Learners complete their qualifications in Foundry Operations and are now available for placement in industry

Skills development and education of 14 school leavers formed part of a pilot project for The Career Path Framework initiative. These learners have achieved NQF level 4 qualifications.

The foundry industry is a complex and specialised sector supplying a vast range of quality metal products to downstream customers. The emergence of South Africa as a cost effective supplier to international markets has created a demand for people with the skills to manufacture the final products as well as function within the support processes to the manufacturing process. These processes include foundry patternmaking, moulding and melting.

The Foundry Career Path Framework Project was initiated in September 2008 with the first industry workshop being held in October 2008. The overall objectives of this project were to:

- Re-design the draft Foundry qualifications (NQF Level 2 – 4) in accordance with the newly developed qualification design model
- Develop an occupational profile to articulate with existing qualifications in specific foundry sectors
- Create a learning pathway / career path framework
- Develop curriculum in support of the occupational profile
- Negotiate the process of registering the qualifications and unit standards on the NQF with SAQA
- Keep the project informed of the criteria and guidelines being developed regarding the occupational qualifications of the QCTO

A project team and various smaller working groups were established that met on different occasions for different purposes. The project process were driven by two primary industry objectives namely to produce sound castings and to remain competitive. Working within the parameters of these two primary objectives, a project approach and process was designed in order to meet the project objectives above.

The foundry industry rallied their support, and their commitment to this project is clearly evident in the substantial achievements of this project over the past 42 months.

“One initiative of the project was to place 18 school leavers at three of the major companies in the industry, to be trained in three main areas of foundry operations, namely melting, moulding and pattern making processes,” said John Davies, CEO of the South African Institute of Foundrymen.

“We would like to thank ArcelorMittal South Africa, Atlantis Foundries and the Scaw Metals Group, the NFTN for the funding and the project team members for being involved in this initiative,” said Davies.

“The programme was multifaceted in that the learners were initially trained in the three main areas, as well as in the other areas of foundry operations and practice and, in the last phase of the programme learners could choose in which field they wanted to specialise. Melting, moulding or patternmaking.”

“Fourteen of the initial intake, have now completed their studies. The three and a half year training period involved practical learning with their ‘hands’ and classroom theory, before writing their exams.”

“I do believe that the learnership training programme developed the students’ foundry skills on a much broader basis and they are more qualified than a student that has qualified as an artisan.”

“Six of the students have already been placed in industry and we are looking to industry to employ the remaining eight. After all, industry called for skills training to be addressed and this is one of the initiatives that has filled the skills gap.”

Davies believes that the pilot project has shown that the programme has been successful and that the SAIF will follow up with similar initiatives in the future and, may include people that are already employed in the industry, if industry supports the SAIF in its endeavours.

He adds that it is part of a long-term developmental and training programme to bridge the skills gap in South Africa. The SAIF is also involved in presenting a number of short course programmes to up-skill existing foundry employees countrywide and was instrumental, with its partners, in setting up the recently opened Gauteng Foundry Training Centre, where twenty apprentices started their training in January 2014.

For further details contact John Davies on TEL: 011 559 6468 or 083 630 2809