

I have come from the University of Hertfordshire where I'm studying a degree in mechanical engineering. I finished my second year before I decided that it was probably about time to have a placement which they do encourage at the university.

As far as finding MBDA, I pretty much found it in our placements office. I wasn't really aware of the company before, I will be honest there, but then I saw them advertised and read up a bit about them and thought "This sounds pretty interesting, I fancy going for that." And so I set about the process of applying; looked on the internet, filled in the criteria and then got put through to go through the online test.

My first placement was platform integration on ASRAAM. That was quite interesting, I got to see quite a bit of hardware on that one. Specifically I started doing a bit with the environmental encoder on the ASRAAM missile and that was quite interesting, I got to know the ASRAAM missile, a few bits about it and how things work.

And now I'm actually doing a placement on the LM Fire Shadow, specifically I guess the role could be viewed as hardware management almost. Keeping an eye on what hardware is coming in, dates, where it's going to be allocated, chasing people up for dates, getting to know quite a few people around the whole project and different areas. Getting a good view of the overall scheme of things on here and meeting quite a lot of people and networking.

Of course you have the buddy scheme where a member of the graduate or undergraduate scheme, or somebody who's just come off of it is set to be your buddy and you can go speak to them about any issues you may have; not necessarily about the company even just ways of settling in which is good. And then of course you have the mentor scheme where we have a more senior member of the company tell you a bit more about the business, the ways things work. If you have any problems it's pretty good to go speak to them if you don't want to speak to your line manager about certain things.

I'm not saying that your line manager is not going to be good to speak to because on a personal view my line managers have both been very good, very supportive. I do feel

overall the line managers don't look at you as an undergraduate or as if you're not going to know a lot, they look at you as a resource as much as any other employee. So you will get the work, you'll get hands on but equally they know that you are an undergrad so they're not expecting the top class that you would get from a seasoned engineer. So you will get work but don't worry if you're not fantastic at it because no one's going to push you too hard but they will push you.

It's really good to be able to sit down, be put into a work environment and be able to use those skills and of course you're learning all the time with it which is really good, especially from the point that I am an undergrad so I will be going back and using it hopefully to help me with my degree.

I tend to find that the teams I've been put with are all very friendly so that makes life a lot more enjoyable really. There is a pretty decent social side here, especially in the first couple of weeks when we're all getting into it all really and getting introduced to everyone – a few activities were set aside so we got to intermingle and get to know everyone else on the scheme at the same time and a few others from the company and of course HR intermingled with us so we got to know who was going to be looking after us on that side of things.

There's also a few things in the company that are social anyway, the sports and social club. Of course by doing that you then get involved in activities with other employers with MBDA, you get to meet more people and learn more things and it's quite a good social atmosphere.

What happens next for me; upon finishing my placement around October time if I'm successful, I've done a pretty good job here, I should get an offer to come back either as a summer placement or a graduate placement which I would take personally because I do quite like it here. Of course entailed within that you can also received a bursary for your final year at University which is about £1,500 – a pretty good incentive if you ask me really.

Also once you're in the company like I am now as an undergraduate, if I do feel like coming back I won't have to go through interviews again to get into the company. Because I've already been through that process so if they want me back and I wish to continue it's a matter of just saying "Yes please" and coming back into it all again and being in the job once more.

Overall I'm enjoying the whole experience, I quite like it here.