

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPS FUTURE TALENT

A partnership between UTC Reading and Prudential is supporting the development of future talent.

The company, which serves around 6million customers in the UK, has been working with the UTC to help prepare young people for employment, while identifying potential employees.

Teams from Prudential's Reading office have visited the UTC to run employment-focused activities, including a skills training week, as well as mentoring students taking part in core projects. As a result of this growing relationship, Prudential has been able to share information about the company's career opportunities including its own apprenticeship scheme.

In summer 2016, three former UTC Reading sixth formers applied and were accepted onto the programme, offering them the chance to build vital skills and experience while earning and gaining further qualifications.

About the Prudential Apprenticeship Programme

Prudential's Apprenticeship Programme launched in 2012 as a key strand of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility commitments. It responded to growing levels of youth unemployment, recognising that helping young people become work ready can help to build strong foundations for an inclusive society. At the same time, the scheme also serves as a pipeline to bring new resource and talent into the business.

Key statistics

Since launch, the programme has:

- supported 178 apprentices over the past 4 years
- achieved an average 73% retention rate in each annual cohort
- seen 11 former apprentices promoted to Grade 2 roles, with six currently on a fast track to the next grade

Three former UTC Reading students – Chaley Gooch, Edward Gilder and George Weller – joined the fourth cohort of 45 apprentices in summer 2016.



WE HAD GOT TO KNOW CHALEY, EDWARD AND GEORGE THROUGH OUR WORK WITH UTC READING. THROUGHOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS, WE FOUND THEM TO BE HIGHLY MOTIVATED, ENTHUSIASTIC AND PROFESSIONAL AND EACH DEMONSTRATED THE NECESSARY DRIVE TO SUCCEED.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UTC READING PROVIDES BENEFITS FOR ALL PARTIES. WE INVEST OUR TIME AND EXPERTISE TO GIVE STUDENTS GREATER INSIGHT INTO OUR BUSINESS CULTURE AND CHALLENGES. THIS DEVELOPS THEIR SOFT SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS, WHICH ARE IMPORTANT AS THEY PREPARE TO LEAVE SCHOOL AND BEGIN THEIR WORKING LIVES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE BEGIN TO GET TO KNOW THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO COULD BECOME OUR FUTURE EMPLOYEES AND CAN PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES TO JOIN THE COMPANY. PEOPLE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ASSET OF ANY BUSINESS, AND GETTING TO KNOW APPLICANTS BEFORE THEY ATTEND AN INTERVIEW HELPS TO REMOVE SOME OF THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH RECRUITMENT.



Maria Wilcockson,
Prudential's Apprenticeship Scheme Manager

For Prudential, the apprenticeship route offers key benefits over graduate recruitment. Maria added: "Development costs for apprentices can be higher than for graduates, but they represent a longer-term investment with a greater return. Whereas graduates typically stay in their first post for between two and four years, apprentices tend to remain with the company for longer as they recognise the investment in their career and professional development. We have enjoyed high retention rates, with 75 former apprentices now retained in permanent roles and 13 in temporary positions."

Student views

Chaley Gooch is employed as an apprentice Web Systems Analyst with Prudential. He said: "If I hadn't gone to UTC Reading I don't think I would be in this position today. As well as learning the technical skills and helping me to focus on following a programming route, I also built up important professional behaviours. Even simple things like meeting company representatives, shaking hands and introducing yourself; it all helps to prepare you for the next step."

"Leaving the UTC and getting the apprenticeship was a completely linear process. If I hadn't studied computer science at UTC Reading I would be in over my head, but as it is I have managed to fit into the new working environment really smoothly and I am enjoying learning new skills all the time."

Edward Gilder is now working as a Systems

Analyst apprentice with Prudential. He said: "The set-up of the UTC, with a 9-5 working day, helps to prepare you for the workplace. The style of learning, based on project work which you have to manage yourself to meet the deadlines, is also good training."

"Before joining UTC Reading I didn't have a clear idea of what I wanted to do, but it helped me to realise where my skills /strengths are and set me on the right path."

George Weller is working as an apprentice Test Analyst. He said: "Since joining Prudential I have found that the ways of working are very similar. I feel able to contribute in meetings, because of the way we worked at the UTC, and can manage my workload more effectively."

"I chose the apprenticeship route over university because it enabled me to gain valuable work experience and qualifications, while leaving my options open. To be working with such a reputable employer and earning money as I learn is a good feeling."



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