

A day in the life of an Aldermans apprentice

Will Williamson

At school what did you most enjoy, or excel at?
Science and maths.

What was it about engineering that appealed to you?

It's an opportunity to do something practical and meaningful as a career.

Why did you decide to pursue an apprenticeship?

Because it's a way to receive training and practical experience in manufacturing while earning.

How did you find your apprenticeship placement?

Through job advertisements on the internet, and the company's website.

Why did you choose to work at Aldermans?

It's a well-established company with good values, friendly employees and management. It offers lots of opportunities for learning and gaining experience of different manufacturing techniques.

When did your apprenticeship start and end?

It runs from September 2018 to July 2021.

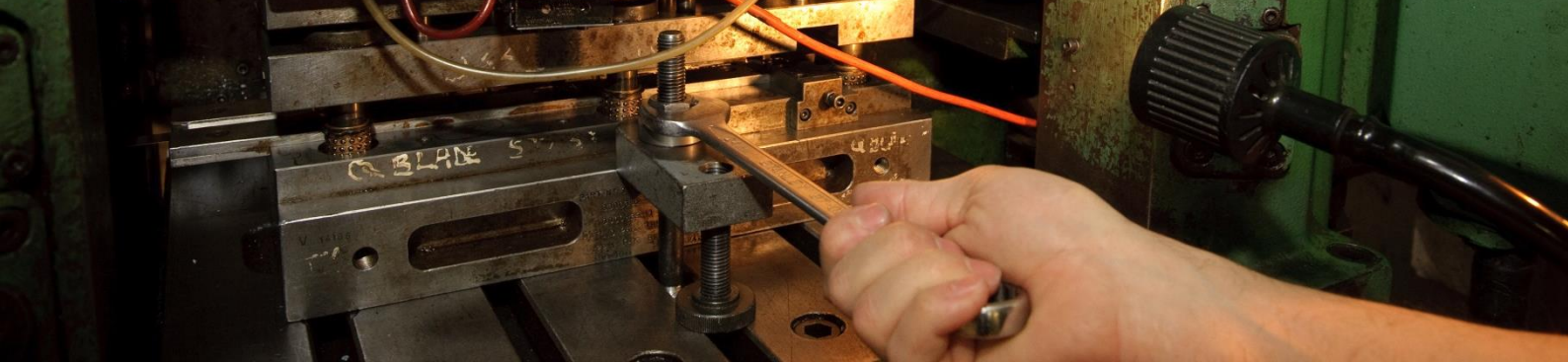
What do you do on a typical day at work?

I work on the shop floor, learning how to operate the different manufacturing equipment that we use on a daily basis to make products for our customers. For example, we use CNC laser cutting and punching machines to produce blank components. Then we use press brakes to fold those components into shaped pieces, and finally weld those components into completed assemblies. We ensure each process is completed correctly, checked, signed off as correct, and recorded on our systems. And we eat pasties from the food van that visits our factory at break time everyday!

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At the end of his initial year at City College Plymouth, Will took part in a joint project with other Plymouth apprentices to create this impressive model of the Mayflower, using a range of metal fabrication techniques. He is pictured, left, with Tony McEwen, Aldermans' Quality Supervisor.



How has Aldermans helped you to develop your skills?

I have been placed on industry-standard courses so I can be recognized as a trained tradesperson in the manufacturing and engineering sector, and a qualified engineer. I have had the opportunity to gain experience operating the CNC fibre laser cutting machine, CNC controlled press brakes, and production assembly welding – all in the two years I have been an apprentice.

During your apprenticeship, what have you achieved that are you most proud of?

I'm proud to be a member of an assembly line producing high quality products that will be used in real-world applications for businesses in my local area.

What would you say to others who might consider an engineering apprenticeship?

It's a valuable opportunity to gain experience in an interesting role, while gaining important industry qualifications.

What have you learned about being an employee?

That your company, management and colleagues are often if not always on your side and are there to help.

What's the most important thing you've learned about yourself during your apprenticeship?

That it's important to better yourself and overcome any new challenge or thing you find difficult, as this is how you become more skilled and experienced.

Are there any down-sides to being an apprentice?

Working to a production standard can sometimes be stressful when you're still learning. But everyone is on your side to help you gain experience, and as long as you're willing to learn and overcome adversity, it's fine.

How has your apprenticeship helped you plan the next steps in your career?

The apprenticeship has given me a platform to begin a career in engineering and manufacturing. It's given me real-world experience in a manufacturing setting. As well as gaining qualifications, it has given me the opportunity to enter the industry. Using my experience and knowledge I can now operate in more roles, and take my standards of production to higher levels.

About Aldermans

A family firm, established in Plymouth for over 50 years, we're one of the region's best-known and respected metal fabricators.

Combining traditional skills with the latest technologies, we offer our clients an integrated metalwork service, from design and prototyping to small or large-scale production runs.

Our technologies include press tooling, pressbrake folding, CNC machining (lasering, punching, milling, turning), cutting, welding, assembly and kitting, and powder coating.

We are proud to hold the EN ISO 9001:2015 quality management certification, plus ISO 14001:2015 for environmental management, and OHSAS 18001:2007 health and safety management.

As well as investing regularly in the latest technologies, we also invest in our staff through training in manufacturing management techniques, such as lean manufacturing and Six Sigma.

We are an active member of PMG, the Plymouth Manufacturers' Group.