

CASE STUDY

From bank clerk to offshore thanks to James Watt College

After nearly a decade working in a bank, one Greenock man kick started a career in the oil and gas industry thanks to the qualification he gained at James Watt College. Martin Harley has landed his dream job as a Marine Engineer with a leading firm after completing an HNC in Engineering Systems recently.

29 year old Martin began working at a local bank as a school leaver. He admits it was never his dream role: "When I left school, I didn't have an ambition to work at the bank but it was a steady job. After 7 years as a Cashier and Customer Assistant I began to get itchy feet. I wanted to try something a bit more interesting."

At this point Martin began to research his options. He was looking for a stimulating course that would lead to more appealing career options. He took the plunge in January 2010, enrolling in an NC Engineering Practice at his local college, James Watt. Remarking on this decision, Martin said: "When I first began the course I was worried about being the oldest in the class but in reality there was a really diverse mix of people, which was a relief. It took me a little while to get back into the way of studying as I hadn't done anything like that since school but I adjusted to college life really quickly. I got a real taste for life in the workshop during the NC and I decided to continue studying."

Between 2010 and 2011, Martin successfully completed an HNC in Engineering Systems, a course he praises for providing an all round grounding to the subject: "I gained an overall knowledge in mechanical and electrical engineering and would definitely recommend the course to anyone else looking to achieve this. I especially enjoyed the drawing for engineering elements of the course, which helped me build up an understanding of the manufacture of components."

"The HNC helped me gain entry to the Professional Diploma in Marine Engineering course I am currently studying. This is sponsored by Vroon Offshore Ltd; I'm working with them, training on the job. This involves splitting my time between college and working on supply vessels in the North Sea. The contrast with my old job in the bank couldn't be more striking."

Lecturer Thomas Haughey isn't surprised at Martin's success. He commented: "Martin is a great example of someone with a natural aptitude for Engineering coming into the field and really thriving. Throughout his time at James Watt, he showed a great work ethic and is now reaping the rewards with the prospect of a fulfilling career. His story demonstrates that with a bit of determination combined with a meaningful engineering curriculum you can transform your working environment; I hope it inspires others who want to do the same."

