

Apprentice Case Study

Mechanical

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Hi, I'm Jack, I'm 17 years old and live in Frizington. I am a GEN II mechanical apprentice based in the ENERGUS centre and I've been here since September 2009. I applied to become an apprentice because I've always been interested in engineering. I live on a farm and I've always helped my dad to fix things. I wanted to come to GEN II to build on the skills I already have and will hopefully make this a full time career.

So can you explain the applicant process?

After filling in the application forms I was invited for an aptitude test (practice papers available via local Connexions offices). Some of the tests were easy but a couple of them you have to think quite hard about like the mechanical test with the pictures of the gears. I waited a while after my test, got my scores back and was pleased I got an interview.

How did you prepare for your interview?

When I went for my interview I took a few photos to show the sort of things I'd already done like when I'd make a hydraulic log splitter and also pictures of the various machinery repairs I'd done around the farm. I was lucky that I had something I could take to show what I'd done. In my interview they asked me questions like why I wanted to become an apprentice and why I had chosen the mechanical apprenticeship – it helps if you prepare what you are going to say.

What did you think when you first arrived?

I was impressed with the ENERGUS centre when I arrived. I was surprised that it was state of the art and there was lots of machinery. When we first started we got our uniforms and protective clothing like overalls and steel cap shoes which is called PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). The first thing we did was six weeks of basic electrical wiring and testing training. I was quite surprised that we got to do electrical training even though we are mechanical apprentices but it's so we have an understanding of the other trades.

After the wiring we did bench fitting learning how to file, saw



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and work to drawings. We then did a Computer Aided Design course (CAD) and we learned how to draw, read and interpret engineering drawings. After that we did a pipe fitting module which is a basic course where you learn to solder, work with plastic, copper and galvanised pipe. We got to do a lot of different things.

Can you explain what a mechanical apprenticeship is?



A mechanical apprenticeship has got nothing to do with motor mechanics. It gives you the skills you need to become a mechanical engineer. You learn things like using milling machines and lathes as well as learning how to carry out mechanical maintenance fixing things like pumps and gear boxes. I'm hoping that I will be going to Sellafield so the sort of things I will do when I'm finished my apprenticeship are things like routine maintenance around the plant – a bit like when you carry out a service a car. As we learn so much on our apprenticeship we have the knowledge that if we find something which is broken we have the skills to strip it down to component level, find the fault and repair it.

What advice would you give someone who is thinking on applying?

Go for it. Do your research before you apply and make sure you prepare for your interview.

Is there anything that has surprised you about your apprenticeship?

I didn't know we'd do any electrical work on a mechanical apprenticeship but I enjoyed it as it gives you an insight into other trades. When I'm working as a full time mechanical engineer if I need to do something which is basic electrical work I will have the skills to do it. I don't have any regrets in doing a mechanical apprenticeship – I'd recommend it any day!



To apply for a GEN II Apprenticeship visit the online recruitment portal at www.gen2training.co.uk