

# Learning online

The Society of Dairy Technology has unveiled e-learning modules for the dairy sector



The Society of Dairy Technology has unveiled e-learning modules for the dairy sector. At the end of last year, the SDT launched its first in a range of five e-learning modules aimed to support newcomers to the industry, employees of companies supplying ingredients, equipment and materials to the industry and individuals who would like to further their knowledge of dairy processes and the chemistry and microbiology fundamentals behind them, to support in their career progression.

The modules start with Milk Production: examining the farm end of the supply chain, looking at milk composition and the factors governing the production of a safe and nutritious product. Following this are Dairy Chemistry and Dairy Microbiology.

Dairy Chemistry delves into the structure of the components of the milk, their function in key reactions relating to the production of milk products, such as cheese and butter, and the physical properties of milk, typically measured to ensure product conforms to strict compositional requirements.

Dairy Microbiology covers the important types of micro-organisms associated with milk, the factors influencing their growth, their function in some cases and their control in others. The fourth module, Milk Processing, considers fluid flow, the attributes of the different types of pumps and valves when moving milk and milk products in pipelines and the major milk processing procedures; heat processing, centrifugation, homogenisation and membrane filtration. The final module, Milk Products, covers ESL milks, cheese, butter, yogurt, creams, milk powders and ice-cream, their manufacturing processes, ingredients and composition.

The modules are pitched approximately at level 3 (A level/diploma) and there are approximately 30 slides per module with both audio and written commentary to support different learning preferences. There is formative assessment throughout the modules for each section so that learners can check their understanding and once they have completed the course there is a 20-question multiple choice assessment. Learners require a mark of 60 per cent (ie, 14 correct answers) to pass the assessment and a certificate is issued.

If a learner does not pass they will be given an opportunity to retake with a few different questions. It is not necessary for the learner to take the course in one sitting – they can stop and start at any point and when they return the system will remember their position. It is difficult to give a timescale for each module because learners learn at different rates, depending on their prior knowledge, but we would expect in the region of four to eight hours per module.



Since the launch the SDT have been delighted with the uptake of the modules from individuals and companies. Company training managers often work closely with their learners, holding group training sessions for the modules, thereby permitting discussion to support learning and setting deadlines for completion. The training platform has the facility to enable company training personnel to keep up to date with the progress of their learners.

The SDT intends to add to the portfolio of five modules in the near future with specific product modules planned as well as other topics such as CIP, dairy engineering and waste/effluent handling and will update module content regularly to ensure they remain at the forefront of technology [Dii](#).

**For more information visit**  
[sdtrainingacademy.co.uk/shop/](http://sdtrainingacademy.co.uk/shop/)

Each learner is given access to the SDT Dairy Handbook to support their learning even if they are not a member. The handbook is updated every three to four years to ensure it keeps up to date with developments in the industry. At the end of each module is additional learning materials to support the learner with reading further into the topics studied in the modules.

The cost of each module is current-

ly £60 (members) and £110 (non-members) with a reduction to £280/module for all five modules (members) and £500 (non-members). If a company signs up for six or more bundles of the five-module license package a reduction to the members price is given. A demo of each module can be viewed by visiting the SDT Training Platform and clicking on the individual modules.

## First company for e-learning

The first company to embark on the SDT online academy five-module package with eight members chosen from the wider team was SoftTrace. It provides dairy manufacturing software solutions and is based out of County Cork, Ireland.

SoftTrace provides a flexible and agile software solution to the dairy industry, to analyse capture and track key plant data providing a concise process and product profile in one central secure location. SoftTrace dairy process technical & compliance manager, Lynn Harte, discusses how the modules have helped the team's continuous professional development in SoftTrace. "Having built strong customer relations over the years we are fortunate that the customers that supported us in our early days are still with us today, partly due to the industry knowledge within our company.

"At SoftTrace, 'We Do Dairy'. It is key to our software development, test and customer care teams that they have an up-to-date understanding of the workings of the dairy industry. To achieve this, we understand the value of continual professional development within our teams. Recognising the importance of continuing to build on our existing skills and knowledge pool.

"Our skilled and experienced teams hail from STEM disciplines, software development engineers, application testers, customer care technicians, IT maintenance and computer engineering backgrounds. The SDT online academy afforded SoftTrace the opportunity to expose our diverse team to specific dairy industry training to assist in their understanding of the challenges that our customers face on a day-to-day basis. We started with eight members from our team, and additional team members will be designated for training with the SDT online academy in the future."

The team feedback on completion of the modules was very positive, because the modules were online and could be accessed at a time that fitted around busy work schedules and project commitments, the organisation of the training was very much simplified." Visit: [Soft-trace.com](http://Soft-trace.com)



Lynne Harte of SoftTrace

