



Project Academy Partnership



The organisation

Shell is a global group of energy and petrochemicals companies with around 92,000 employees in more than 70 countries and territories. They use advanced technologies and take an innovative approach to help build a sustainable energy future. The Upstream business searches for and recovers crude oil, natural gas, and operates the infrastructure needed to deliver both oil and natural gas to market. Shell also develops wind power as a means to generate electricity. The Downstream business manages their refining and marketing activities for oil products and chemicals. The Downstream business also trades crude oil, oil products and petrochemicals, and markets gas and power. It provides shipping services by managing one of the world's largest fleets of liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers and oil tankers. In addition, Downstream oversees Shell's interests in alternative energy (excluding wind) and CO2 management.

The business issues

As is suggested in the structure of the organisation, projects are the foundation of Shell's business. The selection of the right projects, and their successful completion, is an imperative for the long term future of the organisation. During the early 2000's Shell recognised the need to maintain and improve consistent project preparation and execution across its capital investment programme, which at the time was \$19 billion.

The development challenge

Shell created a Project Academy as a long-term investment to help attract, develop and retain the industry's best project practitioners. The academy brought significant benefits to Shell employees as individuals, the projects they work on, and the business. The Shell Project Academy (SPA) is an integrated development programme for Shell employees working at all stages of the project lifecycle; from foundational to directors of Shell's mega projects.

The academy approach is summarised in the Shell 'Pentagon' and includes learning events, assessment and accreditation, coaching and mentoring services, a global online knowledge network, project community events, and work experience opportunities.

The programme

To create and facilitate these events Shell selected four university learning partners for the quality and depth of their project management expertise. These partners complement Shell's internal project management expertise with leading-edge external practices and research and have collaborated with Shell professionals for over 10 years. Together they have developed a world-class curriculum. During the first year approximately 1000 Shell staff participated in 40 Project Academy learning events, covering 19 learning modules. Today the Academy has grown to deliver over 20,000 learner person days each year.



Making a difference

SPA has been externally benchmarked against the world's leading global organisations by Human Systems, and the quality of delivery of the SPA programmes has been identified as outstanding and ahead of its competitors. Recently speaking at an international conference, Hugh Mitchell, Chief Human Resources and Corporate Officer for Shell, said:

"We continue to improve the programmes. In 2012, an independent benchmarking of high-technology companies that develop major projects ranked the Shell academy second only to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the USA."

Internally SPA has a reputation for providing value. Those who participate can gain external recognition (through a partnership with APM - the Association of Project Managers) and further their careers through the application of their learning to the challenging project world that they frequent.

A spokesperson at the APM posted the comments:

"By gaining corporate accreditation, Shell Project Academy joins the ranks of leading organisations in project management for its project engineering competence development. This achievement represents a major

milestone in the academy's history and is a significant step for Shell's position in competence development for project engineering in the wider industry."

Shell's evaluation is that they have created a global community of project managers to facilitate resourcing and to build up expertise through the sharing of best practices. *The Shell Project Academy invigorates this global community. It provides an accredited competence development programme that makes our project staff capable of delivering sustained top-quartile performance.*

Why Cranfield?

Cranfield was selected as one of Shell's chosen partners for the quality and depth of their project management expertise and their collaborative approach to working with Shell professionals has contributed to the development of a world-class curriculum.

Facts and Figures

The Shell programme has been running since 2006 and has seen over 130 cohorts and over 2000 managers through the programme.

Delivery locations have included; China, Malaysia, Russia, Nigeria, USA, Canada, The Netherlands, Oman, Qatar and India.