

The structure of the apprentice scheme is that we do our first academic year at college before coming onto site and into the business where we're embedded in ten three month placements before finally completing a nine month placement in your chosen discipline. So we have a variety of different areas such as configuration management, trials, environmental engineering perhaps in the drawing office and a whole host of other areas around the business giving you a very large overview of what's going on.

During this time you're paid of course, you don't mount up any debt which is always a good point compared to university students. And you get to make contacts within the business so if someone needs me to go and do something in another area I would know who to go and speak to because I've already been in that area.

I'm currently working in trials placement for my final nine months so in total this course lasts four years and you come out in your chosen area. I came to be on the scheme by going to my careers library at school and of course there's a very university based ethos but there was some information available about apprenticeships. I went in and selected a number of application forms for a couple of different companies and I got two offers for the various jobs and of course I chose MBDA over the other company.

That is of course because of the technology that's involved at MBDA, it is much more exciting than it appeared to be in the other company. I get to spend a lot more time at home as well as the fact that we get a much better qualification base when we finish our apprenticeship than with the other company that I had an offer for. So hopefully I'll be able to benefit MBDA as well as benefitting myself in that respect because the more highly qualified you are the more highly competent you are at the job you're doing.

MBDA supports us at college as well as on site by providing us with one to one support once a week, sometimes twice a week, from one of the members of staff in the company. They come to the college to see how we're doing and check our reviews etc. When we're actually on site we have our HR representative Gareth Humphrey's who's very supportive of us and if we need anything he's always there to help. And that includes college work, that includes any work based issues and sometimes home based

issues which allows us to advance ourselves as well as making our personal development a smoother path through.

As apprentices we spend a lot of time supporting various school activities representing the company. I have run an event called the robot rumble which is where we had all the Stevenage based schools in and built a robot out of a kit which we had received from America. Some of the teams have actually gone on to participate in the world championships in America so it's a very good base to cut your teeth on, project management and getting your face out in the community and promoting the company because it's a very good company to work for.

A stand out issue for working for MBDA is that it's a very exciting job to be in. It is at the forefront of technology in most sectors; electronic, mechanical and of course we're always pushing boundaries. Bearing in mind the sort of company we are, we need to make sure that we're one step ahead of the game - so it's a constant evolution which is very good because it keeps your mind fresh and you don't stagnate over a period of time doing the same job which is very helpful.