

IMI introduces first qualification for electric/hybrid vehicle systems

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Technicians in the UK receiving training to ensure vehicles are serviced and maintained according to internationally recognized standards

UK-based Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) has announced that it aims to partner with the Malaysian government and local institutions, helping to develop an international version qualification, the L4 Award in the Diagnosis, Testing and Repair of Electric/Hybrid Vehicles and Components (QCF).

The qualification will enable technicians to safely carry out repairs on the live high voltage electrical components and systems of electric or hybrid vehicles.

Developed in liaison with industry specialists, electric vehicle manufacturers, training providers, health and safety experts and the IMI Sector Skills Council, the UK version of the L4 qualification is the first of

its kind to address working on electric or hybrid vehicle high voltage systems and components while the car's engine is live and when it is potentially lethal to do so.

In the UK to date, 100 technicians have received this L4 award, with a further 1,500 holding the Level 3 qualification.

IMI South-East Asia senior manager, Matthew Stuart said: "We see Malaysia as being ahead of others in this region in the area of electric vehicle adoption. With its conducive policies and a growing awareness of electric vehicles, Malaysia has a strong potential to become the main regional training hub for electric vehicles."

The IMI is a long-time contributor to improving the training standards for the workforce in Malaysia's automotive sector.

Since early last year, it has been working closely with the Malaysian government to provide training support across a network of community colleges, with a particular focus on electric and hybrid vehicles, in line with the nation's aim to be a regional energy-efficient vehicle (EEV) hub.

The professional body now has 24 approved training centres in Malaysia, comprising a mix of automotive companies and community colleges.

The existing 45 IMI electric vehicle assessors in Malaysia improves the country's eligibility to offer the L4 qualification and the demand for assessors is expected to increase significantly in line with the development of the international version of the qualification.

"Currently, there are about 45 technicians in Malaysia who have been trained to maintain and repair electric and hybrid vehicles, and many more will be required over the next five years. By advancing their training to the L4 Award, they will be among the very first in the region to have this advanced level qualification to work on live electric or hybrid vehicles. This puts them in a unique position because with the growing electric and hybrid vehicle industry worldwide, their skills and expertise are likely to be highly sought after," he said.

The IMI L4 electric or hybrid vehicle qualification was originally developed in partnership with BMW with a view, providing the company with a benchmark standard against which it could establish the skills requirements for servicing its plug-in hybrid sports car, the BMW i8 and the fully electric i3 model. This qualification will become a necessity across all makes and models as the electric vehicle sector matures.

"The L4 award is a significant step forward in terms of training and the establishment of standards for electric vehicle maintenance and repair. Going forward, the IMI will continue to offer industry-leading qualifications in emerging technologies such as those involving electric and hybrid vehicles, to help bridge the skills gaps in a rapidly evolving automotive industry", said Stuart.