

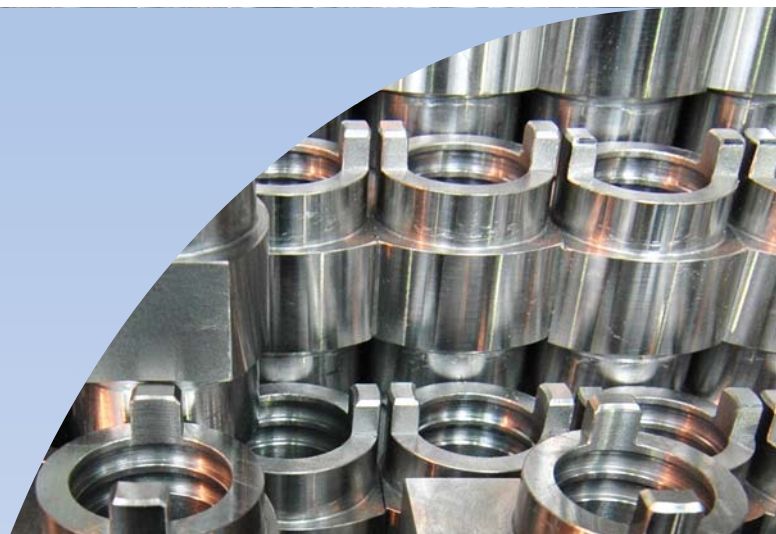
Delivering Business Benefits

Case Study

Corus Engineering Steels

semta

The Sector Skills Council
for Science, Engineering and
Manufacturing Technologies



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Jonathan Dicox
Quality Manager,
Corus Engineering Steels

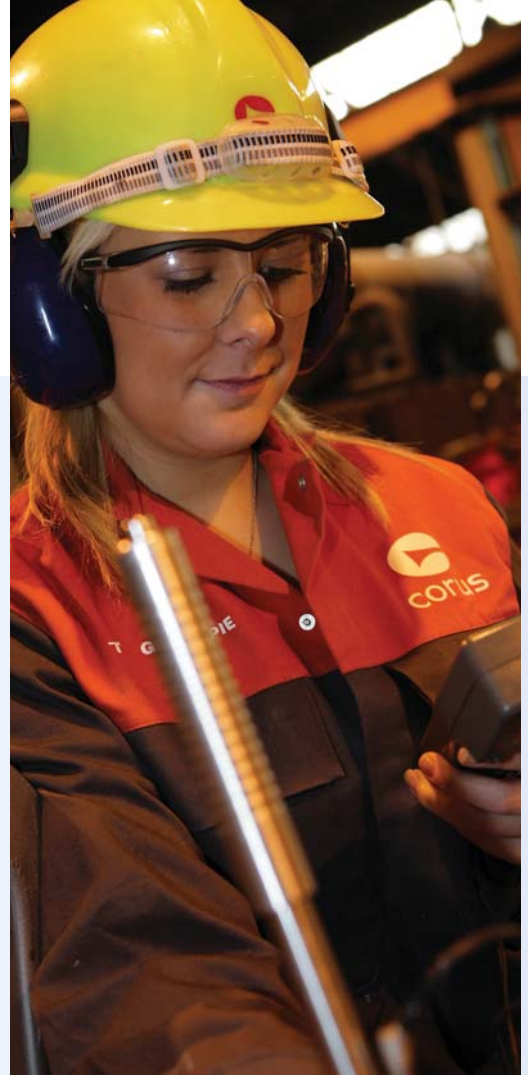
Semta apprentice Teri-Leigh brings structure to department

Teri-Leigh Gillespie, 22, is aiming high: “I believe there’s nothing stopping me from becoming a Technical Director in years to come if I put my mind to it,” she says.

Teri abandoned plans for a career in dentistry after A levels. Instead she joined Corus Engineering Steels (CES) to do an advanced apprenticeship in metallurgy and hasn’t looked back. “The best thing about an apprenticeship is that you get both practical experience and the academic side – and you don’t come out with debt,” Teri says. “You get lots of support and gain knowledge and experience from people you work with. I’ve also grown so much in confidence since starting my apprenticeship.”

It took Teri under two years to complete her apprenticeship and achieve a Level 3 NVQ in Metal Processing and Allied Operations, an ONC in metallurgy and three Key Skills certificates. During that time she did four-month placements in different departments to get broad experience. She is now doing an HNC and aims to progress to a part-time degree in metallurgy with sponsorship from Corus – then maybe a Masters degree.

Teri has enjoyed responsibility from an early stage which includes dealing with customers and making presentations to CES employees. Another confidence booster and milestone in her development was winning a travel award to attend a conference and visit a competitor steel works in Germany. She was able to see how things were done there and bring back new ways of working to CES. In 2008 she won the Metals Industry Apprentice of the Year title for her outstanding contribution to her company.



Just before she finished her apprenticeship Teri applied for the post of area metallurgist. She didn't expect to get it, but did. With responsibility for the day-to-day running of the office, Teri's work involves liaising with quality controllers, running trials and assessing the properties of steel. She uses her knowledge to analyse data and recommend improvements in the way the steel is processed to make sure it meets customer requirements. Writing technical reports is another of her tasks.

Quality Manager, Jonathan Dicox, is Teri's manager. He says: "Teri has done really well. She has brought structure, control and stability to the job. This department is more complex than others she's worked in but the grounding she's

had in other areas has served her well. She's still going through a lot of development but she's grasped things quickly and has a promising career ahead of her."

Apprentice training is important for Jonathan's department and for the whole company. "After a two or three year training programme apprentices have a good knowledge of what we do and what our customers expect. The apprenticeship also gives them the opportunity to identify what department they might want to go into – a works-based or technical environment," Jonathan explains. "It's good to get the younger people coming through, doing their training and then hopefully getting them on to degrees."

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