



# CAREER ENVY

## APPRENTICESHIP & SCHOOL LEAVER CASE STUDIES

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We've put together individual case studies from different roles as a taster of what life might be like on an apprenticeship, sponsored degree or school leaver scheme. Here you can find profiles of school leavers working in: IT Consulting, Project Management, Automotive Services, Digital Strategy, Engineering, Marketing & Events, Sports & Leisure, Business & Tourism.

| NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2017

*In association with:*

**CGI**

## School leavers working at CGI

There's a world of opportunity waiting out there for you. Perhaps you'll want to jump straight into the world of work. Or you might be interested in university and a traditional degree? Whatever path you follow, it's important to make an informed decision. Joe, Georgie and Matt all chose to do Degree Apprenticeships at CGI. Here they share some of the reasons why, and tell us about their time on the programme.

"To create an environment in which we enjoy working together and, as owners, contribute to building a company we can be proud of."

That is CGI's dream. And we do just this by offering exciting opportunities for school and college leavers, who we see as our next generation of leaders and technical experts.

*Take the first step to a bright future.*

[www.cgi-group.co.uk/careers/school-and-college-leavers](http://www.cgi-group.co.uk/careers/school-and-college-leavers)

### Joe, CGI Degree Apprenticeship:



"I didn't want to carry on in a classroom – I hated being in them – but I did want a degree. I was in a dilemma until I saw this programme and realised I could get vital work experience and a degree with minimal classroom time! Come in with an open mind, the good thing about CGI is that the job is very flexible – you're not coming in with one role, you could be doing numerous jobs. That really lets you pursue a career path that suits you."

### Georgie, CGI Degree Apprenticeship:



"I liked the idea I could go to university and work on a career at the same time, which is why I applied to the CGI sponsored degree programme. I have been in two roles since joining; on an MoD project for two years, and now I have been on the Galileo Project for just over a year. The best thing about my current role is being given exposure and responsibility."

### Matt, CGI Degree Apprenticeship:



"I applied for this scheme because I wanted to start earning money straight away but also wanted to further my education with a degree, so the CGI programme was ideal. I started without much knowledge of what a Test Analyst did, but now I've grown in confidence and knowledge, which means I can work on interesting projects. It was daunting at first seeing, but the team were supportive and trained me up really well."

## The 'you' project Careers for people who get stuff done...

At this early stage, having the word "manager" in your job title might seem like a long way off, but plenty of school leaver opportunities fast track you through to important job roles with plenty of responsibility. They are both time-efficient and affordable – your employers will foot the bill for your training. We asked Security Technical Project Manager, Emma, how her Degree Apprenticeship with CGI got her into such a great position.

### What did you do before the CGI Degree Apprenticeship?

I did a double BTEC in IT, and a BTEC in Business.

### How did you find the move from education to work?

I relocated from Merseyside to Reading, which is about 300 miles away from home. When I first moved I found it difficult to settle in – I had no family or friends down here and everything was new – but I was assigned a buddy who helped me with any questions I had in my day-to-day work, and she helped out with university assignments.

As I got more involved in my project, and my network at work started to expand, I started to settle, and now I see Reading as my home.

I wanted to help others moving to settle in quicker, so with the help of our excellent recruitment team a support programme was created which includes welcome packs, helpful documents and a Welcome to Reading Day! This has proven to be so helpful to our new intakes that we're now expanding it to multiple offices.

### What is your role at CGI?

I am Security Technical Project Manager, but I have also worked as Technical Project Manager, and Junior Business Analyst.

### What does your usual working day look like?

It usually consists of updating plans, looking at any tasks for upcoming sprints and prioritising them accordingly. I also have

planning sessions with the team, removing any blockers that are stopping work progressing, make catch-up calls, do a bit of admin, and have a laugh with the team!

### What do you enjoy most about working for CGI?

The people – they are very supportive and friendly.

### What is your top tip for someone considering the CGI Degree Apprenticeship?

Get chatting to people at your assessment centre – not only will this look good to the recruitment team, but you could be talking to someone you are going to go through your three years with, this is especially important if you are relocating.

## Life in the fast lane 'Drive' forward your career in the automotive industry...

You might think that the only way to forge a career in the shiny world of automobiles is to train as a Formula 1 driver, or study towards an expensive engineering degree. You would be wrong. There is a wide range of paid apprenticeships and school leaver programmes in the industry, and with household name brands. We spoke to award-winning apprentice Alexander, to find out how he made it at Mercedes-Benz.

### Why did you choose to do an apprenticeship?

After doing my A-levels I didn't want to go to university so I looked for other options available. I had a look on the government's Apprenticeship website and found that Mercedes-Benz were offering an apprenticeship in Macclesfield, so I applied for it. I felt that going for an apprenticeship would give me the correct training I would need for the job over three years.

### What does your role involve?

My role involves dealing with parts enquiries from internal and external customers and getting them parts for a vehicle as quickly as possible. Most of our work comes through our busy workshop but we also have regular independent garages that require parts.

### What is your favourite thing about your job?

My favourite part of the job is the customer interaction and helping with any queries they have. Although some of the queries are challenging, the satisfaction you get once the job is complete is great and makes it all worthwhile.

### How did it feel to win Apprentice of the Year at Mercedes-Benz and the Institute of the Motor Industry's Outstanding Student award?

Unbelievable! Just to complete my apprenticeship with such a great company was a fantastic achievement, but to get awarded apprentice of the year was the icing on the cake. It really did make the three years of hard work I put into this Apprenticeship worth it.

### What advice would you give someone considering their career path?

Do what you want to do. If you don't do what you want to do, you won't enjoy it as much. Knowing what I know now, I would encourage current students to look into Apprenticeships in a little more depth. There's a lot of pressure from schools wanting students to go to university – that means that they very rarely speak to students about other opportunities, like apprenticeships.

I was fortunate enough to find an apprenticeship with a fantastic brand and great support from the Mercedes-Benz Apprentice Academy, as well as my workplace.

Overall, my experience has been unforgettable and I am now looking forward to what the future holds.



## Future-proof careers Let's get digital...

Gone are the days when non-university routes into work were only for hands-on industries like construction and hairdressing: the careers of the future are digital, and there are myriad ways of making sure you're right in the middle of it all...without paying a penny. Louis told us about his route to a digital career, and how he did it without taking the standard university route.

### What did you do before the CGI Degree Apprenticeship?

I took A-levels in Business Management, Product Design and Geography.

### What is your role at CGI?

I'm a Digital Strategy & Value Consultant, but before that I was Junior Project Manager.

### What does your usual working day look like?

My working week varies depending on whether I'm working on a client engagement or an internal project. Most days I'm in either CGI's Reading or London offices with occasional trips to client site when needed.

When on a client engagement there's a lot of teamwork and collaboration

on project deliverables with teams at various locations including overseas in the USA, so balancing the challenge of time zones can be a tricky but enjoyable task.

On a standard day I'll have two or three meetings – internal and external – in-between a range of project activity.

Recently, I launched a UK wide campaign for both existing and new clients with an online assessment tool to assess their Digital Strategy, by designing the tool itself all the way through to a social media campaign and internal engagement strategy.

### What do you enjoy most about working for CGI?

I've enjoyed the amount of opportunities I've been able to take advantage of since joining CGI: from structured mentoring and support,

to a real sense of empowerment to shape my own career and experience the different parts of the business, knowing I'll have the guidance around me whenever I need it.

### What is your top tip for someone considering CGI's Degree Apprenticeship?

Be prepared to put in loads of effort to balance your day-to-day job and studies before applying for the Degree Apprenticeship – it is a tough ride but the sense of achievement after you pass through every semester makes it worth it.

## The hands-on approach to careers Engineer your own future...

A career as prestigious as Engineer might seem daunting, and only for those going down the academic route, but in reality you can come at it from all angles – including the vocational route, training on the job and being paid for your time. School leaver Josie told us about her exciting role as Utilities Engineer with Laing O'Rourke, and how even though she side-stepped university, she'll soon have a degree in Civil Engineering.

### Why did you decide to do a school leaver programme?

I've always liked creating things and solving problems, so when it came to deciding on my career, engineering just seemed a very natural choice; I've always been a very practical, hands-on person.

I learn best by interacting with what I am trying to understand, so I decided that learning on-the-job while at the same time gaining my qualifications was the best for me.

### Tell us about work and study on the programme?

I attend university one day a week, and work four days a week. I won't pretend that studying part-time and working in engineering isn't challenging – you have to become very good at prioritising tasks and

managing your own time, but it is possible and will be worth it once I've finished.

The type of experience you gain depends on which project you are assigned to, but it is all practical engineering experience.

I have been part of a wide range of projects from piling, top-down construction, precast projects – factory-made elements – in-situ projects – elements made in final position – and now utilities.

### What is your favourite thing about the programme?

My favourite element of the programme is how you're part of a group of people who you can approach for guidance and support. It's nice knowing that there's a

network of people who truly understand what I am experiencing and can help me be successful.

I've always been very well supported throughout my time with Laing O'Rourke, I have met and worked with people without whom I wouldn't be in the position I am today, like my line managers and my mentor.

A lot of your success is down to networking – the more people you know the more knowledge and support you have access to.

## The main event

### Turn your party planning skills into a career...

No longer do you have to take on student debt in order to break into the popular, competitive world of marketing and events. On a Degree Apprenticeship you can study towards a top university degree paid for by your employer, and enjoy a range of work placements that build up your skills, making you super employable. To give you a snapshot of someone who did one of these programmes and went on to become a Marketing and Events Manager, we spoke to Jessica Parnham.

#### What did you do before the CGI Degree Apprenticeship?

I attended sixth form college – Peter Symonds College.

#### What do you do now at CGI?

I am currently Marketing and Events Manager, but I've also worked in other roles at CGI: Security Assistant, Project Management Office Assistant, and Analyst Programmer.

#### What does your usual working day look like?

I'm usually in London once or twice a week and the rest of the time I work either from Reading or at home.

I manage internal and external events for the company, maintaining

our external website and CynerGI pages, as well as designing new promotional materials and showcases for our products and services.

#### What do you enjoy most about working for CGI?

I have really appreciated the range of role opportunities I've had as it has allowed me to explore many areas of the business in order to find what I am best at and what I enjoy most.

It has also allowed me to develop a wide skill set – coding and programming comes in handy within marketing!

I also chose to stay in my hometown of Winchester which is useful as it is close to the university.

#### What is your top tip for someone considering CGI's Degree Apprenticeship?

Come to one of our Open Evenings – it is so useful to speak to past students in person and to have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have regarding the programme.

## Feel the burn

### Super-fit careers in the sports and recreation industry...

You might think that the only way to work in sport and recreation is to be a professional footballer, racing driver, dancer or poker player. Wrong. A hugely diverse range of careers in sport and recreation are available and you don't need to be an international sporting superstar to have a chance. Don't believe us? Here's how Shane did it.

#### Why did you decide to do a fitness apprenticeship?

I'd never really been very interested in fitness, but as soon as I visited my local gym I was truly inspired by the people I met there. I began working out regularly with a bodybuilder who, on seeing my interest in fitness and motivation to achieve my fitness goals, encouraged me to turn my fitness hobby into a career.

#### How did you find out about the apprenticeship?

Fitness was something that I realised I wanted to pursue full-time. When I was searching the internet for career options, I came across Lifetime's Multi Skilled Fitness Instructor Apprenticeship programme, which offered on the job training. Being government

funded, it meant that I could get 'my foot in the door' of the fitness industry without having to pay to go to university; a route that I couldn't have afforded. I applied straight away for the Level Two Fitness Instruction qualification.

#### What does the apprenticeship involve?

The apprenticeship programme included 17 days of classroom-based learning (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) covering topics such as anatomy and physiology, effective use of gym equipment, first aid, customer service and membership sales. It also involved three months' work experience at my local health club.

Gaining hands-on experience in a real-life gym setting was brilliant; it gave me the skills and the confidence I needed to apply for jobs once I

had completed the course. Then in February this year, just two weeks after completing my apprenticeship programme, I was offered a job as a fitness coach at my local health club in Oxford.

#### Tell us about your job as a fitness coach

As a fitness coach, I spend my time on the gym floor helping clients with their exercise programmes. I take new members through their lifestyle and exercise habits questionnaire, perform health screening and complete gym inductions. My role also includes leading 'ab workouts' and 'Swiss ball classes'. Meeting new people every day and working with fitness enthusiasts of differing ages, backgrounds and fitness levels means that my job is extremely varied and I get to design new exercise programmes each shift!



## Lets get down to business

You don't need university to set yourself on the path to the boardroom...

We spoke to Georgia Owen, who was a Business Apprentice with automotive retailers Robins & Day in Manchester, and has now landed a permanent job at the organisation as Fleet Administrator. She told us about her day-to-day duties as an apprentice, the career opportunities her programme brought, and how it feels to have a job that makes you enjoy getting out of bed in the morning.

### What was your apprentice role, and what were your day-to-day duties?

My apprentice role was Business Administrator and Finance Analyst. My day-to-day duties involved completing the dealership banking; this was done as the first job every morning. Another one of my duties was to ensure all fleet deals were invoiced on the right date and sent to customers for payment before the vehicles left the site. I also made sure the customer payment accounts were clear and that right amount was being processed.

### What new skills and study have you learnt so far?

When I started working at Robins & Day, I had no experience of the job whatsoever and through my on the job training with the existing team I learnt everything I know today which has lead me to a permanent Fleet

Administrator position in one of the biggest dealerships. I also went on all the NVQ training via our Academy and online courses which taught me easier ways to deal with situations and gained my NVQ qualification.

### Why did you choose to do an Apprenticeship at Robins & Day?

I chose to do an apprenticeship because I didn't know what career I wanted to take in life. When I first started Robins & Day I struggled, however I soon found my feet and a job which I enjoy getting up in the mornings for.

### What are your career opportunities at Robins & Day after your apprenticeship?

My career opportunities will hopefully lay within the fleet department, I would not mind whether it was sales or

administration but I enjoy working with a high volume of vehicles.

I love to be busy and kept on my feet. I would like to work within Robins & Day for many years and build my career.

### What is your advice for anyone looking to do an apprenticeship and why chose Robins & Day?

The advice I would give to new starters in Robins & Day is to keep on at the job and don't give up, because the opportunities within the company are endless and you will find a position within the company that you really enjoy!

## The beginning of your career journey

### Travelling isn't just for people on gap years, you know...

We caught up with Scott Devine, a second year on TUI's school leaver programme, who told us how it's helped him avoid university debt, and what it's like being a school leaver in the hospitality and tourism industry.

#### What attracted you to a school leaver programme over options like university?

I'm currently part of the TUI Commercial School Leaver Scheme, after doing A-level media exams as well as two BTEC diplomas, performing arts, and travel and tourism. I didn't want to go to university, as I was afraid of acquiring such a high level of debt at such a young age, before I'd even started working.

#### Why did you choose a programme at TUI in

#### particular?

The responsibility offered by the role is what drew me to this programme, knowing that I'd be coming into a role and being tested straight away, not spending my first few weeks doing admin work and tea rounds. Here at TUI they trust you with key roles and responsibilities, which makes you feel really valued and trusted by the company.

#### What is your average day/week like as a school leaver?

As a school leaver, your role changes frequently depending on the department you work in. For example, a month ago I was working with the Trading team and given the responsibility of looking after two destinations, Italy and Croatia, analysing sales, reacting to customer booking patterns and dictating price changes. I recently moved to the Product department, where roles vary between setting up hotels,

analysing quality scores in hotels and researching new destinations. When it comes to studying, TUI has given me the opportunity to get involved in training courses to help further my development, including Excel courses, destination familiarisation activities, and even courses about the history of TUI and tour operators.

#### What is your favourite aspect of the TUI school leaver programme?

The people you work with, no matter what department you're in, are great colleagues and friends. From new starters up to the board directors, everyone is more than happy to help you if you're in need – this kind of cohesiveness is something I never expected, but it's vital to the way we run as a business.

#### What is your favourite part of working in hospitality and tourism, and how will starting

#### out as a school leaver help your career in the industry?

It simply is a fun industry to be a part of! My favourite aspect is the geographical knowledge you gain: learning more about destinations and hotels is part of your day-to-day job, and it's knowledge you can pass on to family and friends. Starting on the programme is key as it gives you a foothold in the industry, and starting at a young age means you have more time than anyone to learn and develop new skills.

#### What would your advice be to a school leaver wanting to move into Hospitality & Tourism?

It's an exciting industry full of many job prospects, and there's much more to the industry than travel agents and flight attendants. No matter what you're interested in – English, media, maths, graphic design or other subjects – there's a career in this industry for you.