

The Midlands: powering the UK's clean energy revolution



Nuclear Skills Academy in Derby



CASE STUDY

The Nuclear Skills Academy opened in 2022 as the first institution of its kind, striving to sustain nuclear capability within the UK's submarines programme by creating a dedicated pipeline of early career talent.

The Academy builds on Rolls-Royce Submarines' more than 60 years of experience powering the Royal Navy's nuclear submarines from its Derby base. The academy aims to sustain the UK's in-demand nuclear capability long into the future as the business grows to meet the demands from the Royal Navy and handle the increasing work resulting from the AUKUS trilateral agreement .

The Nuclear Skills Academy is based in Derby and has the funding to support 200 apprentices each year across four different courses for at least the next 10 years. In its first academic year, it received 1,200 apprenticeship applications. Since then, the number of interested applicants each year has more than doubled.

Courses span all functions of the submarines business across varying disciplines, from design and manufacture to finance and the supply chain, accredited through the University of Derby and National College of Nuclear. The Academy is also supported by the Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre and Derby City Council.

Apprentices gain practical experience, while earning a wage and being supported academically.

Apprentices have had the opportunity to assist with projects such as removing parts from a decommissioned Royal Navy submarine and transporting them back to Derby. The group involved featured apprentices from all nuclear courses, with the project calling for good problem-solving skills, collaboration, communication and agile engineering capabilities. At Derby College Group, meanwhile, apprentices have been learning various manufacturing techniques and material skills, including welding and milling.

Rolls-Royce, the University of Derby and Derby College collaborate to provide support networks to assist all apprentices in their academic development. They also provide wellbeing support through frequent catch-up meetings with their apprentice development leads, mentors, a "buddy scheme" and drop-in sessions to help support them academically.

Credit:

<https://www.rolls-royce.com/media/press-releases/2022/26-09-2022-rr-submarines-opens-nuclear-skills-academy.aspx>

<https://www.rolls-royce.com/media/our-stories/discover/2023/rr-nuclear-skills-academy-celebrates-end-of-first-academic-year.aspx>