

My PEM apprenticeship - James Rayson

Why an apprenticeship? What does it involve?

I chose to complete an apprenticeship instead of going to University. This is because, I wanted to have a more hands on approach to learning and actually get started in the real world.

It seemed a no brainer to me that if I could earn money, have my study package fully funded and have my foot in the door of a progressive firm, then that was the best option. An apprenticeship ensures that soft skills are obtained whilst studying, it would be very easy to get engrossed in the technical study and to lapse on enhancing day to day people and business skills.

Also, an apprenticeship provides an external support blanket, I have my own apprenticeship coach who helps me progress throughout the programme and my study. My apprenticeship coach is available to support me with my professional life and my personal life as required, a unique advantage to being an apprentice.

Tell us about your job role at PEM and where do you see the apprenticeship getting you in the future?

My role at PEM has progressed throughout my apprenticeship. When completing my AAT apprenticeship, I was in a junior/semi-senior role at PEM. I would independently complete accounts preparations and work as part of an audit team, following the guidance of my audit senior.

Now I am on ACA apprenticeship, I have moved into the role of a senior. I now lead audits and large accounts preparations, strongly aided by the team work and leadership skills obtained from my apprenticeship skills days.



In the future, I see my apprenticeship setting me up well to progress in my career at PEM, as it has ensured I have kept a focus on soft skills that become increasingly important as I become more involved in the commercial aspects of a career in accountancy.

How have your colleagues at PEM supported you?

My mentor at PEM has supported me throughout my apprenticeship, stepping in to ensure sufficient time is allocated in order for me to complete my apprenticeship development assignments.

What has been your biggest achievement so far?

My biggest achievement so far is completing my AAT Level 4 apprenticeship and receiving a distinction overall, allowing me to progress onto my chartered qualification.

The thought of sitting professional level exams was very daunting, but I have now completed my first sitting and am happy to have reached this stage.

What has been your biggest challenge/learning curve?

My biggest challenge was finding a balance between completing my work, completing my apprenticeship tasks and having a personal life.

With the time management skills learned through my apprenticeship this has become more achievable.

What advice would you give to someone considering an apprenticeship?

I would advise someone considering an apprenticeship to complete some research into the support an apprenticeship can provide you with and the additional areas (other than technical study) that it can help you develop in.

If you are wanting to earn money, develop technical and soft skills and get started in the working world, then an apprenticeship is right for you.

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