

Dstl careers: from art to engineering

Dstl carries out a wide range of work which leads to opportunities in multiple areas, offering those who choose employment with the organisation a variety of different career paths. Other benefits includes flexible working hours and working from home options, as well as the opportunity to travel both within the UK and around the world.

Louise is a full time apprentice working as an electronics engineer with the Electronic Warfare Technology and Enterprise (EWTE) area of Dstl, and begins her degree apprenticeship in September 2021.

With a background in the arts, Louise explains her path to Dstl:

I came to Dstl after moving to Andover for my husband's job. I had recently graduated from Hereford College of Arts with a degree in Artist Blacksmithing from the University of Wales. I didn't want to work under another blacksmith after graduating and it was too expensive to set up my own company. As I was (at the time) 26, I felt I should find a career instead of a job.

After deciding on an apprenticeship as her route to a career, Louise saw a job advert for electrical and mechanical apprentices at Dstl. Although she applied for the mechanical pathway originally, as it was related to blacksmithing, she opted for the electrical option instead.

I was put on a three month placement within the Cyber and Information Systems in the EWTE group and just never left. I ended up being offered a permanent role and to do a degree in Electronic Engineering.

Dstl has a huge mix of experts with unlimited technical knowledge which is shared generously with new employees. Much of the work carried out at Dstl cannot be done anywhere else in the UK. We work closely with the armed forces and as Louise explains, "We occasionally get to have a go with their toys."

On trial with the Royal Tank Regiment at Copehill Down Training Village on Salisbury Plain.

The most exciting thing that I have been a part of was going out on a trial with the Royal Tank Regiment on Salisbury Plain. We had made a piece of kit that would pretend to be a Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank and so it was great to be able to get out with the troops and try it out.

The work was hard going at times, but ultimately it was a great experience to get properly covered in mud and see our tech being used in the field.

Dstl has an impressive culture of learning and developing its people with opportunities to train, do a degree, and move to other areas of work, not least the chance to lead and gain promotion.