

Title: **Case Study
Engineering & Manufacturing
in Wiltshire & Swindon**

Aaron Rens, aged 18, is in his second year of a four-year engineering apprenticeship with Uni-Mill Engineering Ltd a company based in Swindon.

He is delighted with his training so far. Not only does he have the advantage of earning a wage while he learns, the apprenticeship also gives him solid practical experience in the engineering workshop.

“I have always enjoyed being quite a practical person,” he says. “I can happily sit down and write reports, but what I really enjoy is doing things practically, making things happen.

“I see myself as being quite lucky. It’s a really good company and I think I have quite a bright future with them. And at the end of the day I’m getting paid to learn.”

Aaron attended St Joseph’s Catholic College in Swindon. After taking GCSEs he moved on to Swindon College, where he did an NVQ Level 2 in Mechanical Engineering.

He had considered taking a National Diploma which would qualify him to go on to do a degree, but his college tutor advised him to take the apprenticeship route, and Aaron joined Uni-Mill’s training programme.

And he’s very glad he did – he says his training with the company is very hands-on as well as being challenging.

Aaron spends a day a week at Swindon College and the rest of the week training in the company’s workshops. He has already gained a full grounding in engineering basics such as milling, turning and grinding, while also covering the theory in college.

He says these are practical skills he wouldn’t have the chance to pick up at university. But he still has the option of moving on to higher education – he could go on to take a Higher National Diploma or Foundation Degree while still working for the company.

“It’s going really well,” he says. “Uni-Mill is a fantastic place to work – the people here are friendly and helpful. And because I have been at college for a few years now, I know all the tutors there.

“There is a lot of pressure and you have to be willing to learn. It’s a bit like being at school, but it’s different – you realise that what you’re learning is for you and that as long as you’re willing to work hard, you’ll do well.”