

New apprenticeship unit to supercharge battery manufacturing

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New battery manufacturing apprenticeship unit developed, following rapid consultation with employers and sector experts, to support UK's growing battery sector.

- Skills England has developed a new battery manufacturing apprenticeship unit, following rapid consultation with employers and sector experts
- this will help meet the skills needs of Agratas' new gigafactory under construction in Somerset and the UK's growing battery sector
- the gigafactory is expected to deliver around 4,000 jobs and contribute over £700 million in annual economic value to the South West region
- the new unit is the latest short course made available through the Growth and Skills Levy, giving employers greater flexibility to invest in the targeted, high-quality training their industries need to thrive
- it's an example of Skills England's new fast track approach to delivering apprenticeship updates and new apprenticeship units that are critical to the major projects in just three months

An innovative new apprenticeship unit has been unveiled for battery manufacturing, expected to unblock skills barriers, creating jobs in the South West and beyond.

The apprenticeship unit was developed rapidly by Skills England's new Investment and Infrastructure Skills Service - following rapid consultation with global battery business Agratas, wider sector employers, and other experts.

Agratas is currently building a major gigafactory near Bridgwater, in Somerset, which they estimate will generate over £700 million in annual economic value to the South West and 4,000 jobs once fully operational.

Batteries are increasingly vital across the economy, powering everything from our phones and cars to the national grid, trains, and defence. Having the skills to manufacture batteries in the UK directly supports our national resilience and provides access to jobs in a growing sector.

Phil Smith, chair of Skills England, said:

This new gigafactory will create thousands of jobs and apprenticeships in the South West and beyond. I'm proud of Skills England's work at pace with sector experts to find a skills solution that works for them.

The new battery manufacturing apprenticeship unit will be a valuable addition to the Growth and Skills Levy offer. By working together, we are building the jobs of the future, keeping skills training at the cutting edge.

Skills England listened to industry feedback that the existing battery manufacturing operative apprenticeship was too long and broad in scope for the imminent skills needs of the gigafactory.

A special design workshop was held in early February with the Electrification Skills Network, and representatives from the North East and West Midlands battery clusters, followed up by further consultation with Agratas, wider employers and academic experts.

A new shorter course, grounded in existing employer-designed occupational standards, was developed into the apprenticeship unit being launched today (23 March).

The collaboration with Agratas comes at a crucial time as the UK seeks to enhance its manufacturing capabilities in response to the growing demand for renewable energy solutions.

The new gigafactory will produce sustainable lithium-ion batteries, accelerating the UK's transition to net zero by powering electric vehicles (EVs).

Bhavik Mistry, Head of Learning and Development for Agratas, said:

We're delighted to welcome the launch of the Level 2 battery manufacturing apprenticeship unit and this step forward in building the skilled workforce our industry needs.

By prioritising practical skills, the unit ensures learning is closely aligned to the realities of modern battery manufacturing, making sure it is high quality and closely matched to daily life in battery production.

This initiative is a major boost for the sector, opening up new opportunities for career progression and helping to future-proof the UK's battery manufacturing industry.

UCS College Group signed a memorandum of understanding with Agratas today (23 March) which will see it lead with delivery of training for the new gigafactory.

Andy Berry CBE, CEO UCS College Group, said:

This represents a pivotal moment for the battery manufacturing sector in the UK. I am glad this unit has been prioritised; it reflects the culmination of a collaborative approach between industry and education, demonstrating the role colleges play in delivering skills for the UK.

Apprenticeship units such as this will lay the foundation for a resilient and skilled workforce that is essential for the UK battery manufacturing sector.

This is the latest apprenticeship unit to be made available to employers through the Growth and Skills Levy - after the first seven were unveiled last week for:

- AI Leadership - developing AI strategy
- Electric vehicle charging point installation and maintenance
- Electrical fitting and assembly
- Mechanical fitting and assembly
- Permanent modular building assembly
- Solar PV installation and maintenance
- Welding (mechanised)

These shorter courses range between 30 and 140 hours and can be delivered over 1 to 16 weeks.

They have been developed in response to calls from employers for more flexibility around training funded through the Growth and Skills Levy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-apprenticeship-unit-to-supercharge-battery-manufacturing>