

WHY IS THERE A TRAINING ACADEMY?

In 2006 WEC Group found themselves in the situation of being unable to fill skilled positions, due to a lack of skilled applicants. Hence, the WEC Welding & Engineering Training Academy was formed. Providing individuals in Darwen and the surrounding area with an opportunity to gain welding and fabrication skills, it also produces the calibre of workers WEC are looking for.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

The 12 month apprenticeship scheme, part of a 5 year apprenticeship with the company, trains individuals in the art of welding and fabrication. Apprentices spend four days carrying out practical work and one day learning theory; WEC Academy now delivers the complete NVQ in-house eliminating the need to visit a training centre. Within the first two years of the apprenticeship, students will have the opportunity to complete the City & Guilds 2800 in welding and fabrication alongside NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3.

Over 45 students have passed through the doors of the Academy since 2006 and many continue to work within the Group alongside time-served welders and fabricators.

"Our high success rate is down to employing a full-time instructor focused entirely on developing our apprentices," explains Steve Hartley, Managing Director of WEC Group. "Kris Mercer, our instructor, is dedicated 100% to ensuring our apprentices gain the relevant skills and qualifications during their time in the Academy. Our apprentices have access to the latest state of the art welding equipment to enable them to achieve these skills."

WHAT PROJECTS WILL I BE WORKING ON?

Over the 12 month period, you will learn different types of welding, fabrication and sheet metalwork, whilst applying your newfound skills to engineering projects. For example, making simple items like tools and tool boxes, to working on projects such as fabricating bridges and benches.

Past projects have included the fabrication of a 10m bridge which was donated to the Darwen Anglers, a 6m diameter structural steel garden donated to Darwen Vale High School and a suit of armour! In 2011 the students are working on a Spitfire memorial for Darwen Town Centre with a wing span of 3.8 metres and 6.9m high made from polished stainless steel.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The apprenticeship scheme is unique within the UK and offers students the opportunity to work towards a qualification in Coded Welding; a higher standard of welding than is taught on a day-to-day basis. This qualification enables the holder to find work in high-end industries such as oil rigs or pipelines, which demand the qualification.



Left: Apprentices work on the suit of armour which now takes pride of place in Springvale Road reception.

Above: Students in the workshop learning from Instructor Kris Mercer.

WHAT DO PAST APPRENTICES HAVE TO SAY?

2010 Apprentice of the Year Amir Khan, explains why he thinks the apprenticeship program has such a high success rate;

"As soon as you step through the door you are learning and putting your skills to the test. Kris, our instructor, works with us on a one to one to develop our skills and as a team we work on exciting projects."

2009 Apprentice of the Year Carl Hill equally praises the support WEC and his Instructor provide all the students;

"You're encouraged to develop your own solutions to problems and you're given the right tools to achieve the best results. The suit of armour tested our bending and forming skills and now stands pride of place in the reception area of WEC. I am looking forward to moving onto the main shopfloor and working with the rest of the skilled welders."



2010: Apprentices built a go-kart and entered it into the local street go-karting race. It won 'Best Built Kart', but was unfortunately pipped to the post as one of our drivers ran it into the curb and damaged the wheel!!

CONGRATULATIONS - IT WAS ALL WORTH IT!

To celebrate the success of our apprentices, we hold an Annual Apprentice of the Year awards ceremony which provides a forum to congratulate those who have successfully completed the course as well as hand out awards for 'Outstanding Achievement' and 'Welding Excellence'.

Attended by distinguished guests, family, industry and education representatives, the awards ceremony is the highlight of the year for our apprentices. Attendance, punctuality, teamwork, personal development and formal testing of the skills you've acquired, are all part of the criteria for assessing who will be our Apprentice of the Year. Plus we usually have a great Guest Presenter to hand out the awards!

So, if you are interested in becoming a WEC Apprentice, then do not hesitate to contact us. Our intake is every Summer with the new academic year starting in September.

You can apply in four ways:

1. Download an application form: www.wec-group.com
2. Ring for an application form to be posted: 01254 773718
3. Email to receive an electronic form: info@wecl.co.uk
4. Come to reception at Junction St, Darwen and fill in a form

You can follow us:

- facebook: [wec group training academy](#) or [wec group ltd](#)
- twitter: [wecgroup ltd](#)
- youtube: [wec group](#) (view our Academy video)



www.wec-group.com