

I came to be on the scheme from starting general GCSE's, going to school and then when I turned sixteen I decided I'd like to go to college because that's what my friends were doing. Then after a year I decided it wasn't really for me, I did my AS levels and then applied to the apprenticeship scheme. Because I'd done my AS levels and I'd done maths and ICT I was exempt from quite a few things so instead of doing an ONC I went on to do a HNC. I spent two years doing that and I carried on doing the NVQ level two as a sixteen year old apprentice would do because I'd joined MBDA when I was seventeen.

The apprenticeship scheme works through different placements, you can spend three to six months on each placement over four years. So you get to see everything around the Lostock site and also if you want to do offsite placements, for example during the summer when you're not at college, that opportunity is there as well, which I took in 2007 where I did three months in Bristol. I'm currently working in Stevenage and also at college. There's a lot of travelling involved.

Past placements that I've done have meant I've been around the shop floor, test engineering, quality and I've also done a bit of project management as well which is what I'm doing at the moment. So it's mainly project management, support, running meetings, facilitating, taking minutes and also doing a lot of reporting to the customer as well. Just basically being responsible for the delivery of all the hardware that they want and on time.

MBDA are quite good when it comes to support. They've supported me through all my academic side and also through the technical side. Also line managers, particularly the ones that I've got at the moment, have been brilliant. Also past line managers from previous placements have always allowed me to go back to them and get more advice.

The courses we've been on have included the general manual handling, health and safety and also I've done a lifting and slinging course and an IPC course, which is to do with soldering. I also requested to go on a project management course and they funded me to do that. I do aspire to be a senior project manager eventually but I'm trying to find the route to get there at the moment. So I'm hoping to do a bit more work in Lostock and

on specific projects that I really enjoy and hopefully the opportunities will arise that I can take to get there.

The scheme is very very flexible to your own needs – because I started when I was seventeen I was able to go straight on to an HNC which, while I'm still in my apprenticeship, I have been able to do something a bit different. Placement wise it's also very flexible, you can do any placements you want – obviously within reason. I've worked away twice now, I worked in Bristol for three months in the summer two years ago and this year I'm in Stevenage and it's just totally flexible. You're able to do practically whatever course you want providing it's going to give the business something as well.