areas of Murco's staff development programme will now be explored and credit applied for as appropriate. Staff from Trinity Saint David and Pembrokeshire College attended a UK Petroleum Industries Association launch on 2 November 2011, led by the Rt. Hon. Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister of Wales. At this meeting there was much interest in this approach to accreditation of prior experiential learning from the Welsh Assembly Government, Cogent and senior staff from the industry.

In conclusion, this initiative has demonstrated what can be achieved for the benefit of learners through the collaboration of employers with further and higher education institutions. We found we had shared values and beliefs in the importance of widening access, accrediting prior learning and high quality work-based learning to meet industry needs.

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