Craft Education ..... the future
ITAC Conference
17th January 2013
Dublin Institute of Technology
10.00am – 2.00pm

Conference will be opened by:
Ciaran Cannon TD, Minister of State for Training & Skills

Response and Welcome:
Prof. Brian Norton, President DIT

Speakers:

- Mr. Tony Power, Director Apprenticeship Services
- Mr. Eamonn Devoy, General Secretary TEEU
- Mr. John Tynan, Head of Education, Training & Development, Craft Council of Ireland
- Dr. Barry O’Connor, Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs, Cork Institute of Technology
- Sandra Guilfoyle, Human Resources Manager, Jones Engineering Group

Forum Chaired by:

Mr. Terry Twomey Registrar, Limerick Institute of Technology
Craft Education ..... the future

Education Forum

Dublin Institute of Technology
17th January 2013
10.00am – 2.00pm
Eamon Devoy - General Secretary
Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union
Craft Based Trade Union (40,000 Members)

www.teeu.ie
Eamon Devoy - General Secretary
Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union
Craft Based Trade Union (40,000 Members)

Irish Congress of Trade Unions:
• A member of the Executive Council and General Purposes Committee
• Secretary of the Private Sector Committee
• Chairperson of the Health and Safety Committee
Technical, Engineering & Electrical Union

The Power Union

Director
Education Training & Organisational Services (ETOS)

ETOS is a non-profit making Membership Services Company wholly owned by the TEEU www.etos.ie
Approved FETAC Centre
Technical, Engineering & Electrical Union

The Power Union

Director
Education Training & Organisational Services (ETOS)

ETOS is a non-profit making Membership Services Company wholly owned by the TEEU  www.etos.ie
Approved FETAC Centre

Board Member
Health & Safety Authority
The Health and Safety Authority is the national statutory body with responsibility for enforcing occupational safety and health law, promoting and encouraging accident prevention.
Technical, Engineering & Electrical Union

THE POWER UNION

National Training Authority - Fás:
• National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee - NAAC
• Recognition of Prior Learning Committee
• Apprenticeship Appeals Committee
National Training Authority - Fás:
• National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee - NAAC
• Recognition of Prior Learning Committee
• Apprenticeship Appeals Committee

Board Member - Skillnets
Skillnets is state funded, dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of training and upskilling as key elements in sustaining Ireland's national competitiveness.
National Training Authority - Fás:
• National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee - NAAC
• Recognition of Prior Learning Committee
• Apprenticeship Appeals Committee

Board Member - Skillnets
Skillnets is state funded, dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of training and upskilling as key elements in sustaining Ireland's national competitiveness.

Board member National Qualification Authority Ireland
The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland is an agency of the Department of Education and the Department of Enterprise.
26 Apprenticeships

1. Agricultural Mechanics
2. Aircraft Mechanics
3. Construction Plant Fitting
4. Electrical
5. Electrical Instrumentation
7. Farriery
8. Fitting
9. Heavy Vehicle Mechanics

10. Industrial Insulation
11. Sheet Metalworking
12. Toolmaking
13. Vehicle Body Repairs
14. Instrumentation
15. Metal Fabrication
16. Motor Mechanics
17. Plumbing
18. Refrigeration & Air Conditioning

19. Brick and Stonelaying
20. Cabinetmaking
21. Carpentry & Joinery
22. Floor & Wall Tiling
23. Painting & Decorating
24. Plastering
25. Print Media
26. Wood Machining

18 Trades Organised by the TEEU

TEEU – Organising Workers for a Brighter Future
Background and involvement in shaping the Apprenticeships in Ireland

• 1966 – Bolton Street – first year Apprentice Fitter
• 1978 – Member of the An Co Engineering Committee
• Engaged in the ongoing review of Apprenticeship since
• Three (3) Major Reviews:
  # Establishment of first year off the Job - Time Served
  # Introduction of Standards Achieved Apprenticeship
  # Review + Placing of Apprenticeships on the National Framework of Qualifications
National Framework of Qualifications

LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE
LEVEL 5 CERTIFICATE
ADVANCED CERTIFICATE
HIGHER CERTIFICATE
ORDINARY BACHELOR DEGREE
HONOURS BACHELOR DEGREE
HIGHER DIPLOMA
MASTERS DEGREE
POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA
DOCTORAL DEGREE

10-LEVEL FRAMEWORK

KEY
- FETAC = Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC = State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science)
- HETAC = Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- DIT = Dublin Institute of Technology
- University

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four types of awards in the National Framework of Qualifications:

- Major Awards are the principal class of awards made at a level
- Minor Awards are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- Supplementary Awards are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- Special Purposes Awards are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement
Experience of the Apprenticeship System

Before planning the future we need to review what exists at present

• Irish Craftworkers are World Class and Second to None.
• National View of the Employers & Trade Unions
• International Employer & Trade Union View
• International View – OECD
Irish Craftworkers are World Class and second to none

National Framework of Qualifications

• Irish Craftworkers placed at Level 6 on the framework (+7)
• British, Northern Ireland, Australian, Canadian, South-African, North America are all placed at Level 5.

Employers, Unions and the State

• The Employers & Unions view at national level is that the existing system is robust and a good balance of interests
• The Dual system of training yields substantial productivity for employers, wages for apprentices and substantial benefits to the State both in Social and Economic terms
Internationally, Irish Craftworkers are the most sought-after CANADA

British Columbia Construction Association

- 2,000 Construction employers employing union labour
- Mapped the apprenticeship systems in New Zealand, Australia, the UK, the USA and Ireland.
- The Irish Trades Workers are amongst the best in the World
- The traditional time in trade with block release college training is more than a system it’s a culture that has survived many attempts to “modernise” and restructure it.
Internationally, Irish Craftworkers are the most sought-after
AUSTRALIA

National Electrical & Communications Association

• 5,000 members across Australia

• 90% of all electrical installation work throughout industry

• 75% of all apprentices in the industry and 100% voice and data communication systems

• Both employer and employee organisations favour the current mixture of concurrent off & on the job delivery over an optimum period of experiential - other systems tried and failed
The OECD Reviews of VET in 30 Countries

Review of Irish Apprenticeship System - 2010

Strengths

“Collaboration with social partners is well structured and takes place at the most relevant levels”

“System is well structured with a systematic blend of on and off-the-job elements”

“Good co-operation between the two lead departments & the National Skills Strategy provides for common objectives”
The OECD Reviews of VET in 30 Countries

Review of Irish Apprenticeship System - 2010

Challenges

“The Current economic crisis poses serious challenges in particular to the Apprenticeship System” – due to numbers

“Apprenticeships are limited to a narrow set of occupations”

“Many of those looking after VET students, in particular those in companies, lack pedagogical training”
International View - OECD

The OECD Reviews of VET in 30 Countries

Review of Irish Apprenticeship System - 2010

Recommendations

“Review the apprenticeship system to improve its efficiency & fairness in addressing the skill needs of the labour market”

“Offer differentiated support to redundant apprentices”

“Review immediately, the Employer Based Redundant Apprenticeship Rotation Scheme”.

TEEU – Organising Workers for a Brighter Future
International Comparisons and Analyses

• Meeting the Skill needs of a Buoyant Economy – The Irish Experience - Len O’Connor CIT (2006)


• A New Skills Policy for a New Economy – ICTU Spring 2011 Dr. Paul Ryan of Cambridge, who compares apprenticeship in Austria, Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands with that of Germany and Britain - Is quite positive about the Irish apprenticeship system and suggests that the UK might do well to pursue a similar course.
What’s Good About Our System

• It follows the true definition of Apprenticeship – Master & Apprentice.

• It is currently designed, modified and implemented by Social Partner experts + Instructors and Educationalists.

• It is sufficiently flexible to adjust to the need of changing or emerging technologies.

• There are benefits for all parties, Employers’, Apprentices’ and the State.

• The Irish Apprenticeship System is amongst the best in the world.
What Improvements are Necessary


REVIEW

• Model of Training
• Entry requirements
• Range of Occupations

• Recruitment of Apprentices
• Duration of Apprenticeship
• Cost of Provision
What improvements can be made

- Format – Employers’ & Trade Unions’ views are consistent
- ITAC 2/2 Proposal has no resonance and will be resisted
- Entry level requirements
- Recruitment of Apprentices – Ratio
- Some employers’ behaviour at commencement stage
- Curriculum writing and subsequent conversion by IT’s
- Consistent Quality Assurance essential
- Cost of Provision Who pays and how
- Apprentices accountability
Summary / Conclusions

• The Irish Apprenticeship System is World Class

• Undoubtedly, like all things, Improve can be made

• All parties present have the future of Apprenticeship at heart

• We work together at the National Level – NAAC

• Whatever differences exist or emerge can be resolved

• Lets work together now in the National Interest

• And finally --------------- Next Slide
If it ain't BROKE
Don't FIX it!
Irish Standards Based Apprenticeship System (SBA)

Craft Training & Education
ITAC Conference 17/1/2013
Irish Standards Based Apprenticeship System (SBA) Overview

- Current Irish Dual System of apprenticeship Training was introduced in 1993 following extensive consultation with all stakeholders.
- Apprenticeship takes a commitment from all stakeholders over many years to produce a quality system that is recognised Nationally and Internationally.
- Dual System is a combination of alternating classroom, theory and practice, learning and working leading to a qualified competent worker based on industry standards.
- Similar accredited dual systems in place in Europe for example Germany, Netherlands, Denmark and Slovakia Republic, and the introduction of the Dual System is currently been examined by Spain and Italy.
Irish Standards Based Apprenticeship System (SBA) Overview

- Many countries regard Apprenticeship as the best route to work – combination of technical education and practical workplace experience leading to productivity improvements and innovation.

- A competent skilled worker is expected to: plan, finish a range of tasks & projects, co-operate with others on projects, have sufficient depth of knowledge and skill to apply in the workplace and have an understanding to anticipate new developments.
Irish Standards Based Apprenticeship System
Key Benefits

- Quality training system recognised Nationally and Internationally for example:
  - Satisfies demand for skilled workers in key sectors of the economy
  - Demand for qualified Irish Craftworkers from Australia, New Zealand and Canada
  - Consistent success at Works Skills Competitions – 2011, 6th place in the world
- Strong employer commitment i.e. 80% of training is provided and funded in the workplace by the employer
- Strong training and educational provision for off-the-job training
Economic Context
GDP & GNP
Growth

Source: CSO.
Reduction in the apprenticeship population is a reflection of the reduction in general economic activity for example, Construction Sector €39 billion approx. (current prices) in 2006 or 25% GNP – adjusted to €9 billion in 2011 or approx. 7% GNP.
The current apprenticeship population is 8,800+

House construction completion – 11,600 forecast for 2016
International underpinning philosophy rationale and model of apprenticeship systems

- The imperative that learning in the formal education setting and on site are complementary
- The move from an ‘in the workplace’ based model to a model with sequential formal ‘on’ and ‘off-the-job’ training elements
- Removal of age restrictions, reflecting the contemporary focus on Life Long Learning
• A sustained and increasing focus on ensuring that apprenticeship systems meet evolving national skill needs in the occupations covered

• Recognition by governments and other stakeholders that apprenticeship systems need to be more flexible and responsive to maintain an important role in meeting national skill needs

• EU considers that apprenticeship has a key part to play in the overall training and education of individuals for the workforce
Targeted incentives to encourage recruitment of apprentices

Matching of supply and demand supported by improved information systems and supplemented by “Skills Observatories” to anticipate demand

Assistance to apprentices in insolvent companies.
**Topics for Consideration**

- Underpin the quality of the on-the-job element of SBA to ensure a consistently high level of skill, knowledge and competence
- Address entry-level requirements for some trades to ensure the apprentice can cope with the levels of learning and the rigour of the assessments relating to the programme (achieve standard first time)
- Ensure with the support of apprenticeship stakeholders that the system can respond quickly and efficiently to meet the needs for changes in the curriculum, for example the updating of Aircraft Mechanics Curriculum to meet new EASA Regulations and in progress at present is the review of:
  - Electrical, HVM, Plumbing, Carpentry and Joinery and Metal Fabrication
  - Later in 2013 Toolmaking, MAMF, CPF, Motor Mechanics, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
Topics for Consideration

- Develop formal and more widespread progression routes for Craftworkers and upskilling in specialist skills

- A system that allows the state to adjust provision to requirements

- Absence of intermediate level occupations in industry sectors not traditionally associated with SBA apprenticeship, such as IT – “Apprenticeships are limited to a narrow set of occupations” OECD Report Learning for Jobs February 2010

- Avoid classifying ‘apprenticeship type schemes’ as apprenticeships
Next Steps

- FÁS welcomes the review of the Apprenticeship Programme by the Department of Education and Skills in 2013, which will progress to the consultation phase in 2013.

- Review is an opportunity for stakeholders to have an input into the evolution in the training of skilled workers for a wide range of occupations in meeting the demands of business and industry nationally and internationally.
17th Jan 2013
ITAC Conference
Dublin Institute of Technology

Eimear Conyward & John Tynan

CCoI Background
Information
Skills Training
Programmes
Crafts Council of Ireland

Set up in Dublin under the auspices of RDS

1971

Moved to Powerscourt Townhouse Centre

1983

Moved from Dublin to Kilkenny

1997

Opened NCG National Craft Gallery

2000

40 years: Ireland “Year of Craft”

2011

Workforce

small in scale, geographically widespread, but significant impact:

Employment 5,771

Total Value Output €498m

Value of Exports €125m

Value Domestic Sales €373m

CCoI To-day

2,754 Registered Craft Enterprise ‘Clients’

1,295 Registered ‘Associate’ - students, academics, collectors

75 Guilds, Associations, Networks & Societies

Budgets 2011 €4.1m: 2012 €3.3m: 2013 €2.9m?

Dept. JE&I; CCoI Board -12 Directors, 4 ministerial, 8 elected

23 Staff based at Castle Yard in Kilkenny
CCoI Mission 2013 - 2015

To promote and stimulate the creative and commercial potential of Irish Craft and design, working with strategic partners in development and growth of the sector’

Key Role - Education Team 6 Staff
‘Developing knowledge & skills in craft for emerging and current craftmakers.

To ensure growth of a high-quality, design-led, sustainable craft industry, which provides rewarding outcomes for all who participate.
Four Key Strategic Themes 2013 - 2015

- Enhance the mainstream education offering for school pupils
- Consolidate the range of 3rd level training opportunities
- Enhance outreach services & curriculum support materials
- Strengthen strategic relationships influencing craft related policy
Highlighted Achievements 2012

Successful CRAFTed nationwide programme 128 schools, 135 teachers, 98 trained crafts people, 2,440 children actively making objects.

Forged strong new links with all 21 Teacher Education Centre’s, excellent involvement of parents in high-profile CRAFTed end-of-term presentations, sky television filmed event in Mayo etc.

Completed successful secondary school CPD curriculum support training in 6 regions including 5th yr & leaving cert pupils, jointly with Professional Development Service for Teachers. Teachers workshops disseminated new craft skills to Art Teachers Association.
Key initiatives ongoing

Resolve operational issues & embed primary level programme nationwide, develop long-term financial model.

Publication of ‘CRAFTed Resource Pack’

Local library ‘mini-exhibitions’ nationwide ‘CRAFTed Projects Exhibition’ in 2013

Expand CCoI & PDST initiative in 12 schools to increase impact of craft as a more common feature within secondary school curriculum.
Consolidate the range of 3rd level craft training opportunities

- CCoI/NUIM Partnership developed via ‘Academic Board’ with potential pilot of craft history and/or appreciation curriculum.
- Deliver ‘Train the Trainer’ courses for craft makers who want to supplement their living from craft related teaching.
- Develop ‘Future Makers’ support & awards programme ensuring its continued relevance and maximising its potential.
- CCoI Ceramics & Jewellery skills accredited curriculum leading to 90% + employability.
- Forge strong relationships with our key 3rd level provider partners to explore & pilot extension of 2-year model in other craft disciplines.
Consolidate the range of 3rd level training opportunities

Ongoing Initiatives

Future Makers recognised as leading award programme for 3rd level student and recent practioners, large increase in applications and national coverage. New ‘Design Award’ offered this year.

First CCol cohort Level 7 follow approved NUIM curriculum & rigorous QA of CCol’s end-of-year assessment process July ‘12 with NUIM colleagues.

Specialist CCol ‘art & design lectures’ successful on accredited programme.

Initial partnership discussions with a range of Higher Education partners.

CCol/NUIM ‘Academic Board’ in place, Ceramics Level 7 programme approved, first cohort starting Sep ‘12.
The Future of Craft Education

Proposed ITAC Model

Dr Barry O’Connor, C.Eng.
Chair, ITAC
Continually Evolving Apprenticeship Programmes

- Time Served
- Day Release
- Block Release
- One Year off the Job
- Current: Standards Based Apprenticeship
Standards Based Apprenticeship

- Phases 1, 3, 5 & 7: On the Job
- Phases 2, 4 & 6: Off the Job
  - Phase 2 (FÁS)
  - Phase 4 & 6 (IOT/FE)
Trend in Annual Apprentice Registrations

Dr Barry O'Connor,
Chair, ITAC
ITAC Model : Design Criteria

- Benchmarked against best international practice
- Calibre of the student / apprentice recruit should be maintained
- Education / training needs of industry should be adequately met
- Access, Transfer and Progression opportunities
- The revised model should be cost effective
- Supply of trained craftspeople should be maintained during economic downturns
- Capacity of the education / training system should be maintained
- Ease of mobility from one trade to another
Structure of revised model

- **Stage 1:** Education / and Training (pre-requisite for Stage 2)
  - Years 1 & 2

- **Stage 2:** Work based training
  - Years 3 & 4
ITAC Model Years 1 & 2

- Current Phases 2, 4 & 6 on a four semester basis
- Include additional modules to allow students to adapt to changes in technology in the future and facilitate ease of progression.
- A Certificate in Applied Technology Skills (NQAI Level 6) awarded on successful completion.
ITAC Model Years 3 & 4

- The student seeks employment from an approved registered employer as an apprentice craftsperson.
- The apprentice then completes a two-year work-based period of training with defined learning outcomes.
- On successful completion of Stage 2, the apprentice will be awarded an Advanced Certificate (Craft) in their trade and, where appropriate / required, their Fitness to Practice licence.
- This could be a Special Purpose Award at Level 6.
Alternative Post-Stage 1 Pathways

- Student seeks employment

- Student continues in Full-Time Education
Admissions

- **Standard Entry:** Application for Certificate in Applied Technology Skills (craft specific) through CAO and / or FÁS.

- **Non-Standard Entry:** Students who do not meet the standard entry requirements complete an approved pre-apprenticeship programme and enter as above.
Year 1 Structure

- 2 semesters delivering 60 ECTS credits.
- Content similar to Phases 2/4 of the existing Standards Based system which would be trade specific.
- Additional modules in:
  - Communications and Key Learning Skills
  - Craft Mathematics
  - Engineering / Construction Science
  - Computer Skills and Applications
Year 2 Structure

- 2 semesters delivering 60 ECTS credits.
- Content similar to current phases 4/6
- Include generic modules:
  - Entrepreneurship and running your own business
  - Craft Mathematics
  - Health and Safety
  - Engineering / Construction Science
- Programme Balance:
  Year 2 to contain a balance of Craft Skills/Craft Technology depending on specific craft.
Year 3 & 4 Structure

- Content similar to Phases 1, 3, 5 & 7 of the existing Standards Based system which would be trade specific.
- Special module certification would be required in areas where specific technical skills are required such as:
  - Welding
  - Gas Installations
  - Aircraft Maintenance
  - Electrical
Funding

- Grant on completion of Year 1 and / or Year 2
- Eligibility for Higher Ed Grants etc.
- Paid by employer on Year 3 & 4
- Possible additional focussed Access Initiative supports
Other matters for consideration

- EU Apprenticeship Systems
- Single Qualification?
- Skills for Specific Industries
- Social Implications
- Cuts to Education Budget
ITAC Model Summary

- ‘Floor and Ceiling’ in Craft Apprentice Numbers
- Improved Access
  - Dual track
  - Not employer led
- Integrate Craft Education into FE/HE continuum
- Improve Access/Transfer/Progression
- Front-load ‘academic content’
“... the need to maintain system capacity is crucial irrespective of what the review may recommend...”.
Trend in Annual Apprentice Registrations

Dr Barry O'Connor, Chair, ITAC
Trend in Annual Apprentice Registrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>6932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>7337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>8306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Craft Education – The Future

Sandra Guilfoyle – Jones Engineering

The Jones Engineering Group has had a long and distinguished tradition in the area of engineering and craft training.

The founding company, H A O’Neil Ltd., has been in business since 1890.

The Group has undergone a number of changes from private company at its founding, through to the 70’s when it became a plc and back to private company in 1993.

One aspect of the way we do business has been our consistency in our strong commitment to engineering and craft training.

I would like to give you a brief overview of the present group, an outline of our training history with some of the highlights and an idea of the challenges and opportunities we face going forward.
The group presently consists of 9 companies in the mechanical and electrical area:

- H A O’Neil Ltd
- P Lynch Ltd
- O’Shea’s Electrical Ltd
- Douglas Calibration Services Ltd
- Irish Sprinkler & Fire Protection Ltd
- Jones Engineering KSA
- Jones Engineering Qatar
- Jones Engineering UK
- Celtic Bio

Turnover approaching 200 million.

The Group currently employs 1000 people and operates in Ireland, UK, KSA, and Qatar. We also have projects in Spain, Israel, and a project starting shortly in Finland.

Over the past 5 years we have installed 13 million metres of cable, 100,000 sprinkler heads, 15,000 metres of underground mains, 7,500 tonnes of duct work and 900,000 metres of pipe.
We currently employ 160 apprentices. These are mechanical and electrical apprentices and are employed across 3 of our companies – H A O’Neil Ltd./Patrick Lynch Ltd in Dublin and O’Shea’s in Cork.

Our Client list covers all the well known names on the Irish and International scene –

- Vistakon
- Eli Lilly
- Diageo
- Hewlett Packard
- Merck Sharpe
- Phizer
- Marathon
- Olympic Village in London
- Almarai in the Middle East.

We have been involved in many of the major projects across this country many of which you would all be familiar with:

- Point Village
- Bord Gais Power Plant
- Bord Gais Theatre
- Mater Hospital
- St Vincent’s Private Hospital
- Microsoft
During the boom years our business centred largely in Ireland.

Four years ago as the winds of change started blowing, the group started to look outside of Ireland. The first market we looked at was the UK and we established an office in London. From there we have built a presence in the UK London and we are currently running 6/6 large projects.

The energy division of Jones Engineering Group has teamed up with technology experts, Celtic Bio Energy. This company is involved in organic waste to energy sector – anaerobic digestion.

With the formation of Celtic bio we are looking at a number of large “Waste to Energy” projects throughout the UK.

Three years ago we also started to look at the Middle East market, initially in KSA and subsequently in Qatar.

Just before Christmas we acquired the Hastie – Rotary Group in Qatar and we are currently in the process of integrating it into the Jones Engineering Group.

With this acquisition came six large projects in Qatar and a staff of 300.
In KSA we currently have 57 Managers / Engineers on the ground. These staff with the exception of 10 new recruits were seconded from our staff here in Ireland.

In KSA we are involved in projects for our Client Almarai, who is one of the largest food producers in the Middle East. Interestingly, Almarai is a company which was started by Irish businessmen from Northern Ireland.
Jones Engineering:

➢ It is a busy place to work.
➢ It is a demanding place to work.
➢ And it is a rewarding place to work.

In our business we are not selling a product as such, we are selling the skills and expertise of our people.

Our Clients are demanding. They expect the highest quality in terms of service and response and we can only deliver successfully if we have the right people.

We are also only as good as our last job.

I don’t need to tell you how competitive the market is out there.

Price is a huge issue – value for money. Price is the key factor and to compete you need to be the productivity leader.

Clients have high expectations and expect delivery.
Delays / non performance can cost Clients such as those in the IT and Pharma industry many millions / billions depending in the jurisdiction.

The pressure to bring projects in on time with quality standards and safely is enormous. The projects teams we run have to achieve the highest standards of professionalism and efficiency. And that is what it is all about – **TEAMWORK!**

The key to the success of our business is the combination of those teams and the expertise that resides in those teams.

I said in the beginning that the Group has always had a high commitment to training.
The commitment runs through every strand of our business.

We were the first contractor to achieve accreditation with Engineers Ireland for our CPD programme for our engineers.

We have been running a 5-year graduate programme for engineers for many years.

Every year we recruit graduates in the Mechanical / Building Services areas from UCD, Bolton Street, DCU, Cork and Limerick. From this pool of graduates we will train future managers for the company.

Coupled with this we have a long history of craft apprentice training.
In H A O’Neil at any one time we have between 40-50 mechanical supervisors 80% of whom would have started as apprentices with the company. We have recruited and trained over 6,000 (Approx) mechanical apprentices and a similar number in the electrical division.
In the past a number of people who served as Directors started out as apprentices within the firm.

We have had many successes in National Craft and International competitions. One of the highlights of this success was when Simon Watson won the Gold Medal in the World Skills Olympics in the 1980’s. Simon is now a Project Manager with the Company, currently working in Intel. We continue to recruit apprentices and to train and develop them.

Over the years we have as a company tried to influence the training available to apprentices in both FAS and IT.

The present system sets out to train plumbers and achieves a very high standard. Companies like ourselves have to build on this and continue to train them as pipefitters to meet the needs of our business and Clients. Craft education cannot stand still. What was appropriate - years ago will not satisfy the needs of the industry today.

When we first started working for Clients like Intel, Clean Room technology was new to us and we have to learn fast and adapt quickly.
We sent craft personnel to the US to learn the skills required. Our employees rose to the challenge. For many companies like Intel, Irish Craft Labour has a reputation as the best in the World. We have set our own high standards and continue to set the standard in terms of quality and performance / production. Our Craft labour has exceeded expectations in terms of the skills they developed, but also in terms of the speed with which they picked up those skills. It is a testament to the excellence of the core training that they received as apprentices.

We need to build on that excellent structure. It is not possible to go into details today – that is for another day. What our industry needs is to build on what we have – for instance we must maintain the relevant basics we have today and add appropriate modules or maybe a choice of modules, i.e. the system we have of on-the-job experience interspersed with off-the-job modules is a model that works well. The apprentices get inputs of theory which they then have opportunity put into practice.
It is important that we maintain that standard and continue to develop – keep ahead of the market.

We have seen in other countries, particularly the UK where our own company operates, the poor standards of craft labour. This has happened due to the neglect of the craft apprenticeship system. We do not want to go down the same route.

The future lies in building on the existing system and continuous improvement. The educationalists must listen to the industry and adapt to the demands of the market. But education must adapt with speed.

I am involved in the CIF Apprenticeship Committee and we are currently looking at structure and curricula. It is difficult to address all of the issues but the quality of the craft training system must be maintained.

As I said – the apprentices are plumbers. They get the basic core training and we go on to develop and train them as pipe fitters. Education and Industry need to look closely at the training provided, analyse what is no longer applicable and look at new modules more appropriate to the needs of our industry today.
At present as I said earlier, our craft training is recognised internationally as excellent. When we recruit apprentices for Jones Engineering we try to ensure that they see the apprenticeship as a training that has no limits – a starting point that gives them an opportunity to build a successful career.

Many of our apprentices go on to do extra study, get degrees, which we support. The opportunity is there to progress in the company and or work abroad.

Many who serve their apprenticeship often travel for a year or so – many come back and rejoin. Our apprentices on the Electrical and Mechanical sides have had no trouble getting jobs in Australia and Canada. The Craft Certificate is a passport to jobs opportunity all over the World.
To ensure the future of craft education, the educationalists making the decisions need to inform themselves before they make those decisions.

They need to come out from the schools and colleges and engage with industry, visit the business and see the reality on the ground.

They need to see the demands of Clients, the scope of projects and the skill required to do those projects.

Craft training as a career choice needs to be projected in a positive light. It has received bad press with this recession with so many Construction Workers losing jobs.
Before that we used to hear things like he/she will get into a trade, because he didn’t or won’t get into college. We need good candidates to choose craft training as a career of choice. The sophisticated requirements of Clients demand that we have good people.

Building technology is advancing so quickly, complex chemical process, the demands of IT Industry/Data Centres, all those Clients require bright, smart people to build their hospitals, plants, office buildings, manufacturing facilities, data centres.

Ireland has a terrific base on which to build the next generation of craft people. We cannot waste the opportunity. We should and can lead the way.

**Heartening to hear that the Minister is committed to preserving the best of the existing system.**
I will finish by quoting the great aeronautics innovator Theodore Von Karmam

“Scientists study the World as it is, Engineers create the World that has never been” and I would add we will always need crafts people to build that World that has never been.