

Science & Technology Facilities Council Apprenticeships

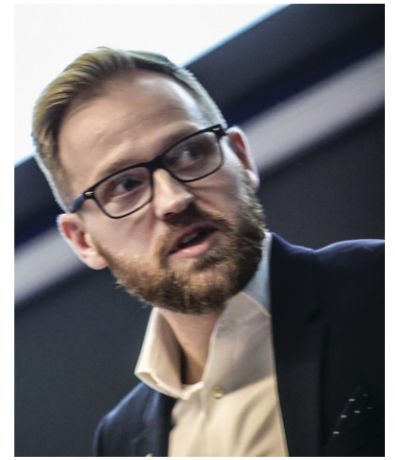


We talk to Jonathan Aghanian, Apprenticeship Scheme Co-ordinator at STFC and Cerys Hope, Associate Project Manager Apprentice, about what apprenticeships bring to their business and the apprenticeship experience.

The Employer Perspective: Jonathan Aghanian, Apprenticeship Scheme Co-ordinator

Q. How has your organisation benefitted from recruiting apprentices?

Jonathan: Apprentices at STFC are a fundamental part of our organisation's structure and long-term development. Working across an array of fields including mechanical/electrical engineering, electronics, computing, IT, project management, administration and laboratory support, they are crucial to developing the pipeline of STEM talent to keep STFC ahead of the demands of a changing research environment. The vision is for apprenticeships to feed into other training programmes at STFC, providing a pathway to take young people from school or college through to degree or even PhD level. This approach allows the apprentices to grow within the organisation, and with advances in their chosen field, keeping STFC and the UK at the forefront of science and innovation.



Jonathan Aghanian

Q. What advice would you give to potential apprentices wanting to join your business?

Jonathan: Carry out research about the potential role you are applying for. Our Apprenticeship Scheme was borne out of the work we do within Engineering-based roles within a scientific and technical capacity, but this has now expanded out into different areas, providing opportunities in roles such as Project Management (L4 and L6), Computing (L3-L7), ICT (L3-L4), Logistics (L2), Health & Safety, Administration (L3), Events and Marketing and so on. We encourage all of our apprentices to work collaboratively and act as advocates for apprenticeships within STEM and STFC in lots of different ways. In summary, be passionate about the work you want to do and the contribution you want to make within STFC. The work we are involved in is rewarding and we're interested in people who want to help make a difference, and want a career rather than a 'job'.

Q. What advice would you give to other businesses who are thinking about recruiting apprentices?

Jonathan: Think about your long-term strategy. How will your apprentice(s) contribute to this, and do you see longer-term development for them and your business? Ensure you are able to resource your apprenticeship training properly. By which, we mean, ensuring they are supported, mentored and develop within their roles. Work closely with your chosen Training Provider(s). We're fortunate enough to work with progressive and forward-thinking training providers who understand our aspirations and work with us to help to achieve this through our apprenticeship scheme. Spend time getting to know the providers in your area and their different approaches to apprenticeship delivery. One size does not fit all.



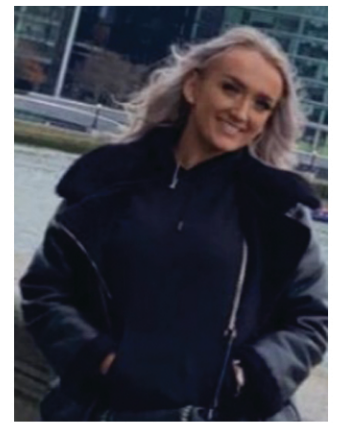
The Apprentice Perspective:

Cerys Hope, Associate Project Manager Apprentice



Q. How did you find out about your apprenticeship?

“ After I had finished my A Levels at my high school sixth form, I struggled to decide what career I wanted to go into. Most of my friends were going University or already knew what jobs they wanted to go for. Apprenticeships were often talked about in college and, to me, it seemed like the best option as I could gain experience whilst also being paid. I attended numerous apprenticeship fairs to try to see what industry would suit me. I also looked on apprenticeship websites such as the Government one and eventually found a local opportunity in customer service and admin. I stayed in that job for 2 years, but once there was little progression left for me, I decided to try to look for another opportunity. I used the same sites and eventually found my current apprenticeship advertised. ”



Cerys Hope

Q. What's being an Apprentice like?

“ It is a good balance between being a student whilst also being a full-time employee. You have time to study and learn new skills whilst gaining experience in a working environment. I now have 3 years' full-time work experience and a qualification in admin. I'm working towards a project management qualification. Whilst being an apprentice, I have also been given many opportunities for additional training, all of which have been paid for and encouraged. I was always encouraged to go to University. I almost felt that certain teachers and others were disappointed in me for choosing an apprenticeship. However, I would not have the experience I have today without it. Many people also think that you'll be on very little money and expected to work long hours, but this is simply not true. Like any job, you get some opportunities that are better than others. It is up to you to research and try to find the best one for you. ”

Q. What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

“ Work hard and show enthusiasm. As you are studying whilst also being a full-time employee, you need to manage your time well and make sure you get all of your work completed. Also, one of your main aims might be to secure a job at the end of your apprenticeship. Many employers do not guarantee this, so you want to make yourself stand out and show your willingness to work hard. Most apprenticeships are only for a couple of years, if that, so you want to make the most of this time and get everything that you can out of it. ”

