

CASE STUDY
EDF ENERGY APPRENTICE: KAT MARTIN



Kat Martin, fourth year Engineering Maintenance Apprentice at Dungeness B Power Station, talks about her experience as an EDF Energy Apprentice.

Why did you choose to take a vocational route and opt for an apprenticeship rather than go to university?

I hadn't really ever thought I'd end up as an engineer; I was really interested in politics and business. I had secured a place at university but decided not to go as the fees put me off. I saw the EDF Energy apprenticeship and applied for that instead, as not only would I get nationally recognised engineering qualifications whilst getting paid, I knew the skills I would learn are very sought-after. I'm really glad I made that decision – being an engineer is a really exciting job as every day is different. There are loads of engineering jobs out there too so I feel like I am well set up for the future.

How did you find your apprenticeship at EDF Energy and how was the application process?

The application process was very simple; I applied and sent my CV online. The testing was something I had never done before but was still a straight forward process. The interview day was nerve wracking, but very interesting with team building tasks followed by the interview.

On the apprenticeship I have learnt so much more than I thought I would. All of the training has been brilliant and I've really enjoyed the practical side. I had no engineering knowledge or background, so doing an apprenticeship enabled me to learn the basics whilst getting paid. The first two years, based at HMS Sultan, are spent making sure that everyone has the same basic knowledge and is brought up to the same level so I didn't feel not having any prior knowledge held me back at all. I've been able to gain engineering qualifications on the job which is great as they are nationally recognised. And now I am set up for a job I really enjoy. No two days are the same and I get a lot of satisfaction from each job I complete. I feel a real sense of accomplishment and we also get recognised for the work that we do which really makes you feel part of the team.

How was the transition from education into a working/teaching environment?

I came straight from A levels into the apprenticeship so it was quite a smooth transition as you're constantly learning on the job. The EDF Energy apprentice scheme starts off with two years at HMS Sultan in Portsmouth, so you're away from home with other apprentices taking part in practical lessons and workshops. Then you go back to the station to complete the final two years. It's really different to being in school but I got used to it pretty quickly. They made me feel really welcome and there's always someone I can ask if I have any problems or I'm not sure what I'm doing.

What were some valuable lessons that you took away from the experience – any top tips you'd give to those going into apprenticeships or things you wish you knew before you started?

The more you put in to the apprenticeship the more you get out of it. And having confidence is key. I would say, if you want to learn every day, have a hands-on job, and get a lot of job satisfaction knowing you have improved the functionality of something, then go for it!

How has your apprenticeship impacted your career in engineering – what doors has it opened for you?

I'm sure it was the right path to take. I've learnt valuable engineering skills, which I know will be useful not just in the nuclear industry but in other industries too. I hope to be able to firstly get a job as a maintenance technician but there are plenty of job opportunities at EDF Energy which means I could end up doing something different to engineering. The company offers lots of leadership training and development so I could end up in a management role if I wanted to go down this route. The apprentice scheme has been a great start to my career here as it is highly regarded throughout the company. The qualifications and knowledge you gain are key to a whole range of opportunities. Many of our senior management, including the Managing Director of Generation, Stuart Crooks, started their career off as apprentices, so with the apprentice training under my belt, the sky is the limit.