

CASE STUDY: Balfour Beatty



MEET OUR APPRENTICES Colin Watt

Job title	Design Draughtsman
Location	Kintore
Apprenticeship type	Electrical
Qualification/education level	SVQ Electrical Installation Level 3 Studying for HNC in Electrical Engineering
Date joined	July 2008



Please provide a brief summary of your role, the project you are supporting and the type of work you undertake on a daily basis:

During my apprenticeship I worked in the Assembly Unit of Power Systems ESI at Kintore, where I was involved in all aspects of the fit-out, wiring and testing of high voltage control and protection panels for EHV substations. As these panels were for a variety of clients, and were therefore bespoke in their design, I really enjoyed the variety that came with my apprenticeship: the challenges we faced were different from project to project. I also gained experience from visiting construction sites, to assist in the installation of the panels assembled in the factory.

After finishing my apprenticeship I transferred into the Design office at Kintore, where I commenced my training and development in the role of a Design Draughtsman. I am involved in a variety of projects where ESI is responsible for the electrical design on EHV substations. These have included 132Kv to 400Kv substations for both Scottish Power and Scottish & Southern Energy. In my role as a Design Draughtsman I have also attended site to liaise with the installation staff

and been involved in the high voltage testing of our equipment. This has given me a more practical understanding of how the designs created in the office are applied on site.

What attracted you to Balfour Beatty?

I was looking for a local company to undertake an Electrical Apprenticeship with. I was aware of Balfour Beatty's facility in Kintore through a family member who had previously worked there. I successfully applied for the three year apprenticeship in June 2008. As Balfour Beatty is such a large organisation, I knew I could continue to develop through the apprenticeship scheme and beyond. I realised when looking at my career options, particularly my ambition to move into a design role following completion of my apprenticeship, that a larger company like Balfour Beatty would suit me better as the Kintore facility has its own large in-house design function.

What development opportunities have you been given whilst in your role?

During my apprenticeship I worked on a number of BBMP construction sites, where I was given the opportunity to be involved in the site installation and testing of control and protection panels that I had fitted out and wired in the factory environment. This allowed me to see the process through from start to finish.

I was also given the opportunity to attend evening classes at Aberdeen College to undertake my HNC in Electrical Engineering whilst I was still completing Stage 3 of my apprenticeship.

I am continuing to develop and gain experience in my role of Design Draughtsman and am now carrying out the role of Electrical Draughtsman on a number of contracts.

How has Balfour Beatty played a role in your long term career goals?

Having moved from the factory into the office environment, I can now see a number of opportunities in Design open for me to move from the lower level CAD/draughting work, into the engineering roles. These potential career paths have been reinforced to me by my Line Manager. There are also roles out with Design that may be possible career routes, such as Project Management, as well as positions in the wider Balfour Beatty organisation.

What has been your highlight so far at Balfour Beatty?

My main highlight has been to finish joint first in our overall Operating Company's Apprentice of the Year competition for 2011/12. I was also proud to successfully complete my Final Integrated Competency Assessment (FICA) at the end of my apprenticeship.

Another highlight was my involvement in the Corriemollie contract for SSE. I was involved in the fit-out, wiring and testing of the panels in the factory, and then went to site and was involved in their installation. I was subsequently involved in the completion of the final record drawings, and was therefore involved in a number of the various stages of the design and build contract.

What one thing surprised you most about working for Balfour Beatty?

The length of time our employees have stayed with the company. Since I joined Balfour Beatty each year we have a number of twenty and thirty years' long service awards and last year two of the Kintore staff achieved forty five years' service.

What are the top three tips/pieces of advice you would give to anyone thinking of applying to Balfour Beatty?

1. Be prepared to be flexible in your working environment.
2. Be willing to travel out with your main place of work. I have gained a lot of experience through working on our construction sites, which has supplemented the knowledge I have gained in the factory environment.
3. Think about your long-term career prospects. This will help you plan what is the best discipline to focus on as the Balfour Beatty Group has a wide range of career prospects.