



The network for women studying Science, Engineering,
Technology and the Built Environment in Scotland

Heads-up from the Graduates!

The drive behind Interconnect is to encourage opportunities for female students and women in industry to build networks throughout science, engineering and technological fields. Earlier this year, Interconnect arranged a fantastic event to do just this; by giving 15 students from universities around Scotland the chance to further their knowledge in the oil and gas industry sector with an informative and exciting visit to the ExxonMobil Aberdeen offices, and SAGE Gas processing plant, St Fergus.

I'm a Mechanical Engineering student from Heriot Watt and aside from building on my understanding of gas production, the trip also allowed me to have a chat with Laura Henderson, a chemical engineering graduate who is now a Process Engineer with ExxonMobil, to try to give a heads up on what these big companies are looking for!

Is relevant work experience during summer holidays a must?

Yes, in my opinion, work placements are a must! They provide practical experience and allow you to apply some of your university learning to real life situations. They also allow you to 'get a feel' for the company and decide (1) if it's a company you would like to work for and (2) if you would like a job like that. You also get exposure to other jobs, disciplines etc. and you may decide to take a different route. The best thing about placements is that sometimes they end with a job offer for when you graduate! It takes a lot of stress out of 5th year if you don't need to fill out application forms/attend assessment centres.

Is it important to be involved with university clubs/societies?

I found that being involved with clubs/sports etc. meant it was a lot easier to answer questions in applications forms and interviews. It makes you an interesting person, and you will find you have lots of examples in the 'Tell me about a time when...' questions.

What about having a higher degree - e.g. a masters as this helps with getting chartered?

I was hired with 5 other engineers and a geoscientist - all of us had Masters degrees.

What is the percentage of F:M employees in Exxon Mobil and in what departments do they work?

UK wide, I don't know, but if I take my group as an example... We have 11 engineers (machinery, instrument & control and chemical) and 4 are female. Other groups maybe have less. But I think the key point is that it doesn't matter. I have never been treated differently because I was female, I have never had any issues and would not mind if I was the only female engineer in my group. I am offshore this week, and this is a very male-dominated environment but I really enjoy it and I am treated the same (in fact I think I get more tasks completed out here because I am female – it's a help not a hindrance!).

Do you have a graduate programme and if so what is the split for intake F:M?

The graduate programme is 3 years and during this time you do technical training (in Houston) and non-

technical training (in Europe). Whilst we are 'graduate' engineers, you are not treated that way and are given responsibility from Day 1 with the appropriate support to back you up. I was hired as a group of 6 engineers, three female and three male.

I think the key things you should remember when applying are:

- 1) Be honest, interviews go well when you are being yourself
- 2) Get as much experience as possible, it helps you decide what you want to do and you are more likely to enjoy what you pick
- 3) Be proud to be a female engineer :)

"Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." —Confucius

Emma Hamilton

Interconnect Student Champion & Mechanical Engineering Student

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