TAKE YOUR PLACE

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...
POPPY

APPRENTICESHIPS

Poppy works as an **Engineer** at the **Sizewell B nuclear power station** on the **Suffolk Coast**, after completing a **Level 6 Nuclear Engineering Degree Apprenticeship.** Here, Poppy tells us what a typical day is like for her.

Hi! I'm Poppy, 23, and I'm an engineer working at Sizewell B power station with EDF.

The power station and its plant are split into different systems e.g., turbines, cooling water etc. For each system there is a responsible engineer who looks after the health, maintenance, future strategy and obsolescence of the plant.

Every day starts with a safety setting to work briefing, where we discuss the status of the plant and highlight the priorities for the day. This is an essential part of the day as we are able to establish the physical and mental suitability of our colleagues, ensuring we are all fit for duty.

A typical day would involve a number of activities from working with maintenance colleagues to investigate and maintain the plant, to strategic project meetings where we discuss planned investment to improve reliability and performance of the power station. As the responsible engineer, I will be acting as the customer to describe what I want the project to achieve and to outline the deliverables.

Lunchtime, I grab some food from the canteen on site and then head out on a walk with some friends to the beach – one major perk of working on a nuclear power station is that we are situated closely to a cooling water source – which just so happens to be the East Coast for Sizewell B! It's a great way to relax during a lunch break, especially in the summer.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF POPPY

Engineer at Sizewell-B Nuclear Power Station

To ensure I'm familiar with the plant areas I will regularly complete a system walk-down, usually with various stakeholders to ensure we incorporate everyone's expertise in order to carry out the right work at the right time.

A systems engineer's responsibility is to future proof the condition of the plant, this involves detailed analyse of component conditions, researching past performance and writing a report that is then feed into my maintenance strategy with the aim to improve the overall health of that system.

Of course, my life doesn't revolve around work though! I have quite a lot of sporty hobbies, I like to run and last summer I purchased a paddleboard, so I like to do that on sunny weekends! I also have a horse and a dog, so they take up a lot of my time too.

Young people are needed in today's engineering industry; we can see challenges in a new and different perspective, bringing innovative ideas to the table. We're robust, reliable, want an environment suitable for everyone. At EDF, we're aiming for a 40% female representative of the company, because there are still less than a third of people in STEM careers who are female. Engineering isn't just grubby hands and greasy overalls – it's divergent thinking, working in a team and having ingenuity.

And nuclear is needed in the UK's energy mix if we are looking to achieve Net Zero – I truly believe we won't be able to get there without nuclear playing a big part in the energy mix.

OVER TO YOU!

Have a go at some of these activities to picture yourself as an apprentice engineer!

1. Sketch a possible timetable for Poppy's day, hour-by-hour for a 9-to-5 shift. Don't forget to include lunch!
2. List as many skills you think Poppy uses in just one day. Put them into a two-column table of 'soft skills' e.g. teamwork and 'hard skills' e.g. component analysis

BONUS!
EDF believe it's important to have engineers of more than one gender. Can you think of reasons why?