



## CASE STUDY: Cisco Careers

### Background

UTC Reading is a University Technical College that delivers computer science and engineering excellence for 14-19 year olds.

The school's vision is to inspire students through the solving of real-life industrial and community problems. As students learn, they quickly gain confidence and build the technical and personal skills required to drive the future of industry.

This vision is supported by collaboration with industry partners which shape the curriculum, set and evaluate projects, sponsor units and provide mentoring and work placements.

Among the school's lead industry partners is Cisco International Ltd, a worldwide leader in networking which has a UK base at Longwater Avenue, Reading.

In summer 2015, Cisco International Ltd realised the benefits of this partnership in developing an emerging workforce, as it appointed three of UTC Reading's Year 13 graduates to its apprenticeship programme.



### Shaping future talent

For Cisco International Ltd the partnership with UTC Reading has multiple benefits. Since the UTC is a specialist in computer science, it is able to shape and develop a curriculum which meets industry-specific recruitment needs.

Through coaching, mentoring and work placements, and by the setting and evaluating of live projects, Cisco International Ltd can build relationships with students, and identify and develop future talent.



OUR INVOLVEMENT AT UTC READING HELPS TO DEVELOP THE TALENT WE NEED FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR BUSINESS. BY WORKING WITH THE STUDENTS ON PROJECTS, INTERNSHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE WE GET TO KNOW THEM. IT BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS AND HELPS TO REMOVE SOME OF THE RISK WHEN IT COMES TO RECRUITMENT.

THE FIRST THREE STUDENTS TO JOIN OUR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME WERE PARTICULARLY GOOD AT BUILDING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS DURING THEIR TIME AT THE SCHOOL AND WERE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR TECHNICAL AS WELL AS THEIR SOFT SKILLS THAT WE LOOK FOR.



Martin Raines,  
Project Manager at Cisco International Ltd



UTC READING DEVELOPS THE TALENT WE NEED BECAUSE THE STUDENTS ARE EXPOSED TO REAL PROJECTS FROM AN EARLY STAGE. IT BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS AND HELPS THE STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT BEFORE THEY'VE EVEN STEPPED INTO OUR OFFICES.



Ellie Ulrich,  
Apprentice Manager, Services Academy at Cisco International Ltd

## A direct line of sight to employment

For the students at UTC Reading, industry partnerships offer an unparalleled direct line of sight to employment.

Students are able to develop the soft skills demanded by industry within a realistic, yet secure environment. Here they can take on new challenges and get valuable feedback as they become 'work ready'.

Work placements provide opportunity to put soft and technical skills into practice and build important relationships.

James Walsh, Israr Hassan and Anwar Whight are now following the three-year apprenticeship programme with Cisco International Ltd.



IT IS A DREAM COME TRUE TO BE WORKING AT CISCO. I COMPLETED THEIR WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME DURING MY TIME AT UTC READING WHICH WAS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING THINGS I HAD EVER DONE THROUGH SCHOOL. I KNEW IMMEDIATELY IT WAS WHERE I WANTED TO START MY CAREER.

HAVING MADE THAT CLEAR TO MY TEACHERS, THEY GAVE ME EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD LINKS AND CONTACTS WITH THE COMPANY. THE APPLICATION PROCESS WAS EXTREMELY TOUGH, BUT BECAUSE OF THE PREPARATION I HAD BEEN GIVEN BY UTC READING I WAS ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT I HAD THE SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS CISCO NEEDED.



James Walsh



YOU GET A LOT OF CONTACT WITH THE INDUSTRY PARTNERS AT UTC READING, WHICH MEANS YOU GET TO KNOW THEM AND THEY GET TO KNOW YOU. THIS REALLY HELPS WHEN YOU ARE READY TO MAKE THE NEXT STEP. I THOUGHT ABOUT UNIVERSITY AND HAD OFFERS FROM FIVE UNIVERSITIES, BUT THE CISCO APPRENTICESHIP IS A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY. I CAN EARN MONEY WHILE I QUALIFY, INSTEAD OF GETTING INTO DEBT; EXPERIENCE THE MANY DIFFERENT ROLES AND CAREERS CISCO OFFERS AND I HAVE MORE CERTAINTY OVER MY LONG-TERM CAREER PROSPECTS.

DURING THEIR APPRENTICESHIP, THE FORMER STUDENTS WILL SPEND TIME IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BUSINESS BEFORE TAKING AN ELONGATED PLACEMENT IN THEIR FINAL YEAR. ON COMPLETION THE APPRENTICESHIP WILL GIVE THEM A UNIVERSITY-EQUIVALENT QUALIFICATION.



Israr Hassan

## A validated approach

In summer 2015, UTC Reading was awarded an outstanding rating in its first Ofsted inspection.

Inspectors commented that pupils were prepared exceptionally well for their future lives in modern Britain.



STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM EXEMPLARY CAREERS GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT BECAUSE OF THE UTC'S STRONG LINKS WITH BUSINESS PARTNERS. BUSINESS PARTNERS REPORT THAT STUDENTS ARE 'WORK READY', NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF QUALIFICATIONS BUT OF PERSONAL SKILLS. STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN WORK EXPERIENCE THAT IS RELEVANT TO THEIR INTERESTS AND FUTURE CAREERS, AND MANY WIN VALUABLE APPRENTICESHIP PLACEMENTS WITH BUSINESS PARTNERS.



Ofsted 2015