

Apprentice Case Study

System and Control

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My name is Cameron McGlennon and I’m a second year System and Control Apprentice. I applied to GEN II in 2009 after doing a year in the sixth form. I didn’t really like sixth form and wanted to do something more hands on and the money you earn whilst you are doing an apprenticeship was also a major factor.

What did you think when you first arrived?

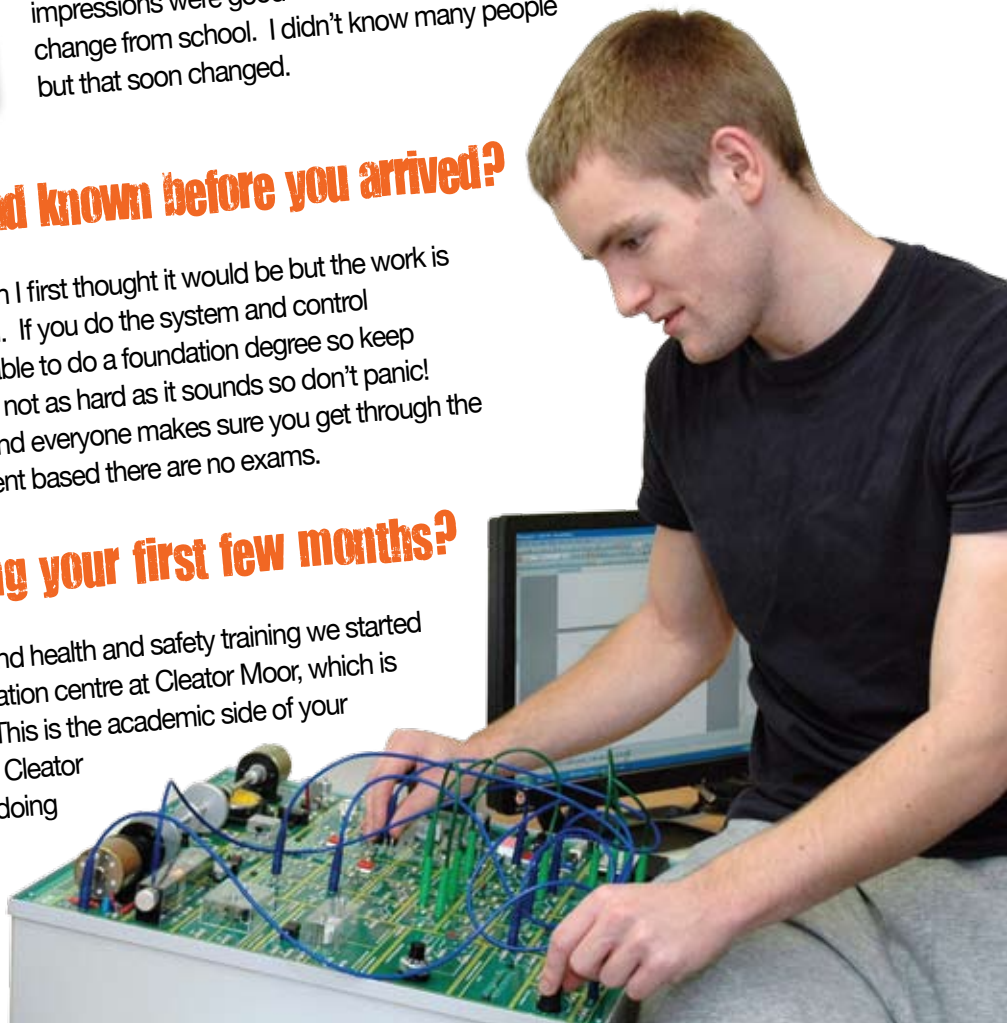
We were the first group of apprentices to go into the ENERGUS centre so my first impressions were good – it was all brand new and top of the range. It was a big change from school. I didn’t know many people but that soon changed.

What do you wish you had known before you arrived?

This course is a lot more academic than I first thought it would be but the work is very interesting and nothing like school. If you do the system and control apprenticeship you automatically are able to do a foundation degree so keep this in mind when you’re applying. It’s not as hard as it sounds so don’t panic! You get plenty of help with the work and everyone makes sure you get through the course and as the course is assignment based there are no exams.

What did you do during your first few months?

After doing our basic bench fitting and health and safety training we started our training at GEN II’s Higher Education centre at Cleator Moor, which is the equivalent to going to college. This is the academic side of your training. We did one day a week at Cleator Moor and four days at ENERGUS doing the practical side of things.



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So what do you do at GEN II's Higher Education Dept?

We do a variety of things:

Maths and further maths.

Instrumentation which is a bit part of the job as it is about measuring levels, temperatures, pressure etc and we have training rigs and get a lot of hands on experience.

Communications which is learning how to write technical reports and basic drawing skills.

PLC work which is controlling processes such as traffic lights using computers you also use PLCs for things such as controlling levels in tanks and temperature rates etc. A PLC is a Programmable Logic Controller, basically a box with electronics which links between a computer and a rig. Don't worry I knew nothing about these when I arrived, I hadn't even heard about them and now I can use them fairly well.

What is your typical day?

We are currently on block release up at GEN II's Higher Education centre so my typical day would be a variety of lessons starting at 8.30am. We have two hour of maths in the morning a break, then two hours of instrumentation then lunch. In the afternoon we do our project work which is your own chosen project.

What advice would you give someone thinking of becoming a System and Control Apprentice

Probably don't spend your wages in the first week of getting paid! But on a more serious note this apprenticeship is really good as you get to concentrate on the one subject. There's a lot of academic work but there is loads of help and if you're prepared to put the time in then it's easy to get through. When I've finished my apprenticeship and my foundation degree I will hopefully get a job as a system and control engineer and eventually move into a management position.



To apply for a
GEN II Apprenticeship
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