

CLAAS UK take apprentice training 'in-house'



It is 20 years since CLAAS UK launched their industry leading Apprenticeship program and this has gone from strength to strength, with a record number of apprentices joining the scheme in 2020. In light of the increased demand for good quality Apprenticeships the company has now made the decision to raise their apprentice programme to a new level.



As from February 2022, in an industry first, CLAAS UK will be taking their apprentice training 'in-house' in a new dedicated Apprenticeship Academy directly adjacent to the award winning CLAAS ACADEMY, on the site of the CLAAS UK headquarters at Saxham.

The development of the new purpose built Apprentice Academy will make CLAAS the only UK agricultural machinery manufacturer to offer and deliver an in-house apprenticeship programme that is 'all under one roof'. It's also a worldwide first for the CLAAS Group and with a significant investment of 3 million Euros, the programme will provide a blueprint for the development of similar schemes within the company's global operation.



To date CLAAS has seen over 200 apprentices graduate and grow within their dealer network, many of whom are progressing within their careers. This has been as a direct result of the commitment and support of their dealer network and the existing training providers.

However, CLAAS recognise that in order to stay ahead they have to keep on running. The original apprenticeship program was created 20 years ago and as the CLAAS product portfolio and technology has changed to meet the increasing demands of customers, so the training schemes also need to keep pace of these new developments.



Year 3 Apprentices Nick Searle (left) and Obi Brinkley (centre) with Year 1 Apprentice James Gosling in the new CLAAS Apprentice Academy

Hence CLAAS' decision to focus on the importance of "growing their own" to ensure that their dealership staff of the future have the technical skills and product knowledge required by the customers and their dealer network to provide a first CLAAS service.

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People are what make CLAAS the company it is today. The business and its customers businesses are driven by the success of our people and in order to secure their future the company now feels it's the right time to start the process of truly growing their staff from within CLAAS.



Year 1 Apprentice James Gosling in the new CLAAS Apprentice Academy.

The decision to take the Apprenticeship programme in-house, rather than continuing with a third party, will allow CLAAS UK to fully integrate their apprentices into the culture of CLAAS, its extensive product range and its ethos.

Andrew Dunne, Academy Manager has said “Our new generation of apprentices will receive specific product training throughout their apprenticeship programme and will be fully integrated and accustomed to CLAAS, leading to further qualification and progression within the dealerships once qualified.”

CLAAS will continue its close working relationships with the current partner colleges to ensure all their existing apprentices complete their programmes successfully and continue their careers at CLAAS.

The CLAAS ACADEMY inaugural intake of apprentices from CLAAS dealerships will commence in February 2022, with a further cohort joining the scheme in autumn 2022. Initially CLAAS UK will be delivering the Land-Based Service Engineer Technician Level 3 Apprenticeship Standard, but as the Academy develops it is planned to expand apprentice numbers and courses available.

The apprenticeship programs will be delivered by CLAAS dedicated trainers alongside specialist product trainers from the CLAAS ACADEMY. In preparation for the new programme, not only has an Apprenticeship Academy been established on site, the CLAAS ACADEMY itself has been extended and remodelled to provide additional bespoke facilities for the apprentices, namely specialist fabrication, engine, hydraulic and electronic workshops, classrooms and break-out areas. This expansion sees the Academy grow by a further five workshops and six classrooms, together with dedicated digital studios.

CLAAS UK has received full Government approval to join the apprentice training register. In the future CLAAS will also be collaborating with the Scottish Rural College (SRUC) to deliver apprenticeships for Scottish candidates from the new Apprentice Academy at Saxham.

“This is a significant strategic step for the development and sustainability of our business,” explains Brian Wain, Chief Operating Officer for CLAAS UK. “In an industry which combines advanced technology with practical applications, we have to invest in the people who will be our future engineers, for our dealer partners, and our final customer, if we are all to succeed in the field.”

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Apprentices Nick Searle, James Gosling and Obi Brinkley with John Kireia, Technical Trainer Tractors in the CLAAS Academy.

Apprentices James Gosling, Nick Searle and Obi Brinkley in the CLAAS Academy.

