



Why use an Autodesk Authorised Training Centre (ATC)?

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Originally from a civil/structural engineering background, Shaun has more than 19 years of hands-on experience with AutoCAD as a user and a CAD manager and has worked in the Autodesk channel in sales, support and training. He is currently Vice-Chairman of the Autodesk Authorised Training Centre Advisory Board (ATCAB) for the United Kingdom and Ireland and is also an Autodesk® Approved Instructor (AAI) and occasional AUGIworld columnist. He is also Country Coordinator for the Autodesk User Group International (AUGI) UK Chapter and currently provides training and consultancy to the Facilities Management (FM) industry through his own consultancy business, CADFMconsultants.

Let's face it. We all need training at one time or another, whether it is an AutoCAD course or a Revit Architecture course. All of the courses we attend provide us with the knowledge we require to use our Autodesk software and we need that training to enable us to move forward and develop.

There are many organisations out there offering training, but who do you use? Who gives you the best training? Who has the highest quality of instruction? There is no simple answer here. Your organisation may have a specific training contractor looking after their training needs. However, for Autodesk training, the best person to provide that training is Autodesk (of course!). Autodesk do not provide direct training to the end user, but they provide training indirectly through their Partner Program of Autodesk Authorised Training Centres (ATC's).

An Autodesk ATC provides the trainee with two unique offerings:

Autodesk Official Training Courseware (AOTC)

All Autodesk ATCs provide Autodesk Official Training Courseware (AOTC) to the trainees attending their courses. This is in the form of a comprehensive manual including process overviews of exercises that will be performed during the course as well as challenge exercises allowing the trainee to test their knowledge gained in each chapter of the courseware. There is also a CD-ROM provided that contains all of the exercises in Autodesk DWG format. It also provides a browser-based set of the exercises covered in the course.

Autodesk Approved Instructors (AAI's)

An Autodesk Approved Instructor (AAI) is exactly that. He or she will be an instructor approved by Autodesk to instruct on an Autodesk product. For example, I am an Autodesk Approved Instructor for AutoCAD. To become an AAI, the instructor has to attend annual update courses provided by Autodesk for their product. The instructor then has to take an on-line exam to prove their knowledge on that product. The minimum pass rate is normally high, in the region of 85%. This ensures the instructor has a high knowledge of their product, which, in turn, will be passed on to the trainees on their course.

All ATCs have to have one accredited AAI as part of their instructor team. Also, all ATC instructors, AAIs or otherwise, have to have an Autodesk Instructor ID number that is



associated with their Authorised Training Centre. This is linked to the ATC Site ID number to allow trainees to complete their on-line evaluation of their training course. The screenshot below shows the website waiting for the trainee to input the ATC Instructor ID and ATC Site ID numbers.

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Autodesk® Authorized Training Center® Evaluations'. At the top left, there is a small image of three people in a meeting. Below the title, there is a blue horizontal bar. The main content area has a white background. It starts with a thank you message: 'Thank you for attending an Autodesk Authorized Training Center (ATC) course. Please take a few moments to fill out this evaluation form. Your comments and feedback help us ensure the quality of the program.' Below this is the section 'ATC Login Information' with the note 'All fields are required.' There are two input fields: 'ATC Instructor ID:' and 'ATC Site ID:'. A 'Continue' button is located below the second input field.

Fig.1 – The ATC on-line evaluation screen

Autodesk utilise this feedback to assess the quality of the training delivered by the ATC. Also, providing the appropriate privacy controls are in place, the ATC can be permitted to use this information to assess their quality of training, allowing them to also maintain a high standard of training.

Autodesk ATCs are your best way forward for high quality, accredited Autodesk product training. All ATCs offer scheduled training courses every month using AOTC manuals and materials. They also offer other training services as well, such as mobile training and custom training.

Mobile training provides an on-site ATC at your premises. Some ATCs are now using the advantage of mobile computing and laptops by providing a completely mobile ATC anywhere in the UK. You still get the accredited Autodesk training with the AOTC manuals but it is at a location convenient to you.

Custom training allows you to specify exactly what aspects of the Autodesk software you wish to be trained on. Most ATCs offer a Training Needs Analysis (TNA). The TNA then specifies what training requirements you have. These are then addressed by the ATC and the custom training is then delivered either at the ATC or by way of the mobile training specified above.

Overall, Autodesk ATCs can provide every aspect of Autodesk software training you will ever need. The best way to find your local ATC is to use the Autodesk ATC locator on the Autodesk UK website: www.autodesk.co.uk.