



Royal Holloway and TNK-BP

Nomination Category: Education Partnership

Nomination Statement:

The new dual-award MSc in Petroleum Geosciences at Tyumen State Oil and Gas University, Siberia, is an excellent example of a promising new training partnership between industry (TNK-BP) and two universities with very different academic traditions (Royal Holloway, University of London and Tyumen State Oil and Gas University). The partnership was instigated by TNK-BP who, in 2006, recognized Petroleum Geoscience as one of several skills areas critical to future success. To develop these skills amongst future recruits, TNK-BP decided to establish a world class one year masters level degree programme, and identified Tyumen State Oil and Gas University as the institution that should deliver it. In April 2007 TNK-BP and TSOGU identified Royal Holloway as the third member of the partnership, and the institution to help them achieve that goal. After a hectic year of planning and organizing, a new training centre was opened and the new MSc programme was launched in September 2008 with 20 enthusiastic students on board. The successful launch of the programme is down to a number of key factors:

- TNK-BP's focus on Technical Capability Development, and their willingness to put considerable resources in to it, both financially, in terms of sponsoring students and providing the resources for the new training centre, but also in terms of personnel, in terms of project planning and management, and providing technical expertise.
- The willingness of TSOGU (both students and staff) to adopt new learning strategies and structures, and to champion the project.
- The willingness of Royal Holloway to develop international partnerships and to look outside the more traditional methods of working with students from outside the UK
- The recognition by all partners of what they can bring to the project – the excellent training of Russian specialists that already exists in Russian Universities, the interdisciplinary nature of masters level training in UK universities that will help Russian specialists to apply their skills more effectively in the workplace, and the vision and determination of industry, in the form of TNK-BP to recognize key skills shortages and to go about addressing them in a very practical manner. Getting to this point has not been without its challenges and has required a lot of hard work to change perceptions, and to overcome resistance to change, in all three partners and to ensure that those involved in implementing the project treated it with the same importance and urgency as those leading it. New challenges lie ahead – it was always the intention of TNK-BP to act as “mid-wife”, and for the relationship to change once the project is up and running and a wider range of companies become involved. In the current economic climate, persuading other companies to share TNK-BP's vision will be the real challenge.