

Survey suggests 70% of students from leading ROV training centre are in jobs

More than 70% of ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) students from Scotland's only ROV and diver training centre have secured relevant industry jobs, according to new market research.

The Underwater Centre, based in Fort William, surveyed 75 of its previous students in a bid to track their career progression and gain a comprehensive overview of the commercial success of its ROV pilot training courses.

Results from the survey suggest that 71% of students who have undertaken an ROV course at The Underwater Centre since 2006 are now in employment, with the average taking only three months to find a post.

Findings also indicated that not only were students successful in finding relevant jobs, the average annual salary of those in employment was £42,750. In line with this, 92% of those surveyed felt that training at The Underwater Centre made them more employable.

These latest figures reflect the growing demand for the Centre's ROV courses – last year saw a 71% increase in the uptake of ROV courses, compared to 2007.

With energy business analysts Douglas-Westwood forecasting that the deep water oil and gas sector will spend £112 billion between 2009 and 2013, the demand for trained and skilled ROV personnel looks set to continue.

In response to increasing industry demand and a desire to develop and deliver new courses, The Underwater Centre has made significant investment in its facilities in recent months. New operational cabins, an ROV workshop and additional training modules such as manipulator operation and fibre optics, means that The Underwater Centre's Fort William site has seen considerable modernisation and redevelopment.

The Centre's location offers unique, industry relevant conditions for ROV training. Based on the shores of Loch Linnhe, which in parts is deeper than the North Sea, the site is sheltered by the heights of Ben Nevis, meaning it is accessible for training all year round.

Using the industry standard ROV, the Seaeye Falcons, the Premium ROV Course involves students being trained in flying, pipeline inspection, NDT investigation and seabed searching.

Steve Ham, general manager at The Underwater Centre believes the new market research underlines the benefit of the industry relevant courses being developed by the Fort William training facility.

He said: "Despite the recent economic downturn, the future for the ROV industry is predicted to be very successful. As the prices of oil and gas recover, the opportunities within this sector will in turn increase.



“The rise in ROV use outwith the oil and gas sector, in the rapidly expanding renewable energy industry, for example, is also set to make the next few years the most lucrative there have been for the ROV sector yet.

“In the same vein, the feedback we’re getting from equipment manufacturers suggests that many companies are already gearing up to meet the anticipated increase in demand.”

The Underwater Centre is the only training centre in the world that offers the full range of Health and Safety Executive (HSE) commercial diving qualifications in air and mixed gas diver training, from HSE scuba to HSE approved closed bell diving.

As well as the seawater dive site with a large range of underwater structures and facilities, The Underwater Centre has an enclosed dive training pool, purpose built welding bays, private pier, three barges with wet bell and closed bell training facilities, fully equipped lecture rooms and accommodation for up to 49 students.