

# IN WITH THE NEW

**IVECO has formally opened its new technical and commercial training academy in Winsford, Cheshire, with big plans in store**

**T**he purpose-built facility includes eight classrooms, a high-ceilinged commercial vehicle workshop equipped with two bays and six mobile lifts, driveline parts and tools, a large meeting room and five staff, with a third technical trainer expected last month.

IVECO training manager Kinhode Aloumon is tasked to implement the brand's Europe-wide 'excellence in action' training programme, delivering hard and soft skills to the UK dealer network of 17 main dealers, plus subdealers and out-of-hours cover, amounting to 480 technicians and 90 sales managers. The training academy is currently mapping the skills competencies of the dealer network, and plans to follow that up by assessing employees' competence levels, too.

The training covers front-end commercial (sales) roles and back-end parts and technician roles. Aloumon says that the IVECO specification encompasses nine job roles within the back-end path (an example is 'electronics/electrical specialist'). Courses are taught at two levels: professional and expert. Each level includes some five to six modules to cover; expert training is more in-depth. Courses vary in length from two to four

days; theoretically they are shorter, but Aloumon has taken the decision to increase the length to impart more information to UK students.

Courses can also be developed based on requests from the market; road safety training is one example. That also means that training is not only offered for the dealer network, but also to key account customers; Fraikin and Dawson Group have commissioned courses currently in development.

The first course offered at the facility was electric vehicle familiarisation, in February. And given the company's interest in alternative fuels, and the launch of a second-generation eDaily full electric van at the CV Show, that is a hot topic. The academy's target is to train 80% of its primary network to attain professional or expert level for EVs by the end of the year, as well as 10% of its secondary network. That translates to making 170 technicians across the network fully trained and capable, Aloumon adds. EV training standards will be in line with IMI standards. In fact, to attend its EV training, technicians need to be certified to IMI level 3 in EV.

Despite the aggressive programme, the training manager admits that, so far, the centre has struggled to fill classrooms. As of early May, the centre's

busiest day since it opened saw only 10 students in all. He explains: "2023 is a transitional year for the academy. I hope that by the end of the year everything will be set up properly, communication-wise and marketing-wise; everyone will be well-informed, and I hope that by 2024 we will be at full speed. This year we knew would be difficult, and we are struggling; there are still lots of things that we need to put in place. However, in the meantime, we are delivering training to small numbers." One three-day course being carried out in early May had only one student. Although the centre could cancel the course, contractually speaking, it decided deliberately not to, states the training manager. "We have decided to deliver training below the minimum numbers because we want to demonstrate to the network that we are flexible, we are back, and we don't want to penalise them."

Aloumon himself is new to training, having begun late last year after a career mostly spent in the IVECO sales organisation; his last role was IVECO UK truck network sales performance manager. Reflecting on his new position, he says: "What I have learned in the last two to three months is, if we really want to improve, and do good business, it starts from training." **TE**

