

TOMMY LEVEL 3 MACHINING APPRENTICE



What does an average day look like for you?

I am currently at SETA doing my training. Initially we talk through each day's plan with our instructor. We then prepare the items needed (including safety equipment) for the particular job that we will be working on. This can be a combination of milling and turning, or may include general engineering work to achieve a precision part according to the drawing.

Due to the precise nature of the work there is also a lot of measuring and checking required. As such it can be frustrating when I make a mistake, but the instructor is always there when we need help. We are learning to do things for ourselves during this foundation year and once we have finished the required pieces I can experiment and try new things.

I feel a great sense of satisfaction when I leave SETA at the end of a day knowing that I have manufactured a part to the best of my ability. This is gradually getting better.

What has been your personal highlight so far?

Having worked in industry before starting my training at SETA I have been able to see that time is money. At SETA we are learning the foundations to produce quality work within the tolerances of the engineering diagrams. So my personal highlight is seeing my own development as I progress through the workshop tasks.

What was your route in to engineering?

At secondary school I achieved a Level 2 distinction star grade in an NCFE Technical Award in Engineering. Whilst doing this I realised that it was the hands-on type of work that I really enjoyed, as I didn't really engage with the theory-based subjects.

I went on to Wiltshire College and did a Level 3 T-Level Technical Qualification in Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control qualification. This has given me a baseline for lots of engineering applications, and I'll be able to use it throughout my career. As part of the T-Level I had to complete 315 hours of work experience. I did this with the same company that I did my school work experience with – Apsley Precision Engineering Ltd.

When I had finished at College I approached Apsley about an apprenticeship, and I was lucky enough to be offered a Machining Technician role.

Why did you choose to do an apprenticeship?

Even though I was doing a T-Level at college there was a lot of theory. This isn't really my style of learning, and I enjoyed the hands-on aspect of the course working in the 'real world'.

When I carried out my own research on getting a job in this field all the companies I looked at required years of work experience. An apprenticeship is the perfect way of gaining this at such a young age. So, when I had the opportunity to do an apprenticeship I jumped at the chance.

What personal qualities do you think are important to do your job?

My employer, Apsley Precision Engineering Ltd, specialise in the manufacture of precision machined components and assemblies for the Defence, Medical, Aerospace and Scientific Industries. So I believe that I need to have a keen eye for detail.

As I am in training at the moment I need to be able to work out a solution if I make a mistake, understand where & why I have gone wrong so that I can learn from it and get better. And of course, I need perseverance if I need to manufacture a part again.

