

[News story: Investing in apprenticeships](#)

We asked one of our current apprentices, Emily Clegg, based in our Programme Management Office, to share her experiences to mark National Apprenticeship Week.

Emily is studying at Sheffield Hallam University on a 4 year chartered manager degree apprenticeship (CMDA).

What made you choose the apprentice route?

For me, the option to study and gain experience was a no-brainer and the way of learning suits my practical learning style.

The chartered manager degree apprenticeship (CMDA) programme stuck out because it includes a degree, practical application and professional accreditation all in one.

The added benefit is knowing that I won't have all the university debt before I even start my career.

Would you recommend doing an apprenticeship to other people?

Certainly! There is a perception that apprenticeships are only for young people – they are not!

Our university group has mix of people ranging in age from their early-20s to mid-40s, who are from various industries from manufacturing to pharmaceuticals. It's really interesting to have different perspectives and experiences during group discussions.

I joined Sheffield Hallam University's Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme, which asks students to consider an alternative pathway to university and highlights the option as part of professional development. Degree apprenticeships in particular avoid the high cost of university fees and breaks the 'job/experience' dilemma often faced by graduates, whilst also bringing benefit to organisations.

Is there any down side to being an apprentice?

Having the self-motivation and commitment to learning is really important on an apprenticeship and managing time between work, study and personal life is a challenge at times. But the Coal Authority is very supportive through this journey and it's important to recognise that it is an investment for the future.

How have you applied what you've learnt on the apprenticeship?

Because the assignments are based on my own working environment, what I'm

learning is always relevant in some way.

For my most recent module, I was able to combine results from questionnaires and interviews with academic literature to put forward recommendations for the PMO strategy our team is working on.

This is just one example of how the programme encourages you to apply learning in context whilst also bringing relevant ideas and fresh perspectives into the business that are underpinned with theory.

What format does your apprenticeship follow?

On my programme, 17 modules are delivered in blocks over the 4 year period. This typically involves 3 to 4 full days at university to go through key content and be introduced to the assignment in a workshop/informal seminar type environment.

Essay/report based assignment timescales vary across the modules; the shortest being around 5 weeks and the longest being 4 month for research project deadlines.

I'm also building a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates application of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace context. This is in preparation for applying for professional accreditation towards the end of the programme.

Understanding how the delivery of the programme suits you is important when considering an apprenticeship. This differs from programme to programme so is worth investigating.

Discover more

Find out more about apprenticeships and National Apprenticeship Week on Twitter @Apprenticeships

If you're interested in finding out more about apprenticeships with the Coal Authority, please contact our Learning and Development team.