

JIB Apprentice Exchange winner announced



Twenty-five year old Samantha Jones has been named winner of the 2015 Apprentice Exchange Programme, organised by the Joint Industry Board (JIB).

Employed by Melvin John Electrical in Coleford, Gloucester, Samantha will fly out to the United States in May and spend six weeks living and working in New York. During her trip she will learn how electrical contracting works in the US and will act as an ambassador for the UK industry.

The selection process involved a shortlist of six potential applicants taking part in a challenging interview. Samantha impressed judges with her preparation, confidence and existing commitment to promoting the industry.

“For such a young woman, Samantha’s achievements to date are impressive, including from her work with [JTL](#) as an ambassador promoting the role of women in the construction industry and with the NICEIC in their “Jobs for the Girls” campaign,” said Ivor Williams, chairman of the JIB’s Further Education Committee.

“Samantha is a confident and knowledgeable apprentice who will only excel within the industry and I have no doubts will be a fantastic ambassador in New York,” he continued. “She was selected from a particularly strong group of apprentices at interview, which is a great achievement in itself, and certainly bodes well for the calibre of future operatives in the industry.”

Commenting on her win, Samantha said: “I am very much looking forward to my new overseas ambassador role, to experience travelling to another country, to work in a different environment, to experience the differences in work ethic, training and installation methods and to bring back positive and negative feedback, which could help the industry standards in this country. It’s also going to be very interesting to see at what level women are engaged within the electrical industry.”

During her trip Samantha will be [writing a blog and uploading pictures of her adventures](#).

The 2015 exchange is a tripartite programme that will also see an Australian apprentice visit England later this year and a New York apprentice travel to Australia. The scheme is being run by the JIB in conjunction with training provider [JTL](#), the Electrical Contractors’ Association and Unite the Union.

What is the JIB apprentice exchange programme?

The JIB apprentice exchange programme was set up by the JIB’s Further Education Fund Committee to help address one of its aims: ‘to enhance individuals’ learning through cultural exchanges’.

When a delegation from Australia visited the JIB in 2008 the idea of an apprentice exchange was proposed, and the inaugural exchange was in 2010 when Shona Rawlins went to

Queensland for 6 weeks. Two further apprentice exchanges have taken place since then, with Thomas Hyland of Balfour Beatty also travelling to Australia in 2013, whilst Luke Wheeler of SPIE Matthew Hall completed his exchange programme in New York in 2012.

Get involved

If you're interested in taking part in future apprentice exchanges, you must be a [JTL](#) apprentice and a member of Unite the Union. Your employer must also be an [ECA](#) and JIB member.

For the application process, the apprentices are endorsed by their employers but also by their JTL Training Officers. [JTL](#) actively seek the best performing apprentices and provide them with recommendations. These are the apprentices with consistently high scores and who are particularly eager and committed.

What do the judges look for?

The apprentice must be in the 3rd or 4th stage of their apprenticeship, so they will be undertaking their portfolio building and/or AM2 assessment. In general, the apprentices that do well are those at the later part of Stage 4. Samantha, for instance, will be a graded electrician by the time she is in New York. As long as the apprentice is Stage 3 or Stage 4 at the time of applying they will be considered.

As well as asking the candidate why they would be suitable for the exchange, they are also asked to provide insight into their views as to how the industry could be improved. The answers to these questions, along with the employer endorsement and the training officer's endorsement, are the basis for selecting those to take to interview.

The judges look for apprentices who are achieving high standards in their apprenticeship, are confident in their presentation, knowledgeable about the industry (and the organisations that operate within it), are intelligent in their answers, eager and willing to learn (as many of those will also be undertaking additional higher certificates alongside their apprenticeship).

At present there is no set date for the 2016 apprentice exchange but if you're interested in applying, follow JIB on Twitter [@JIBElectrical](#) and you'll receive news alerts on when the next application process is open.