

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL SKILLS NATIONAL PROGRAMME

1e. Careers Path Questionnaire for Employers - Rory McColl

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What path did you take into your current position after you finished school/college?

After school I went straight into university. I studied civil engineering and when I graduated I joined Thames Water on their engineering graduate scheme.

What did you want to do after you finished college/school?

Honestly, I didn't have any firm idea in my mind. In many ways I feel like I'm still figuring it out as I go along. I think many people come out of college without a clearly defined vision of what they want to spend the rest of their lives doing – and that's completely fine.

I chose to study engineering as I had good grades in maths and science from school, and I wanted to practically apply what I had learned. It was a leap of faith in a sense, as I had little idea what the course would involve and what my future would look like. Happily, it's something I've come to find really interesting and I'm pleased with the decision I made.

How does what you are doing now match the expectations you had while you were in education?

I couldn't have imagined doing the job I do now when I was at school. Back then, I didn't really have any idea what the world of work looked like, particularly within engineering.

What is your job now, and what do you get to do on a day-to-day basis?

I'm working as a civil engineer on a massive infrastructure project in north London. The work changes a lot day-to-day, but some typical activities I do are:

- Reviewing engineering drawings and designs
- Helping to solve construction problems
- Planning, arranging and sequencing construction activities
- Assessing construction progress against plans.

What is the best thing about your job?

The satisfaction of seeing a project go from concept to design to reality in front of your eyes.

What would you advise students to do at college which could help them get into this career?

Firstly, I'd recommend making yourself aware of the huge variety of activities, industries and careers that exist within engineering. The range of things you could do is vast, and the options available to young people starting out now are incredibly broad.

If it's something you're really interested in, the next step is figuring out which level of entry is right for you. Some people might go into an apprenticeship, some might choose to go to university, and some might go for a degree apprenticeship, which is somewhere between the two. Regardless, the opportunities at each level are really exciting, and I really recommend engineering as a fulfilling, exciting career path.