

Sainsburys College in Edinburgh

Sainsbury's has announced that it is to open six Food Colleges across the UK and one of these will be at their Murrayfield store. The firm hope that the Colleges, which will offer training to colleagues working on the meat, fish, deli, hot food and the cafes, will help their assistants deliver the best food and service to customers.

☒ Colleagues attending the Colleges will receive in depth training from a team of experts that covers product knowledge, knife/preparation skills and practice, sales, customer service and merchandising. Coaching skills will also be taught to ensure the training can be cascaded and passed on when colleagues return to store. Sainsbury's anticipates that over 8,500 colleagues will pass through the Colleges per year although this could rise to up to 10,000.

Gwyn Burr, Sainsbury's Customer Service and Colleague Director, said: "Sainsbury's has an unrivalled heritage of offering fresh food dating back over 141 years and our counters are an integral part of this. We know from customer feedback that customers enjoy the great tasting food and really value the great service they receive on our counters but we were keen to improve this even further. We believe that the skills that our colleagues will learn and develop at the Colleges will play a big part in our future success."

The Food Colleges follow on from the successful opening of Sainsbury's Bakery College earlier this year. The Bakery College, located in the Whitworths Mill near Northampton, was an industry first and has halved the amount of time it takes for Sainsbury's bakers to complete the Level Two qualification aspect of their training.

The launch of the Colleges follows the recent news that Sainsbury's is the first ever food retailer to be awarded Gold accreditation by 'Investors in People'. This is the highest possible award and was only granted following interviews with over 2,000 colleagues working in supermarkets, convenience stores, depots and store support centres.

In October 2008 Sainsbury's became the first company to offer all of its colleagues the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification under its 'You Can' initiative. Sainsbury's target is for You Can to provide over 10,000 colleagues with job opportunities, skills and qualifications by the end of 2010.