Shaping the Aerospace Workforce of the Future

ON JUNE 21, 2018, aerospace industry experts gathered in London, United Kingdom to discuss their perspectives on the future of special process personnel at a free event, "Shaping the Aerospace Workforce of the Future." Organized by the not-for-profit Performance Review Institute (PRI), the focus was eQualified, an international collaborative aerospace program that harnesses the technical expertise in the industry to address two key challenges: A critical shortfall of qualified special process personnel and the skills gap created by an increasingly globalized workforce.

"eQualified represents a way to safeguard and improve our training and qualifications, which ultimately impact on the future success of our organisations as a whole. Everyone who participates will be contributing to a legacy of helping future generations with aerospace process quality."
—Richard Blyth, Rolls-Royce PLC

The eQualified approach to these issues is two-fold. Firstly, technical experts from across the industry—including representatives from Suppliers, Prime Contractors, Training Providers and Airlines—work together to determine the baseline knowledge and experience required to be considered competent for a target position, such as a heat treating operator working with titanium alloys. Their input is used to develop and maintain special process Bodies of Knowledge, which are made available without charge on the PRI website at https://p-r-i.org/professional-development/qualifications/bodies-of-knowledge. The Bodies of Knowledge are based on global industry standards and best practices. The intent is for the industry to leverage this shared knowledge to secure the future of the manufacturing workforce by using these Bodies of Knowledge for training, recruitment, and personnel evaluation. The eQualified program approves Training Providers to deliver courses aligned to the Bodies of Knowledge ensuring the training materials delivered reflect current industry requirements.

Secondly, eQualified members utilize the Bodies of Knowledge to develop assessments which validate the competency of aerospace special process personnel. Theory assessments can be taken securely online by candidates to objectively verify their understanding of the Bodies of Knowledge content. In some cases, practical assessments are also conducted.

Attendees at the event in London heard from a number of industry representatives who are actively involved in the eQualified program. They included Mark Binfield, Nadcap Lead for Actuation Systems at UTC Aerospace Systems (Goodrich); Richard Blyth, Engineering Manager External Laboratories at Rolls-Royce PLC; Michael J. (Mike) Hoke, President and owner of Abaris Training Resources, Inc; and Charles Parker, Senior Manager of Materials Engineering for Honeywell Aerospace.

"For those not yet involved in this area, this is a great opportunity to network and learn about how the industry intends to utilize the framework of eQualified to address the difficulties we all face with the recruitment, training and qualification of aerospace special process personnel."
—Mark Binfield, UTC Aerospace Systems (Goodrich)

This conference and networking session was repeated on October 25, 2018 at The Engineers' Society of Western Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania USA. For more information, send email to eQualified@p-r-i.org. You can also keep up to date with eQualified activity through LinkedIn.

The conference addressed two key challenges in the aerospace industry: A critical shortfall of qualified special process personnel and the skills gap created by an increasingly globalized workforce.