

Olivia Thomas

BTEC Level 3 in Transport Planning

Current Position: Apprentice Engineer at Stantec



I am an Apprentice Engineer in the Transport Team at Stantec. Stantec is a multi-disciplinary development consultancy, where each team work to provide support and advice for various development projects. The aim of which is to secure planning permission and create innovative solutions to design issues. In the transport team, I mainly produce transport assessments and travel plans to assess and mitigate the transport impacts of new developments. This could include combating increased congestion, suggesting more sustainable infrastructure for public transport and active travel to facilitate the need to travel.

How has the pandemic impacted your work?

My role has seen the secondary impact of the pandemic, such as the increased demand for cycling and walking infrastructure. The government's advice against using public transport has left a large amount of people without a car unable to travel. Therefore, the dependency on cycling and walking has increased. I think this will have a large impact on how local authorities write their transport policy and guidance document moving forward. The need for active travel is more than just beneficial for the environment but have also been the primary method of transport for many individuals during the pandemic. I expect to see a greater emphasis on cycling and walking infrastructure in my future work as a result.

How did your BTEC qualification help prepare you for this current situation?

Throughout my BTEC I had to attend Leeds College of Building in two-week blocks, meaning I was away from home and living independently. This increased my self-determination and allowed me to learn crucial life skills.

Did you feel well prepared as a BTEC student when you moved on?

My BTEC made me feel very prepared, I knew exactly which degree apprenticeship I wanted to study and the line of work I wanted to focus on. It was worth delaying university by two years as I am now more knowledgeable about transport planning. My employment opportunities are very strong as a result.

This interview took place August 2020.

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