



# Technical Futures

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The University of Cambridge may have over 800 years of history, but today it is a vast organisation with over 10,000 staff and 19,000 students. It has an annual income approaching £1bn.

Over 1,100 of the University's staff work in a huge range of technical roles, from apprentices to senior technical managers. Some jobs are closely linked to teaching and research: technicians manage the laboratories where students do their experiments and they also run large and expensive research instruments. Other roles are very challenging technically, working with researchers to build unique pieces of mechanical or electronic equipment. There are some very specialist roles working in conservation in the many University museums and collections. But just as vital are the technicians who work to keep the buildings and infrastructure running, from heating engineers to electricians and IT staff.

Typical apprenticeships with the University last for three years, normally based in a single department. Apprentices usually work towards Level 3 qualifications (A Level equivalent), with day release at a local Further Education College. There is often the potential to progress towards higher qualifications.

Posts are advertised on the University website (<http://www.jobs.cam.ac.uk/>).

The University looks to appoint enthusiastic staff who have a real interest in the relevant area of work, who can work within a team and are creative problem solvers.



*Here two of the University's recent apprentices describe their training, work and hopes for the future.*

Kirsty joined the University from school and is working in the Estate Management Division, which is responsible for all the University's buildings, old and new.



**What have been the benefits for you of choosing an apprenticeship as your way into the world of work?**

On the job training. It has been brilliant to be able to attend university on day release and then come into work and put the theory into practice. The ability to earn whilst learning has enabled me to be more independent professionally and personally.

**What were the high points of your apprenticeship training?**

The overall high point of my five years training would be achieving a degree in Building Surveying with honours. This has led to more overall responsibility and interesting projects.

Daily high points would be the variety of properties on the University portfolio, which have allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the construction techniques / methods used throughout the ages, these range from the Fitzwilliam Museum (1837) to the Astrophysics Building(2014). The varied nature of my work allows me to liaise and communicate on a frequent basis with departments, consultants, contractors etc. which means I am not tied to my desk all day!

**Where do you think your training is going to take your career in the next 5-10 years?**

My training has already allowed me to successfully obtain a full time employment opportunity as a Building Surveyor, in which I am being supported to obtain chartered status with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. In the future I would like to reach management level within the construction

industry and be able to support and guide a team in the commendable ways which I have been.

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Adam joined the Department of Physics after school as an Apprentice in the mechanical workshop. He is now a research laboratory technician.

**What have been the benefits for you of choosing an apprenticeship as your way into the world of work?**

Not only have I learnt the inherent skills and theories for my job, I also learnt invaluable interpersonal skills that have aided me in both work and private life. Also, all my education so far has been funded by the university leaving me debt free.



**What were the high points of your apprenticeship training?**

After years of study finally finishing, getting my certificate and being able to hand it in to the Department. Another is being trusted by colleagues far higher up the hierarchy to get the job done well.

**Where do you think your training is going to take your career in the next 5-10 years?**

I'm currently in the midst of enrolling to top my HND up into a full BEng degree. Hopefully, I'll continue my path into more scientific research.

For more information contact:

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<http://www.ppd.admin.cam.ac.uk/courses-and-programmes/technician-development-and-apprenticeship-project>



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