

## How Siemens meets demand for young electrical engineering talent

*Siemens' Digital Industries (DI) division in the UK has partnered with the E3 Academy since 2008, a coalition that helps them recruit the best and brightest young electrical engineering talent into the organisation's base in Manchester, UK. We spoke to some former-E3 scholars who now work at Siemens about their experience of the scheme and its benefits.*

As part of the largest industrial manufacturing company in Europe, Siemens DI joined the E3 Academy as a founding partner in 2008 driven by its need for a stream of talented young electrical engineering students to join its graduate scheme every year. Competition is particularly fierce for recruiters in the field of electrical engineering and the academy enables Siemens to meet candidates early and onboard them as employees well before they even graduate.

### Giving young people an opportunity to see their future

Siemens funds scholars through their time at university, while also providing eight-week summer work placements and mentoring through each semester. Feedback from the scholars focuses on benefits to themselves and to Siemens from this early exposure to the business not afforded to regular graduates joining the graduate scheme.



One ex-E3 scholar is Adam Holmes, who graduated in 2013 and is now a technical consultant in motion control. He said:

“When you’re 18 you don’t know about engineering beyond what you’ve just done in physics and maths at school. The E3 Academy gave me lots of exposure to Siemens early on, an understanding of what engineering is in reality, and allowed me to actually use the skillset I’d learnt at university and apply it to the real world.”

After three summer placements in different parts of the business, scholars join the graduate scheme once they finish their final year at university. At Siemens, this involves four six-month placements in different business areas.



“The early exposure to the business from the summer placements gives you a lot more flexibility”, said Holmes. “You can re-join a team for another six months or build experience in another area of the business to find your niche. Having already established those connections gives you and Siemens more control over your career. For example, they can place you in your favourite business area, where you can quickly start generating value for the organisation and develop yourself.”

## Guiding young engineers into their career

Another benefit is that students can take more control over their course and the work experience has even helped some building the confidence to focus their studies and move directly onto their career path.

“It seemed scary at first to sign up for a graduate job in 2016 when I’d not even started Uni yet, but I soon got over that. Similarly, for the interview, I was worried that I would have to prove my technical skills with electronics. However, I was soon reassured by the welcome and support I got from Siemens.

“In the end, I loved the experience of my summer placements so much that I actually ended up pursuing the possibility of leaving my course early to start working at Siemens,” says Kathryn Grimwade, who is currently working as an automation specialist at Siemens, having graduated with a BEng in 2019 and was named as the company’s graduate of the year in 2021. “I simply wouldn’t have felt able to have those discussions without having that established connection with Siemens already. It was useful to have people in industry to talk it through with.”



Since Siemens already had a firm grasp of Grimwade’s performance throughout university and on her summer placements, its HR and Engineering teams already had that long-term view and knew she had what it took to join the graduate programme. The E3 Academy scholarship gives that extra clarity to students in their final year as they can focus on their studies rather than worrying about trying to get a job.

“Gaining that understanding of the business before starting full-time gave me a massive head start,” says Grimwade. “Coming in on the first day and already knowing everyone was a noticeable advantage compared to other graduates. All E3 scholars also get a mentor from the start of our summer placements. I am still in touch with mine and they have supported me in my development here. The placements have given me longstanding contacts throughout the business.

“You just know more of the basics, since you’ve spent the past few summers there getting to understand the processes, software, and ways of working.”

## Giving back and developing hiring skills

Having fully experienced the benefits of the E3 Academy himself, Adam Holmes now works as the Academy’s internal coordinator at Siemens. It is a role that is helping him develop his leadership skills, as well as supporting budding young engineers.

“Being a product of the programme, I wanted to give something back. So now I run the whole scheme from Siemens’ side: deciding the number of scholars, where they go for their placements, and hosting well-being check-ins.

“These check-ins allow students to highlight their recent successes and address any issues or worries they may be feeling. Their wellbeing is more important than getting a first, so my

job is to make sure they know that and address any unnecessary pressure they may be feeling.”

### **Retention rate higher than 80%**

This sort of approach is one of the factors that ensures Siemens achieves a high retention rate. In fact, 80% of scholars remain with the company two years after graduating and go on to build successful careers over the long term at the company.

“Of those that started the scheme with me, one moved back to academia to do a PhD but three are still here and it was helpful that we all knew each other when we joined, as well as people in the years above us,” said Grimwade.

“One piece of advice I would give to someone on their first placement is to be proactive and take initiative. People are always happy to help but you need to show an interest, invite yourself to meetings and take opportunities when they come up. This is how you get the most out of the experience and grow as individual and an engineer.”

The E3 Academy is looking to partner with organisations that are looking to recruit the best and brightest young electrical engineering talent the UK has to offer.

**Get in touch if you would like to hear more about partnering with the Academy - [manager@E3Academy.org](mailto:manager@E3Academy.org)**