

Some of the first T-Level students jump straight into jobs on HS2

August 18, 2022



It was a day of double celebrations for six Walsall College T-Level students who were among the first in the country to pass their Construction – Design, Surveying and Planning T-Level today (18 August) and celebrate with the news that they’ve secured a job on [HS2](#).

[Balfour Beatty VINCI \(BBV\)](#), HS2’s construction partner for the West Midlands, formed a partnership with Walsall College in 2020 when T-Levels were first introduced. The collaboration enabled 16 students to secure a 45-day industry placement, working on HS2, that would account for 20% of their overall grade. All 16 students found out today that they had passed both the placement and theory elements of their course, allowing them to progress to the next stage in their career.

HS2 Minister Trudy Harrison said: “HS2 is about more than just boosting transport across the UK, it’s about levelling up communities throughout the country including through the creation of thousands of skilled jobs such as these.

“As someone from a construction background, I recognise the role T-levels will play in supporting not only this project but the wider industry and I want to congratulate the students from Walsall College and wish

them every success with their future careers.”

Julie Venn-Morton, HS2’s Skills Manager for the West Midlands said: “Our partnership with Walsall College is playing a vital role in helping us to plug the UK’s skills gap and create the talented workforce we need to deliver Europe’s biggest engineering project.

“We’re delighted that every student passed their industry placement and that at least six of those who took part will transition straight into full-time jobs. HS2 is a once in a lifetime project and a fantastic place for these young people to begin building a promising career.”

After securing the grades they needed, six students will progress straight into an apprenticeship role with BBV. They will spend the next five years advancing their studies while earning a wage supporting the construction of Britain’s new railway. Further interviews are being held over the next two weeks, and BBV hopes even more of the talented youngsters will transition into jobs that will help bring HS2 to the region.

Shilpi Akbar, Head of Stakeholders and Communities at Balfour Beatty VINCI said: “We’re looking forward to welcoming six new apprentices from Walsall College in the coming weeks, who’ll bring new ideas and fresh ways of working with them.

“Each apprentice will take up roles across the business which will be absolutely critical in delivering HS2. This is just the start of a fantastic partnership with the college, which will provide further employment opportunities and development for students in the region.”

Among those to have secured a degree-level apprenticeship with BBV are:

18-year-old Leah Hickman from Cannock who has secured a degree-level Chartered Surveyor Apprenticeship. Leah’s new role will see her work alongside the team building the Delta Junction – one of the most complex pieces of infrastructure on the HS2 route.

Leah said: “The industry placement has been invaluable. The blend of studying at college and gaining work-based experience on a project like HS2 is definitely the best way to learn. I’m only 18, and already have two years’ experience on my CV, which will really help me to stand out.

“I’m really looking forward to meeting the team I’ll be working with and starting my new career as a Quantity Surveyor.”

18-year-old Jake Flood from Walsall who will start his new role as a Civil Engineering Degree Apprentice. Jake will be joining BBV’s tunnelling team and can’t wait to get started.

Jake said: “This has been a fantastic opportunity and I’m so grateful to BBV for investing in me.

“I’m so excited to be starting my new career on HS2. Finding out today that I got the highest possible grade – a Distinction – and that I’m joining the tunnelling team is just amazing.”

18-year-old Tyree Clarke from Wolverhampton who will move into his new role as a Civil Engineering

Degree Apprentice next week. Tyree will work alongside the team delivering HS2 from Hints to Handsacre. He will be studying for his degree at Wolverhampton University.

Tyree said: "I'm so excited that I've secured this Civil Engineering apprenticeship with BBV. As soon as I started studying for my T-Level, I knew I wanted to be a civil engineer, so this really is a dream come true."

BBV is set to continue its partnership with Walsall College. It will offer 16 more students the opportunity to complete their industry placement on HS2 when the new T-Level Construction course begins in September.

The new Construction T-Level has proven to be a huge hit with the first cohort of students to graduate from Walsall College, and it's a route the students would recommend others consider when they finish their GCSEs.