



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **College ceremony marks key milestone for country's first Aerospace Engineering Diploma grads**

<Five years on from creating national headlines, Exeter College and Flybe celebrate successful delivery of brand new qualification as all 23 graduates go on to full time employment>

Twenty three of the 160 Exeter College higher education students who today donned their caps and gowns to process through the city for their Graduation Ceremony at Exeter Cathedral, had an extra special reason to celebrate, becoming the first graduates of the Flybe Engineering Diploma/FdSc Aircraft Engineering qualification, the country's only four-year programme in Aerospace Engineering. All 23 will soon receive their Licensed Aircraft Engineers' certification from the Civil Aviation Authority and all are already fully employed – 16 with Flybe with the remainder having taken up jobs with other aircraft engineering employers across the country.

After being the only UK airline to sign the Government's Skills' Pledge in 2007, Flybe, Europe's largest regional airline developed Flybe's unique engineering qualification in conjunction with its education partner, Exeter College, a programme of study that combines gaining the necessary academic qualifications alongside hands-on experience.

Business Secretary Vince Cable, who recently visited Flybe's Training Academy said: "I want to congratulate Flybe and their students who have become the first in the country to gain an aerospace engineering diploma. Having recently witnessed first hand the excellent training facilities at Flybe I know that they will have bright futures ahead of them.

"The UK desperately needs more new talent coming through to grow our manufacturing sector and engineering is a rewarding career providing young people with the opportunity to work for exciting high profile companies."

Jim French, Flybe's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer commented: "We are extremely proud of our very first Flybe Engineering graduates. Their successful completion and dedication to the four-year programme marks yet another important milestone for Flybe's Training Academy. What is of course an added bonus is the realisation that all our students are now fully employed. With the aviation industry as a whole facing a shortage of engineers, the fact that 23 newly qualified engineers are now out in the workforce is a magnificent result for us all."

Added Exeter College Principal, Richard Atkins: "This graduation ceremony marks yet another milestone in the pioneering partnership between the College and Flybe that ensures that the College's courses meet the needs of our students and the ever changing demands of the industry. We are very proud that our first group of Flybe students, enrolled four years ago as a first in the aircraft sector, are now graduating and being fully employed in the industry. This innovative programme continues to attract excellent trainees and at the beginning of this year gained further national recognition with the Association of Colleges Beacon Award for Practical Teaching and Learning. We wish all the graduates the very best in their future."

Concluded Mr French: "This programme is very close to my heart and the outstanding success achieved by these first ever graduates is measurable proof of the calibre of the training they have received through our partnership with Exeter College. It is also testament to the growing reputation of the quality and scope of courses offered by our Training Academy here in the South West.

"That every one of our graduates has gained employment is something we can all be extremely proud and I wish all of them every success in their future engineering careers."

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#### **Notes to editors**

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