

Full Steam Ahead For UTC Reading

Submitted by: C8 Consulting

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Reading, UK, 30th August 2012 – The Oxford and Cherwell Valley College (OCVC) Group, lead sponsors of the new University Technical College that will be based in Reading, today announced the official name and other important developments, including the project receiving formal approval from the government and the procurement of a site.

Reading's University Technical College will be called UTC Reading and the site has been secured on Crescent Road in East Reading which will accommodate 600 students when at full capacity. This location is in a central position to serve the proposed wide catchment area, which includes young people within a 15 mile radius of postcode RG1 5RQ in East Reading, extending to Newbury, Slough, Basingstoke and Farnborough. UTC Reading's site offers extensive playing fields for sport and recreational activities, to ensure that the 14 to 19 year olds starting in September 2013 have all of the facilities for the planned programme of extra-curricular activities.

The recruitment drive to appoint a new principal for UTC Reading is also underway and the sponsors plan to have the chosen candidate in post by January 2013, to be in place to spearhead the launch. Other teaching and support staff will be recruited soon after. Another key development has been an agreement between Schools Minister Lord Hill and the sponsors. The signing of a 'funding agreement' is a key milestone in the process of developing the UTC to open in September 2013, as Chief Executive of OCVC, Sally Dicketts, comments:

"The funding agreement being signed means that this project is really happening. Now that we have a name, location and this funding secured we are on the right path in seeing the dream of UTC Reading become a reality. By 2013 I am confident we will have a leading-edge facility that Reading and the region will be proud of, that can inspire the next generation of computer science and IT specialists through education."

UTC Reading will specialise in computer science and software engineering, taught alongside the national curriculum. This means that students get the benefit of practical study of the specialist subjects whilst still taking the GCSE's and A-levels that they would take at a regular school; getting the best of both worlds. The specialist curriculum proposed by the UTC will appeal to secondary school-aged pupils interested in computer science and/or engineering who are keen on pursuing and developing their talents.

Making all of this happen is a committed partnership made up of sponsors and partners. These include Reading College, Reading School, the University of Reading, Microsoft, Cisco, Network Rail and Peter Brett Associates. Together the sponsor and partners believe they can help create a new kind of facility for 14 to 19 year olds, that brings together the combination of education and industry to give them the best possible start in their professional life.

Steve Beswick, Director of Education for Microsoft and a key Industry Partner for UTC Reading, comments:

"Microsoft has a long and proud history supporting education in the UK. One area of focus for us is the

promotion of computer science in schools for young people. This promotion is essential so that we can develop talent and ensure the UK continues to produce world class computer science and programming graduates. The Memorandum of Understanding we have signed with the new UTC Reading represents a further deepening of our commitment to this cause and underlines Microsoft's strategy of transforming the way technology is used and taught in schools."

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Notes to Editors

What is a UTC?

A University Technical College (UTC) is an innovative school that provides education for students aged 14 to 19 and offers specialist programmes alongside traditional subjects. It is supported by a University and high profile academic and industry partners who are involved in every aspect of the UTC, including the development of the curriculum.

What's different?

A UTC provides students with a valuable choice when they are deciding what options they wish to follow when they are 14. If they are really interested in the specialisms of the UTC (Computer Sciences and Software Engineering) then they can study these alongside the standard GCSE curriculum. This means that they get the benefit of real-world study of the specialist subjects while still taking the GCSEs and A-levels on the curriculum.

About OCVC

The Oxford & Cherwell Valley College Group, which includes Reading College, is committed to ensuring all its students are equipped with the contemporary knowledge, professional values and interpersonal skills to achieve employment and citizenship. The colleges aim to be inspirational and innovative, to foster respect and personal development through learning, and to be of value and economic significance to local communities. As the premier colleges of further education in their regions, the colleges in the group have excellent links with local employers and vocational courses are delivered in industry-standard facilities. The college has some of the best pass rates in the country, including a pass rate of 100% for most A-levels in 2012.

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