

Mentoring and Work Experience at West Midlands UTC



Jacob Reynolds—Year 13

I first met my mentor Neil Hawkins from RMD Kwikform in 2016. Having a good mentor was one of the main benefits of being at the UTC because it meant you could get in contact with them easily to ask any construction/engineering related questions which you may have not understood. Also arranging work experience was easy because RMD Kwikform are very pro work experience and allowed me to go and spend a week there to learn what the company does and what everyone does in different departments.

In March 2017 I did my first week of work experience with RMD. I was taught the basics of programs like Auto Inventor where I designed a Lego brick and 3D printed it, Unity engine where I had learnt the basics of C# and how to design games and how to use Auto CAD which is the main software they use to design their projects and to really visualise what the final product will look like.

In October 2017 Neil invited me back to RMD to do another week's work experience. This week was a lot more in-depth because I was able to take part in a real-world project which was based in Israel. The task was to help finish the falsework which the new bridge would be built on. I really enjoyed doing this because I was constantly busy doing it and it was interesting trying to figure out what to do next.

Neil Hawkins—RMD Kwikform

I have been mentoring students from UTC now for a couple of years and it has really opened my eyes to the value that such programmes can jointly bring to the employer and the student.

From initially meeting Jacob, then reviewing his course, career aspirations and interests, we got a real insight to the aptitude of a young ambitious, capable youngster.

As part of the mentoring programme, we have facilitated several work experience sessions with Jacob and other UTC students at different stages of their education allowing them to be able to work in multiple departments including Engineering Design, Product Development and Digital Engineering.

The mentoring and work experience programme is very well resourced and managed by the UTC with mentoring training, induction packs, action plans and work experience guidelines all provided to support the mentor and student.

The benefits to an employer of bringing capable students into the work environment is that it creates a culture of learning and opportunity amongst the staff, students and apprentices and it can even greatly assist with assessing candidates and improving the success of recruitment programmes. We have been able to indicate to the business that particular students are worth considering in future recruitment campaigns.

Overall, a positive and inspiring experience for both parties and I would be happy to endorse the programme and provide advice for future students or other employers on the benefits.

