

Strategy for NDT education at universities in UK: An integrated education programme for NDT professionals

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Some years ago, we at the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing (BINDT) began work on a programme to integrate vocational qualification – for example certification that results from our highly successful PCN scheme – within the broader context of education and professional development. The aim was to create a programme that: • results in academic qualifications and engineering registration • improves the status of certificate holders • provides pathways for career development, including entry opportunities for school-leavers • and also includes educational material - or links to access educational material. It is certainly the case in the UK that NDT has traditionally suffered from the fact that the subject is not very well known in its own right – even within the professional engineering community. It is not a mainstream discipline. Certification is a vocational qualification and is not regarded in the same class as a degree – and of course there are fundamental differences, for example a degree is for life, whereas a certificate is usually temporary and has an expiry date. Very often there is no structured career development for NDT technicians... and no entry route for school leavers. In addition, it is a common challenge that there are insufficient new people coming into NDT. The overall result is a series of curricula, including degree courses and apprenticeship schemes, that provide an integrated education programme for NDT professionals.