

Tata Steel

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Tata Steel is one of the world’s largest steelmakers running the UK’s largest steelworks as well as having sites in the Netherlands and manufacturing plants across Europe and Asia.

In the UK, TATA Steel provides a vital foundation for many of the country’s key strategic supply chains, including the automotive, construction, packaging and engineering sectors. The company supplies almost 50% of UK carmakers’ steel requirements. It is also the only UK steel company with significant domestic R&D activity, with a research facility in Warwick and another under development in Swansea. Tata Steel UK has a turnover of more than £2bn and provides employment for over 8,500 people.

We spoke to Matthew Davies, Training Advisor for L&D at TATA Steel, at the Port Talbot site about how BTEC fits into their recruitment strategy.

‘Here at Tata Steel, we have over 300 apprentices so our apprenticeship training is pretty robust and is based on a 5-level tier structure. If we know we have a shortage of skills in a particular area, then it’s all about developing the apprentices around the apprenticeship framework specific to that area and train them with the relevant skills and knowledge required. We work closely with colleges to identify the skills gap and make sure that the qualifications plug those gaps.

We tend to hire more people who have BTECs than A Levels as we see a much higher success rate. We find those that have taken a BTEC have well-rounded knowledge and more ‘street cred’ and maturity about them. They are better equipped with those ‘softer’ skill requirements. If we are recruiting for a full-time technician, for example, we would want candidates with a BTEC Level 3, Level 4, HNC or equivalent as we know they will have covered the competency-based tests along with having the personal attributes that we are looking for.

Times are changing - automation is a massive market for us so it’s all about keeping abreast of the ever-changing market environment and having the flexibility to meet those changes within the workplace. We can provide specific knowledge and process about Tata Steel to any of our employees but what we can’t provide them with is general skills and knowledge. The BTEC offering equips them with this broad range of experience and provides them with more transferable skills.’

