

CASE STUDY

Sophie Hayes

CNC Programmer/ Operator



How did you get to where you are now?

I have 2 members of my family who work away on the rigs. It was always my ambition to work on a rigs. So at the time in 6th form, my closest option to anything was construction.

I carried out a year of that and decided it wasn't close enough to what I wanted to do, so I decided to go onto college and study Mechanical Engineering.

With my good grades I was able to go straight onto level 3, so I studied a Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Mechanical Engineering for 1 year.

I passed that and towards the end of the year when I had finished all my work I decided to go onto the apprenticeship website and apply for a job.

I came across Dunlop Oil & Marines job application and saw that it was in Ashington

(close to home) so decided to apply.

After a few weeks (we were now in the summer holidays) and I got a phone call from the College saying I had been accepted for an interview.

I went on to do the first interview and the next day I got a phone call to say they'd like to see me back for a second interview.

I got a phone call the next day saying I had got the job! I started my apprenticeship on 1st of September 2015.

This allowed me to work in a job while I also did my Level 3 Diploma in Mechanical Engineering.

I completed and passed that in my first year. I then went onto and am still in the process of doing my Level 3 Extended Diploma in Mechanical Engineering.

I have also paid to do my Higher National Certificate

in Mechanical Engineering at Teesside University alongside it. Which brings me to where I am now.

A day in the life of a CNC Programmer/Operator

What challenges do you face on a day to day basis?

Doing my job, alongside my Level 3 Extended Diploma & my HNC is a big challenge.

Being on a CNC machine is challenging anyways because most things are based on the operators skills, so you have to ensure that every detail is correct.



"Everyone has their **own way of doing things**, so technically speaking everything between work and university has a difference, **but it's always the same outcome.**"

What would your advice be to someone who aspires to be like you?

Never give up on what you truly want, because no matter how many setbacks cross your path, if you want it enough, you *will* achieve it.

What is the biggest difference you noticed between work and university in terms of engineering?

The biggest difference I have seen between work and university is the algebraic methods.

I've never had to use algebra in my line of work, but that is because a person in a different line of work does that part for us.

Everyone has their own way of doing things, so technically speaking everything between work and university has a difference, but it's always the same outcome.

Real life example of engineering applied to your work.

There is Engineering applied at my workplace every single day. Operating and programming the machine is a good example of real life engineering applied at the workplace.

There are still problems that can arise from this though. Although a CNC machine is very consistent, there are still mistakes that can be made. Such as dimensions that are out of tolerance, sometimes operators fault and sometimes a machine fault.

How do you approach these problems?

You would approach this problem by continuously checking the dimensions of every job that comes out of the machine.

Although it is very consistent, you can't be too sure. Checking the program and tooling thoroughly before starting is also a very important step towards this.



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