



National Employer Service



Network Rail Putting Graduates on the Right Track

Network Rail is committed to nurturing talent within its organisation. In partnership with the National Employer Service it runs one of the largest engineering apprenticeships in the country with over 200 people each year developing skills in railway engineering on its advanced apprenticeship programme.

In October 2009, Network Rail offered eighteen young people the chance to gain valuable work experience through the government's Graduate Talent Pool scheme – a programme which matches motivated graduates with employers.

For Network Rail, the scheme offered the twin benefits of raising awareness of its graduate opportunities, whilst also providing useful short-term support on a range of projects.

Linsey Perry, Professional Development Manager, says the railway industry is sometimes overlooked as a potential career by graduates despite its crucial role in the economy. This is underlined by the £35 billion that is due to be invested in Network Rail's infrastructure over the next five years.

"The Graduate Talent Pool was a way to bring some talented people into the organisation and give them a flavour of the work they could do. It's also allowed us to get to know them and we would encourage them to apply for our graduate recruitment programme next year."

Linsey Perry, Professional Development Manager, Network Rail.

The graduates have been assigned to a range of projects across Network Rail. Perry adds that the graduates create an extra resource which can be used to extend the range of the projects they are assigned to. *"We wanted to make sure that we had meaningful work for them to do."*

The programme will finish with a two-day course at Network Rail's leadership development centre where participants will receive advice and training about applying for jobs in the wider employment market.



“Some things that are initially challenging and alien to you become familiar.”

Harchand Lotey

Graduate Talent Pool placement at Network Rail

Background: Originally from London, prior to joining the Graduate Talent Pool Scheme, Harchand read business and management at De Montfort University in Leicester.

Reasons for joining the scheme: Since leaving university, Harchand had applied for several jobs without success. He already had background knowledge of Network Rail through his degree course. He found out about the scheme while job-hunting on the internet and saw the internship as an opportunity to sharpen his skills in analysis.

Work: He was assigned to the Human Resources department to help analyse the value of Network Rail's apprenticeship, graduate and MSc recruitment schemes. *"It's involved looking at how the company can get recruits into the right roles and then get the best out of them."* Harchand's work has involved extensive use of Excel software and interviewing senior management.

Verdict: *"Some things that are initially challenging and alien to you become familiar. The brilliant thing is that I'm assisting someone and he is my mentor. He will always sit down with me and explain how to extract information from certain pieces of data."* Other benefits include gaining a better grasp of how to present information in a business context.

Harchand Lotey at Network Rail's head office, York Way, London, on the Graduate Talent Pool programme.



“I will definitely be applying for the graduate scheme now that I have some knowledge of working in Network Rail.”

James Ennis

Graduate Talent Pool placement at Network Rail

Background: James is from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and prior to joining the Graduate Talent Pool scheme had read environment and transport planning at the University of Leeds.

Reasons for joining the scheme: James started looking for jobs in November 2008 and tried to join a graduate recruitment scheme on the Tyne and Wear Metro. He found out about the internship via Network Rail's website and felt it would create an opportunity to gain experience in a related business.

Work: He was assigned to the corporate responsibility (CR) department which monitors the environmental and community impact of around 5,000 infrastructure projects that Network Rail undertakes every year.

"It's involved pulling people together for meetings and finding out what people know about the sustainability of their projects. On my fourth day, I had to represent CSR at a meeting and take notes for them about what went on."

Verdict: *"It's a perfect fit with the degree that I did. Because of my university course I already had plenty of relevant background knowledge. Little things like knowing what various acronyms stand for when reading documents have helped me and helped the department. I will definitely be applying for the graduate scheme now that I have some knowledge of working in Network Rail."*

James Ennis at Network Rail's head office, York Way, London, on the Graduate Talent Pool programme.