LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reply to '30th Liverpool course—is this a record?'

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reply to ‘30th Liverpool course—is this a record?’

Dear Sir

We read with interest Dr Mike Moores’ piece on the 30th Liverpool course on radiation protection and quality assurance (2012 J. Radiol. Prot. 32 193–4) and would like to offer our congratulations on its longevity. With a history of providing radiation protection courses going back to the 1970s with origins in the 1960s we can appreciate the challenges the passing decades have posed for those providing such radiation protection courses.

On our part the Windscale Fire of 1957 and subsequent Veale report of 1960 on ‘training in radiological health and safety’ proposed the establishment of an organisation that in 1970 became NRPB. The report identified two levels of training, one at graduate level for those engaged professionally in radiological protection and another at a technical level for support staff needing practical competence. This lead to NRPB adopting the organisation of two professional courses previously offered by UKAEA. These were a post-graduate course that met the initial and early training requirements of operational protection staff and an advanced course for the more experienced professional. These courses ran until 1998 with the University of Surrey validating the post-graduate course from the early 1990s and offered credits at masters level to participants passing the course examination.

The changing face of the nuclear industry over the intervening years coupled with the requirements of IRR99 regarding training, as underpinned by Euratom requirements, led to these professional courses being replaced in 1999 by a modular training programme, the Radiological Protection Training Scheme (RPTS) that continues to be offered by the Health Protection Agency. This scheme comprises three modules consisting of a number of topic-focused courses covering the underpinning knowledge in radiological protection. The ‘Core of Knowledge’ module is intended to provide the requisite technical knowledge as specified in the HSE’s statement on radiation protection advisers and as such can contribute to evidence of knowledge and understanding for those seeking RPA certification. This is supplemented by specialist courses focusing on specific topics in radiation protection at an advanced level. With the environmental regulators publishing a syllabus in 2011 setting out the requisite knowledge and training for a for Radioactive Waste Adviser, a second training path satisfying these requirements in a similar manner to HSE’s RPA syllabus will be offered.

A consequence of security, industrial and medical uses of ionising radiation expanding; decommissioning; new build; new regulation and changing demographics will continue the demand for high quality radiation protection training and education for all sectors. This will lead to greater challenges for all providers as we go forward over the next 30 years.

Yours sincerely,

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