



WHY IT MATTERS...

CIVIL & BUILDING ENGINEERING



Loughborough University

James Childs

Section Engineer

Civil Engineering entails the design, development, construction and maintenance of the built environment and in some cases the surrounding natural environment. The variance of structures that this entails is huge whether that be bridges, skyscrapers, railways, roads, sea defences, retained earth slopes etc. Structures that everybody uses.



The field incorporates a balance of problem solving and management skills to develop and improve the built environment around us in a constantly changing world.

Post 16 Education	Higher Education
AS Level English Lit and Lang and Critical Thinking A Level Maths, Physics and Geography	MEng Civil Engineering

Why did you choose to study Civil Engineering?

Even from quite a young age I enjoyed maths and the problem solving aspect of it. I had kind of assumed that I would therefore go into accounting as it was the only profession I knew that really involved maths. In year 8 we had to carry out a week's work experience in a local company and there were no accountancy firms to choose from. My physics teacher suggested that I went for a local Civil Engineering design office, which I did. It really developed my interest in Civil Engineering.

For me it offers a nice balance of problem solving and something different every day.

James' advice: "Work hard on your chosen subjects from the start. I, in hindsight, let my foot off the gas going into year 12 after reasonably good GCSE's. When my AS results came through, it gave me a real fright; what I had hoped to achieve in terms of going to university was potentially no longer attainable.

As a result, I had to take resits throughout year 13, piling more pressure on myself.

Fortunately I managed to scrape through with some decent grades eventually - enough to go to university to do the degree I wanted to.





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James' experience as a student

I hugely enjoyed my time at university. I found that whilst the course was challenging and demanding, it was interesting and engaging throughout and I still found more than enough time to enjoy meeting new people, trying new activities and sports and going out enjoying myself. There was ample support from the university and opportunities for self-development, which was well balanced with fantastic opportunities outside my studies around the university.

James' Career

I am currently a Section Engineer for Taylor Woodrow, the Civil Engineering arm of Vinci Construction UK (VCUK). During my second year at Loughborough I attended the department careers fair and applied to become a sponsored student of a company. I had an interview and was then offered a place by VCUK as a sponsored student, which meant paid summer placements, a contribution to university fees /equipment and fast-track to a graduate position with the company once I'd finished my degree. I undertook two placements whilst at uni over summer holidays.



Whilst admittedly I didn't appreciate it at the time, the decisions that you make at 16 can have a huge impact on how the following decades will shape up. Whilst that can seem overbearing and intimidating, I think the important thing is that you can only truly make the correct decision if you take the time to properly research, explore and experience a variety of different fields and opportunities.

For instance I was fortunate in that my school mandated a week's work experience - not all do. However, a lot of companies from a variety of fields and disciplines do offer work experience, work placements, experience days and other such schemes. It's well worth trying these experiences, even if it's just to rule it out for you.

At the end of the day, it is a very personal decision and only you can truly know what is right for you (even though recommendations from family/ friends/ teachers around you can be a useful nudge in the right direction). I would however push you towards what you think would interest you - this is what truly makes the difference, is your job enjoyable or not?

Loughborough offers undergraduate degrees in

Urban Planning, Architecture, Civil Engineering, Architectural Engineering, Construction Engineering Management, Commercial Management and Quantity Surveying.