

CASE STUDY

Greenock man swaps fast food for oil and gas thanks to James Watt College

A young dad of two has turned his career prospects around thanks to gaining an Engineering Systems HNC at James Watt College. Ben Edwards from Greenock was supporting his young family with a job at McDonalds until he landed his dream role with a leading North Sea Oil employer after gaining the qualification.

23 year old Ben explains that initially he thought he would train to work in Sports Science: “When I left school I went to university, starting a degree in Sport Studies at Stirling. But to be honest, I realised it just wasn’t for me.”

Leaving university, Ben worked at a fast food outlet before hearing from a friend about a Mechanical Engineering apprenticeship at a local firm. While he didn’t secure the post, the feedback from the company was so encouraging he began researching routes into Engineering.



Ben commented: “I looked hard at what my strengths and likes were and Engineering seemed to match up. I was keen to start at the beginning, so I enrolled in the NC in Engineering Practice, which is a six month course at James Watt. After completing that, I knew I wanted to continue studying, so I proceeded to the HNC in Engineering Systems.

“For me, the design stage of the qualification was the most interesting. The stuff I learned at James Watt College is pretty much the job that I do now. The HNC helped me get the role with Wood Group PSN, one of the major North Sea employers. I’ve just completed a three month stint at their Design Academy in Aberdeen, after which I will be working as a Trainee Piping/Structural Engineer at the firm’s Glasgow offices.

“While it has been very challenging at times to keep studying with two young children, I was really focussed on getting a better lifestyle for them as a result. My lecturers at College knew my circumstances and were really supportive and understanding.

“I’d recommend the course at James Watt with no hesitation. Without it, I definitely wouldn’t have this opportunity. It is my dream job, with good pay and plenty of opportunities to work at home and abroad. It really is fantastic- especially compared to my previous job.”

Lecturer Thomas Haughey is delighted Ben has achieved his goals: “Gaining these qualifications was a real opportunity for Ben to improve his career prospects, not only giving him a more interesting work life but also helping him to have more choices for his family. By putting in the hard work to achieve the HNC in Engineering Systems, Ben is now using the all-round grounding it provides in his everyday working life. I’m certain he will go on to flourish in Engineering and I wish him and his family all the best.”