



An accredited environmental awareness training course could become mandatory for site managers and supervisors employed by members of the UK Contractors Group.

The Site Environmental Awareness Training Scheme (SEATS) will launch on 28 February and has been developed by CITB-ConstructionSkills in partnership with UKCG member firms Costain, Skanska and Wates to provide management or supervisory staff with an introduction to environmental issues on construction sites.

Accredited by Site Safety Plus and delivered via classroom-based tutorials and case studies, the one-day course will aim to teach the basics of environmental management systems, waste management, pollution prevention and water management, energy and resources, and how to be a good neighbour. The UKCG is endorsing the course, which if successful could be made mandatory for all its 34 members.

“Our environmental committee recognised their responsibility to take leadership on environmental issues and decided to develop a common, portable industry qualification that will set the standard for the training of site supervisors and site managers,” said Simon Nathan, head of policy at UKCG. “Although large contractors are behind the course’s development, SMEs and subcontractors are also welcome to attend, it’s about pushing best practice down the supply chain,” he added.

Course candidates will learn how environmental issues affect work on site, best practice techniques, legal compliance, and what the supply chain is required to prove to major contractors. At the end of the course, knowledge will be tested by a 25 multiple-choice questions and candidates will each receive a copy of the new GE 700 Environmental section for further reference on site. SEATS will be taught at most national construction colleges and will

cost £150 per head.

Nathan added: “At the moment, several companies conduct in-house environmental training, but a common accredited industry course recognised by all major UK contractors will enable employees to easily take their qualification to another company, it should remove a lot of cost and duplication from the industry. We’re hoping it will gain recognition, it’s about transferability – the more it’s recognised and employers and clients understand it, the more widely it will be taken up.”

However, the move is expected to court controversy among some site personnel, who feel they under siege from the plethora of cards and certification schemes that are increasingly being asked for to work on site in managerial positions. One of these is the Site Management Safety Training Scheme, a five-day health and safety training programme that is also mandatory for members of the UKCG.