

MEET CONNER MURPHY

Engineering Apprentice
Williams

Conner Murphy is one of the lucky few chosen by Williams to go through its apprenticeship programme. Conner has just completed his Level 5 HND Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at Newbury College and has embarked on a part-time degree programme at Portsmouth University.

We asked Conner a few questions about his apprenticeship experience and what it means for his career in motorsport.

Why did you want to become an apprentice?

From a young age, I've always loved completing practical projects and enjoyed the academic challenges that come with them, so it made perfect sense for me to go down the apprenticeship route. It has enabled me to get hands-on, real-world experience as well as gain qualifications at the same time.

What did you learn during your apprenticeship?

Being an apprentice at Williams allowed me to gain valuable experience in most of the organisation's manufacturing departments. I rotated throughout the metallic and composite production areas, as well as the wind tunnel models' manufacture and aerodynamic testing areas. I also gained experience in the design office, where I produced CAD models and technical drawings.

During my apprenticeship I faced diverse technical challenges and learned the skills



to produce and interpret engineering drawings, and work with a variety of materials and manufacturing techniques. I have also developed a good range of hand-crafting skills.

Why did you choose this particular career path?

Mechanical and manufacturing engineering interests me because I like to look at something and think about how it was designed, why it was designed that way, how it was made and what I would have done differently.

I look at an F1 car and see how it went from a drawing on a piece of paper, to winning races and championships. The designing, modelling, prototyping, testing and evaluation, re-modelling and then final manufacture, are all areas that are essential in producing any successful product and ones that I have a keen interest and passion for.

What have been the highlights for you?

In March 2014, I was awarded the Peter Atkinson Gold Award for Outstanding Achievement at Newbury College.



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business@newbury-college.ac.uk

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MEET CONNER MURPHY (CONTINUED)

This was in recognition of achieving distinction grades in every assignment task for each subject module for the BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering and for also self-studying five subject modules to complete the two-year course in just one year. This was then followed up with an award at the National BTEC Awards 2014, where I was recognised as a Commended Runner-Up in the Outstanding BTEC Apprentice of the Year Category.

I've also been to 10 Downing Street for an evening reception in recognition of British Motorsport, hosted by the then Prime Minister David Cameron.

Have you taken part in any special projects?

During my apprenticeship I was lucky enough to fly out to Malaga with the race team and marketing department to do some filming and a photo shoot of the FW36, which was the first car to boast the Martini livery.

I also accompanied the race team during the 2015 in-season test at Silverstone and took part in an apprentice exchange scheme with Jaguar Land Rover, where I had the opportunity to spend four weeks working at their research and development site in Gaydon.

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Williams has run a successful apprenticeship programme for the past ten years. Scott Pinnell, Apprentice Coordinator, talks about why apprenticeships bring value for both sides.

"Williams is essentially an engineering company that makes state-of-the-art racing cars, and in order to be continually successful, we need to nurture a pool of talented and experienced young engineers. Our engineering apprenticeship programme not only feeds the company its future employees, it also allows us to ensure they have right mix of academic and mechanical skills.

As we've been running an apprenticeship programme for many years, it's become embedded in our culture – everyone is supportive right up to the senior management team.

Each apprentice is rotated through the departments over the course of two years. This allows the apprentices to understand each area thoroughly and find out what they are good at. This process also has a motivational effect on other team members, as fresh ideas are in constant supply."

WILLIAMS

What happened at the end of your apprenticeship?

I was offered a permanent role within the team at Williams as a CNC Machinist.

Would you recommend an apprenticeship to other students?

I would definitely recommend this route to students who are unsure about going to university but want to carry on with further education, and to students who

want to gain valuable experience in a working environment whilst obtaining the necessary and relevant qualifications.

How was your experience at Newbury College?

My apprenticeship was greatly enhanced with the help of Newbury College. The support and guidance I received from the lecturers enabled me to gain the qualifications with the highest possible marks, which in turn has given me the work-specific knowledge and expertise I have today.



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