

Interview with Madeleine from RWE

Q1: What was the process of getting into this role?

A: When I was looking at next steps after A-levels, I was looking at a few different apprenticeships and degree courses when I found one with RWE and applied for a few different courses out there. I was thrilled when I got the call back for this apprenticeship as it was one of the best structured for what I wanted from an apprenticeship.

I applied in Feb 2023, submitting a CV and cover letter, and then at the interview had a small test, one on one interview and group task. The process was pretty daunting as it was the first major interview that I had had, but getting support from family and friends practicing interview questions really helped!

Q2: What made you want to pursue a career as a wind turbine technician?

A: From when choosing GCSEs and before then, I knew that engineering was my main goal of what job I wanted to go into. At GCSEs I chose engineering as an option, and my coursework project was to do with turning wind power into useful power. This, along with other research in physics and other subjects planted the seed that renewable energy was an industry that I wanted to get involved in.

When lockdown happened, I got involved in various online courses to further my knowledge in different areas, like cyber security, physics and micro computing. These helped build my foundation knowledge for A-level.

For A-levels I did Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Engineering. I was awarded the Arkwright engineering scholarship alongside my studies, where I received financial aid and a mentor from Balfour Beatty. My engineering A-level was 50/50 coursework/exam, and my coursework project I chose was to create a energy generation prototype that fits on children's playpark equipment. This was a really interesting project for me to research and develop and I enjoyed developing the prototype.

Throughout my A-levels I worked for AluminiumArt, traveling to different craft fairs and festivals. At one of the festivals I was chatting to a customer talking about how I wanted to work in the wind turbine industry when I finished my A-levels, it turned out that she was head of power transmission for Siemens Energy. I got her details and kept

in touch, and she acted as an extra mentor throughout my A-levels and put on a weeks work experience for me. This work experience helped solidify that working in the wind industry was the right one for me.

I chose an apprenticeship over the traditional degree route as it was something that lead straight into the industry that I wanted to go into, allowing me to earn as I learn and be exposed to actual industry, with heaps of potential to further my education as my career grows!

Q3: What would you say to someone who is thinking about going into this field?

The wind industry is such a cool one to get involved in (in my opinion!) there are so many different engineering disciplines involved, and the apprenticeship route helps give you a good base knowledge on how the industry works.

In terms of advice, be proactive and take any opportunity offered to help find out what you like to do. There are so many programs out there that offer tasters of different jobs, like Stemettes, the Smallpeice trust and more, it's better to try lots of different things out there before committing to something so you have a good idea on what is available out there. Willingness to learn new things is an amazing trait and can help you go far!

Q4: What skills do you think being a wind turbine technician has given you?

A: I have learnt so much since starting my apprenticeship back in 2023. To start off, it has opened so many doors for me, since starting I have taken part in the WorldSkills competition, coming 2nd in the UK in the renewable energy competition, I have been invited to take part in blade testing in Blythe, worked on a gas power station briefly and been invited to speak about my experience at many events! I have developed a lot in confidence because of this, and practiced communicating to various people at different events (and managed to speak twice on BBC radio about green skills).

In terms of hard skills, I have learnt all sorts in hydraulics, mechanics and electrics, applying college learning onsite in annual servicing and fault finding. I have also learnt different energy generation methods, specifically solar, that may help me in the future if I was to transition into another industry.

The main skills that it has developed in me has been confidence in talking to others, teamwork and resilience in changeable situations.

Q5: Describe your job in 3 words!

A: Exciting, Changeable, Interesting

Q6: How has being involved with Guiding helped you in this role?

Since starting as a rainbow many years ago, Guiding has encouraged me to develop new skills and be curious about the world around me. When starting as a leader I have been learning about how to do the same to inspire the next generation of young women to be confident in what they do, and be interested in the world. It has also greatly tested my resilience in planning and being adaptable, especially when organising camps as the first one I organised, thundered and lightnined for the majority of the weekend – learning how to adjust the plan when things don't go the way expected has been an invaluable skill to learn!