

# Life as an apprentice

Meet Ammaarah, an apprentice at BAE Systems

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*Alt text: a headshot of Ammaarah*

## **Finding the right path was important**

When I was studying my GCSE's and A levels, I was focused on going to university. I went through the UCAS process, and I received three university offers. However, I became conflicted with the reality of university. It would mean I would leave university with a significant amount of student debt and have limited work experience in a very competitive job market. I made the very bold but difficult decision to reject my university offers and take a gap year to research alternative options and gain work experience. I was lucky and started a job as a Care Navigator at my local authority. In this role, I saw the benefits of on-the-job training. I developed vital communication and teamwork skills. The experience helped boost my confidence in the work environment, and I realised I was ready for another challenge and additional developmental opportunities. I wanted to continue to gain work experience but complement it with academic progression.

## **The best of both worlds**

I researched what apprenticeships had to offer, and this is how I identified the Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship. It would allow me to gain work experience in the different functions across the business and achieve a degree in Business Management with Chartered Accreditation, all debt-free.

## **The recruitment process was comprehensive**

I was required to complete an application, do an online test, visit an assessment centre, and carry out security and health checks. I researched techniques and spoke to my careers advisor at Sixth Form to help me to manage each stage of the recruitment process. It was a difficult and long process, but it was definitely worth it in the end!

## **No two days are the same**

I've had placements in Finance, HR, IT and Early Careers where I've been able to work on exciting projects and learn from many inspirational people. I've experienced multi-million-pound transformation programmes, multi-million-pound contract renegotiations and large-scale organisational design and implementation. I am currently driving my Business Improvement project and working with stakeholders in delivering my project.

## **My apprenticeship journey has been really positive**

I have developed both professionally and personally and achieved things I didn't think were possible. The catalyst to my development was having varied six month placements across different departments. My apprenticeship has provided lots of exciting enrichment opportunities to support my development, including trips to the Lake District (Outward Bounds), hosting the BAE Systems Apprenticeship Awards and supporting young people in our communities. It is important to me to find a work/life balance. I like to make time for my family and friends, reading, baking and hiking.

## **Find the time to research**

I would advise anyone looking to start their career to do plenty of research and ask lots of questions to help understand the opportunities and find the best pathway.