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**STEM Leadership Award for schools and colleges supported by Ocean Winds**

**One of Scotland’s leading offshore wind companies, Ocean Winds, is supporting SSERC to develop a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) award for the Young STEM Leader Programme at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 7.**

As a major renewable energy infrastructure company in Scotland, Ocean Winds values investment in its future workforce, and is offering direct support for STEM subjects in schools. Ocean Winds (OW) is an international company dedicated to offshore wind energy and created as a 50-50 joint venture, owned by EDP Renewables and ENGIE. Through their existing partnership with SSERC, Ocean Winds is committed to supporting STEM Education across Scotland. The partnership is being extended to develop a new level of the Young STEM Leader Programme.

A key strand of the Scottish Government’s Strategy for STEM Education and Training, the Young STEM Leader Programme (YSLP) aims to encourage future pathways in STEM by empowering young people to deliver exciting experiences in their school, college or community. The programme is already being delivered across over 800 centres in Scotland, with over 12,000 young people taking part.

Being a Young STEM Leader doesn’t just mean test-tubes and Bunsen burners, but gaming, music, digital skills, design, sport, animal welfare, fashion, the environment and almost everything in between. As a STEM Leader, young people are encouraged to share STEM activities, events or interactions with other people, helping to develop leadership skills and qualities and break down existing barriers to STEM participation.

To meet the increasing popularity of the programme and aspirations of the young people involved, there have been several calls for the development of a new SCQF Level 7 award (YSL7), equivalent to Advanced Higher level. This new award – supported by Ocean Winds – will allow Young STEM Leaders in the senior phase of secondary school, colleges and apprenticeship programmes to take the next step in their STEM leadership journey.

It is hoped that the YSL7 award would focus on an evidence-based enquiry project representing approximately 50 – 60 hours of learning for the Young STEM Leader, typically spread across an academic year. In addition, YSLs would be expected to engage with STEM employers and institutions to ensure their project is reliable, accurate and meaningful as a research topic.

The award is currently in development and will be launched for a limited pilot starting in September 2023, with a full national launch in June 2024.

Mark Baxter, Project Manager for the Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm for OW, commented:

“Having partnered with SSERC for STEM support over the last year we are delighted to follow their advice to assist the development and delivery of this keenly anticipated extension to the highly regarded Young STEM Leader programme. We are hopeful that the students that benefit from this programme will be inspired by the rapidly growing opportunities in the renewables sector in Scotland and internationally.”

Alastair MacGregor, SSERC Chief Executive, said:

“This presents a unique opportunity for SSERC to nurture existing relationships with employers (including the development partner) and build on the success of our existing offers including the STEM Ambassador Programme, Education Industry Partnerships and Nuffield Research Placements. As well as providing the next step for YSLs in schools and community groups, it is hoped that the award will encourage more young people in colleges to consider becoming a Young STEM Leader.”

**About Ocean Winds**

Ocean Winds (OW) is an international company dedicated to offshore wind energy and created as a 50-50 joint venture, owned by EDP Renewables and ENGIE. Based on our belief that offshore wind energy is an essential part of the global energy transition, we develop, finance, build and operate offshore wind farm projects all around the world.

When EDP and ENGIE combined their offshore wind assets and project pipeline to create OW in 2019, the company had a total of 1.5 GW under construction and 4.0 GW under development; OW has been adding rapidly to that portfolio and is now on a trajectory to reach the 2025 target of 5 to 7 GW of projects in operation, or construction, and 5 to 10 GW under advanced development. In 2022, OW’s offshore wind gross capacity already operating, in construction or with advanced development rights granted has reached 16.6 GW.

In the United-Kingdom, OW is the majority shareholder of Moray East, Scotland’s largest operational offshore wind farm with an installed capacity of 950 MW. The project operational base is Fraserburgh. OW is also developing the adjacent Moray West project, 882 MW, with first power planned for 2024. The project operational harbour will be Buckie.

During the ScotWind process, OW has recently been awarded exclusive rights by Crown Estate Scotland to develop three projects:

* An offshore wind project targeting a capacity of 2 GW, named Caledonia, adjacent to the existing Moray East and Moray West seabed lease area. The nature of Caledonia as an extension to the other Moray Firth projects offers opportunities for rapid deployment, to deliver both economic recovery and low-cost, low-carbon power;
* One floating offshore wind project of 1.8 GW capacity in partnership with Mainstream Renewable Power
* Another floating offshore project of 500 MW, both east of the Shetland Islands.

**About SSERC**

SSERC, formally constituted as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and a registered Scottish Charity, was set up for the benefit of Scottish Education. All 32 Scottish Local Authorities are members of the company. SSERC offers a broad portfolio of services, principally in support of the STEM areas of the curriculum, which are not available from any other source and which can be broken down into three main stands of activity:-

* Provision of Professional Learning (PL) for early years practitioners, primary and secondary teachers and school and college technicians and childminders
* The Advisory Service providing specialist Health & Safety advice for schools and Local Authorities.
* Wider STEM engagement activities including the Young STEM Leader Programme, management of the STEM Ambassadors in Scotland Hub, ENTHUSE Partnerships, the Scottish STEM Placements Programme and Education in Industry Partnerships.

**Further information**

<https://www.oceanwinds.com/>

<https://www.youngstemleader.scot>

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