

SLC marks National Apprenticeship Week with Darlington Programme Announcement

The recruitment drive is being launched during National Apprenticeship Week and the first cohort of successful applicants will start their 18-month apprenticeship in April.

The Apprenticeship Programme, which will be delivered in conjunction with Darlington College, will offer applicants Administrative Assistant roles in the Pre-Assessment department, which is central to the application process for almost two million new and returning students each year. As well as being supported and developed by colleagues in the organisation, the apprentices will also spend one day a week at the college for off the job training.

The apprentices will follow the Apprenticeship Standard for the relevant role, completing learning outcomes and achieving functional skills leading to an end point assessment. Chris Larmer, Executive director of Business Operations, at SLC said:

At SLC, we are committed to investing in our people and our Emerging Talent programmes are a significant element of our People Strategy. We want colleagues to have the opportunity to further their development and enhance their skills to help grow their careers.

I'm thrilled to launch our recruitment campaign during National Apprenticeship Week and look forward to welcoming 20 new colleagues to our Darlington site. The North East is full of talent and we want to offer young people the chance to unlock their potential and gain a recognised qualification, as well as valuable experience in the work environment.

Claire Turner, Marketing and Engagement Manager for Darlington College, added:

It is fantastic to be recruiting a new cohort of apprentices for the Student Loans Company to support its organisation. We have a longstanding relationship, and it is always inspiring to see how this training, along with the support of the employer, leads on to great careers for our apprentices.

SLC's Darlington site employs almost 1,400 employees across a range of functions, including technology, customer service and operations. It currently has 12 colleagues taking part in its Emerging Talent programmes in the North East, with more than 100 across the entire business. As well as its Apprenticeship Programmes, it also has a Graduate/Degree Apprenticeship

Programme, Graduate Programme and Internship Programme.

Apprenticeship case studies

Ebony French

Having just started with the Student Loans Company as an Apprentice, Ebony French, 19, is already seeing the benefits of being on the programme.

Ebony is an e-learning apprentice in the Organisational Development Team in Darlington. She said:

I'm really enjoying working at SLC and the experience of the workplace, alongside the skills I am learning in my apprenticeship, go hand-in-hand. It's all coming together to help me in my role in the Organisational Development team.

To be an apprentice, I think it's really important to ask questions and take advantage of all the opportunities to learn something new as it will only benefit you and your future career.

Ebony also has a disability and uses a wheelchair. She added:

SLC has been incredible in ensuring I have all the equipment I need to allow me to work comfortably. My team and manager's support has been amazing as I've settled into my role. I look forward to progressing in the organisation and putting the skills and knowledge from my apprenticeship to good use.

Kirsty Downing

Darlington-based Kirsty Downing, 32, was SLC's first degree apprentice to graduate with a First-Class Honours Degree in Management Practice from Teeside University in 2021. She has also achieved her Chartered Management Institute Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management, alongside her full Chartered Manager Status.

Kirsty joined SLC in 2012 as an Administrative Assistant and has grown in the business, being appointed to a number of operational roles. The Emerging Talent Programme allowed her to balance her career ambitions with family life so she could work and study at the same time. She enrolled in the Degree Apprenticeship Programme in 2018. She said:

I have always wanted to enter higher education, to expand my skills and knowledge, but having a family meant that there was no way I could give up work to study. Being able to complete an apprenticeship allowed me to do both. It's been a lot of hard work but I'm really proud of myself and grateful to SLC for the

opportunity to enrol in the programme.

Having spent her apprenticeship as an Operations Manager, Kirsty has moved into an Operational Support Specialist role. She added: "I've already been able to apply the skills I learned in my new role. I want to make a significant positive impact on the way we work at SLC and hopefully in the future I can progress into another leadership focused role.

For more information about the Apprenticeship Programmes please visit the [Darlington College website](#). And for all the latest SLC vacancies, including a number of frontline operational roles in Darlington, please visit [careers.slc.co.uk](#).