



THE NATIONAL ENTERPRISE ACADEMY OPENS ITS DOORS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE TO TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURS

Young people in the South East will now be able to study for brand-new qualifications in enterprise and entrepreneurship as the National Enterprise Academy (NEA) officially opened today. The brainchild of Dragons' Den entrepreneur Peter Jones and backed by Government, the NEA is the first-ever UK educational organisation dedicated solely to enterprise and entrepreneurship.

The NEA's curriculum will pioneer a new and innovative way of teaching. It will expose students to real-life business issues in real-life business environments, with a high level of input from a range of entrepreneurs and local businesses who will support enterprise tutors.

The NEA opened its doors on the site of Amersham and Wycombe College, its delivery partner in the South East. Following the joint launch held in London, the official launch for the Amersham Campus was attended by Alex Pratt OBE, SEEDA Board Member, this year's students, key stakeholders and representatives from various local businesses.

For its first year, 39 enterprising students are enrolled at the NEA in the South East. Between the two enterprise centres the NEA will enrol nearly 18,000 learners in its first five years, giving young people and older learners the skills and confidence to become enterprising employees or entrepreneurs in their own right.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has invested up to £9m, matched by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and employers, creating a powerful partnership which allows employers to lead and shape the skills being taught.

At the national launch, Business Secretary Lord Mandelson said:

“Enterprise is essential to our future and it starts with young people. This Academy will play a vital role in helping young people unlock their talent and gain the skills necessary for a better future, both for themselves and the country. The Academy and its students deserve every support and success.”

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The two new qualifications have a strong focus on practical skills. The first, a level 2 BTEC Diploma in Understanding Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, and the second, a level 3 BTEC Diploma in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, have been developed in partnership with Edexcel, the UK's largest qualifications awarding body. Both will be available to 16 to 19-year-olds from this September and the qualifications will also be integrated into diplomas."

At the same event, Peter Jones, Entrepreneur and founder of the NEA, said:

"While it's true that traditional business studies courses equip students with a wealth of valuable theoretical business knowledge, there is currently no single academic course wholly dedicated to enterprise and entrepreneurship – a fact that inspired me to set about establishing the National Enterprise Academy.

"In the UK, we need to foster amongst our young people an 'I can' rather than a 'Can I?' attitude. That is not to say we do not already possess a great deal of young talent in Britain – far from it. But up until now, we have simply not done enough to unlock the entrepreneurial talents of our young people.

"There is arguably no better time to create a National Enterprise Academy than during a recession. The UK needs entrepreneurs to stimulate the economy and businesses need inspired employees to help their companies recover quickly. With the continued support of Government and the private sector, the National Enterprise Academy will create both."

The NEA opens its doors after a successful Pathfinder pilot programme, funded by SEEDA and delivered in Buckinghamshire. The Pathfinder began in January 2009 where 28 students were recruited on to an intensive six-month programme designed to develop, shape and test the UK's first ever qualifications dedicated solely to enterprise and entrepreneurship.

The results of this pilot programme are outstanding: several students have already established their own businesses, some are continuing in education, including taking up further provision with the NEA, gaining further knowledge and skills which will help them make a contribution to the country's economic growth. Five of the graduates have been offered positions by high-profile organisations.

SEEDA is involved in the NEA as the South East is a key driver of the national economy and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit is important to SEEDA; it recognises the national importance of this project as well as what it will bring to the region, the entrepreneurial heart of Britain, and the local Buckinghamshire economy.



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Alex Pratt, OBE, SEEDA Board Member, commented:

“We’ve invested £2.3 million in the National Enterprise Academy in Buckinghamshire to help get the Pathfinder pilot going as we see the NEA offering a new and exciting way of engaging young people in the world of enterprise. We are delighted that the importance of instilling an enterprise culture in our prospective young businessmen and women has been endorsed through these new qualifications. There is a wealth of business opportunities out there waiting to be grasped.”

Notes to editors:

1. Both qualifications will equip students with a sound theoretical understanding of business planning, marketing, accounting, financial planning and market research and will, more importantly, capture the true essence of financial entrepreneurialism. At level 2, students will hone their business skills on live business challenges in established real-world businesses. At level 3, students will take on the responsibility for the day-to-day management of their own business. The shorter BTEC level 2 will be integrated in to the additional special learning (ASL) modules of the diploma framework.
2. National Skills Academies are the gold standard for industry training, aiming to improve productivity and tackle skills shortages across England. Each National Skills Academy puts employers at the heart of skills training for their sector: they identify demand for future skills needs and ensure a responsive supply of excellent education and training for their sector; they ensure this is easily accessed by employers. It is managed by the Learning and Skills Council working in partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, the Skills for Business Network, and the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
3. The National Enterprise Academy is part of a national network of 16 Skills Academies, (12 now active) which are driven by business and delivering high-quality skills that business needs across all the key sectors of the economy. Around 880,000 people will be trained by the 16 National Skills Academies during their first five years of operation, securing around £130m in employer investment.
4. Those active are: Manufacturing, Construction, Financial Services, Food and Drink Manufacturing, Nuclear, Process Industries, Hospitality, Creative and Cultural Skills, Sport & Active Leisure, Retail and Materials, Production & Supply. National Skills Academies for Power, IT, Social Care and Fashion, Textiles & Jewellery are still in business planning.
5. SEEDA, the South East England Development Agency, is the Government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development of the South East of England – the driving force of the UK’s economy. Through supporting businesses, encouraging innovation, developing skills and engaging with public and private partners, we aim to create a successful, sustainable future for the region.
6. SEEDA is investing over £2m (£2,267k) in the National Enterprise Academy. Any students starting a business can continue to receive support from SEEDA through Business Link (who helped over 7,500 start up businesses in the South East last year), specialist advice through SEEDA's new Innovation and Growth Teams or export advice through UKTI.

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