

MEng Electrical Engineering student Mayure Daby is spending one year of his degree programme on placement working for National Grid.

I applied for a placement at National Grid for various reasons. The opportunity to get an insight into the working world and more specifically the power engineering industry before deciding whether I should specialise in the electrical/power or electronic branches in the final year of my degree and having an edge over others when applying for a job at the end of my studies, topped the list. Not to mention the extra bit of financial comfort.....

Having been on placement for now 5 months, I have been actively involved in a number of projects. During the first week at work, I was asked to deliver a presentation about my department at a 'stand down and team building day'. My readiness to get involved was appreciated by the managers in my department and I have since found myself juggling tasks. I am currently involved in an innovative project that aims at recovering heat from transformers used on the UK electricity network to heat buildings, in a bid to reduce the carbon footprint of the network.

The important thing is that even as a placement student I have been given the chance to get involved in real projects, some of which have very important budgets and can have a long term impact on the company policies.

The support and encouragement from my line manager and other staff in our department has been quite amazing, I have been welcomed and helped from the very beginning and being part of a young and dynamic team, the atmosphere at work is quite enjoyable. National Grid provides many opportunities for personal development ranging from personal development workshops, skill development sessions to team building exercises. I have been placed on several training courses and I am now qualified to visit and work on substations and high voltage equipment installations. These qualifications are recognised across the industry and will surely be an advantage should I decide, after my studies to apply to other companies in the same industry. It should be noted that every project that you get involved in is an opportunity for personal development and at the end of the day we are all responsible for our own development. Projects are rarely offered. To ensure you get involved in as much as possible you have to ask to be involved and be pro-active.

There are also other advantages of doing a placement. National Grid offer opportunities to sponsor the final year of high achieving placement students with possibilities of immediate employment after completion of their degree. Again it is up to the individual to be pro-active try and contribute as much as possible. Also there is the opportunity to build contacts with people from other companies in the same industry which is always a good thing when job hunting.

I have also faced certain difficulties at times. Restricted sports and socialising activities and restricted mobility; especially since the office I am based at is in the country, have at times proved challenging.

Overall I would assess my placement so far as a very interesting and enjoyable experience with exciting prospects for the future and a definite positive for anyone's CV. I would definitely recommend other students to go for a placement year if they have the opportunity.