



21020

Professional Operator Development Programme (PODP)

Tarmac **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6**



Mobile plant checks

DESCRIPTION

Having competent frontline operators is critical to safe operation of plant equipment. A competent person is defined as someone who has the necessary skills, experience and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities safely.

Historically, competence has focused on technical skills through vocational qualifications and periodic, on-the-job assessments to demonstrate on-going competence. It's possible for an apprentice to achieve all qualifications in the framework but not actually have the right skills to carry out their job. This means some apprentices may need further training from their employer.

Apprenticeships are now based on standards that contains a list of the skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will need to have learned by the end of their apprenticeship. Standards are occupation-focused; they are not qualification led. The learning happens throughout the apprenticeship and the apprentice is assessed at the end. They need to prove that they can carry out all aspects of their job.

Using an apprenticeship standard Tarmac have created the Professional Operator Development Programme (PODP) for its new operators. This formalised programme develops an operator (of any age) from novice to skilled in 12 months developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to perform their role healthily and safely.

Working with employers across the mineral products industry a trailblazer group was set up to collaborate to produce an occupational standard for a mobile and static plant operator in minerals processing. With a vocational qualification incorporated it also maps to the National Occupational Standard (NOS). The standard was approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships (now IFATE) in June 2017.

Tarmac reviewed the standard and realised that it covered about 70% of its operators. With 100 to 150 new starts per year, Tarmac decided to adopt the nationally recognised standard to develop its new operators. Several business stakeholders were involved to provide a comprehensive programme of development leading to a skilled operator in 12 months. The development elements within PODP include:

- Who are Tarmac and CRH – purpose and values
- Tarmac's products, processes, and customers
- Interpersonal skills
- Occupational health and wellbeing
- Safe working including hazard spotting, risk assessment and safe behaviours
- Sustainability
- Plant operation

One challenge in rolling out the programme was the need to ensure that the operational business understood the changes in the standards, that they were not age restricted and the perception that the 20% of the time in training was 'not working'.

The programme was initially delivered in partnership with an external provider but using internal expertise to deliver the learning. Detailed workbooks are provided to guide the learners through the learning and regular internal reviews are carried out with each learner to monitor progress and ensure their ongoing continuous development (CPD) is recorded. This also ensures that they will be ready when they have their external end point assessment to qualify.



Reviewing safe working practice

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Tarmac have now become an employer provider such that every part of the apprenticeship is delivered and administered by themselves. The incorporation of other apprenticeship standards into PODP, to cover more of Tarmac's operational and technical roles, is being reviewed.

The programme has been communicated to MPQC and the mineral products industry and customers have been to the National Skills & Safety Park to learn about how it is delivered and the benefits of the programme to Tarmac.

BENEFITS

- Over 100 learners have started the Professional Operator Development Programme
- Success rate of 81% with an impressive 36% achieving a distinction at End Point Assessment
- Positive feedback from line managers and external stakeholders
- Apprentices have helped to support a positive health & safety culture
- Has helped recognise that some employees have additional learning needs
- Created a more inclusive learning environment
- Ensures learners are supported to overcome barriers to learning
- Training that is delivered consistently to all learners

- Programme develops knowledge, skills and behaviours with on-the-job experience
- Attitude and behaviours are a key focus of the programme
- Positive feedback from both learners and their line managers.

TRANSFERABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

- Tarmac is now adopting other apprenticeship standards that are relevant to other technical and operational occupations. They will be incorporated within the programme with employees then "streamed" according to their occupation.
- Although Tarmac is an employer provider, the principles of the programme are transferable to both large and small employers. Through collaboration and working with training providers, employers can adopt the practices to develop skilled operators.
- Through MPQC, Tarmac has presented the approach to other organisations.



Safe work at height



Isolation training