



## Fergus Sykes, 22

Apprentice Electrical Engineer at Siemens



### Winner of Siemens Apprentice of the Year 2016.

**I chose to do an apprenticeship because I would have been in the first year of raised tuition fees and I didn't want to go to University for the sake of it, spending all that money when I didn't really know what I wanted to do (I applied for chemical engineering and geography courses initially). I took a year out to think about which career path to follow and heard about the amazing opportunities with engineering in particular companies. My parents were very supportive of me doing an apprenticeship within the engineering/manufacturing industry, particularly once they found out the benefits of the apprenticeship over going straight to university.**

I am currently completing my HND at college and next year will be progressing onto a one year degree conversion which is all fully sponsored by Siemens – and I will continue to earn my wage whilst studying. My role at Siemens is massively varied due to our rotational placement system, which is a fantastic way to learn all about the industry and the different areas of work here. I've been on service callouts to customer sites, vetted customer orders, built demonstration rigs, created VBA scripted spreadsheets, and even attended schools for CSR and STEM events. Winning the Siemens 2016 Apprentice of the Year award is without a doubt the greatest achievement of my Apprenticeship, as it really solidified in my mind that I had been working at the high level I try to achieve. When I complete my apprenticeship, I want to be part of the Technical support team.

The culture of best practice and quality of product and customer service over all else made Siemens seem a very attractive prospect to me. The size and range of fields that Siemens covers is immense so the opportunity for moving within the company is huge once your foot is in the door. The area that I enjoy the most about my role at Siemens is learning about the engineering that goes into the product, I'm yet to be able to call myself knowledgeable about everything we make and very few ever can because there is so much to know, you never stop finding new things to learn about.

With regards to hobbies that helped me realise my potential for a career in the engineering/manufacturing industry, I've always done DIY and car maintenance/bits of wiring with my father growing up and always enjoyed finding out how things work. I now work in a job that requires good knowledge of Combination Logic and funnily enough used to use the computer game Minecraft's 'redstone' wiring system to create circuits and perform logic operations within the game to open doors, so it happened to translate over very nicely.

Because I didn't really get much careers advice at school, it's now part of my drive to go to schools and events to show younger people the options available. I am a registered STEM ambassador and have taken part in many great events over the three years I've been here, such as the Manchester Science Festival, Siemens Roller Coaster Challenge and The Robot Orchestra. Siemens participates in outreach activities with local schools, and I've been to local schools as well as those much farther afield. I want to help inspire the next generation of engineers by making sure they have the knowledge of the opportunities out there, know how to work out what they want to do with their lives and are supported in achieving it.

The advice I wish I had been given when I was at school would be: don't choose a career necessarily on what subjects you enjoy in school because chances are you'll end up not using 90% of the subject and the teacher you have is a huge contributory factor to your enjoyment of the topic. Choose a career based on your personal interests and what engages you, it may be this is a topic at school which is fine, just don't let the fact you enjoy the lessons be your only drive to choose that as a career, go out and see what the applications are in the real world.

In terms of advice for young people that want to get into the engineering/manufacturing industry, the best engineers are those with an innate interest in taking things apart and finding out how things work. If you have a car, try servicing or repairing it yourself, if you have a remote control car try taking it apart and making it faster, if you have neither why not make something new that fills a need in your day to day life? If you find you do have this drive it is an extremely employable feature, so make sure they know what you have done in your spare time! Highlight your hobbies and personal interests in your CV.