

Aimee

Ports of Auckland Outfall Upgrade Project

We have already brought you Patrick's story. Now, it's the time for one of our female undergraduates to share her experience with McConnell Dowell. Here is Civil Engineer Undergraduate Aimee's path through our programme.

What was a typical day like?

A typical day for me would include attending pre-start meetings before going out to site to observe the ongoing works. During these toolbox meetings we would cover the main tasks happening that day, as well as some potential safety risks that could happen.

I had daily duties such as completing site diaries, testing the Ph levels of the water being removed in construction, tracking monthly site hours and completing weekly visual inspections to monitor the condition of sites for council. I would also track the progress of the excavation and spoil removal.

What was the most rewarding thing about working with your team?

I had the opportunity to work alongside all the engineers and with other groups on the site. For example, I assisted the Health and Safety Advisor, the Superintendent and Electricians, among others. This was really interesting because I got to learn about all the different moving parts that contribute to making a project run smoothly.

One of the highlights of my internship was to go to the Hynds factory where the different pipes for our project were being made. We got to learn about the construction of the pipes and how they test them to check their strength. We also did a few social events like the Christmas fishing trip, or barbeque breakfasts, where I got to know the people I was working with a lot better.





How did the internship contribute to your personal and professional growth?

I built my communication skills; talking to people from diverse backgrounds made me realise how much you can influence others by slightly tweaking your speech for different audiences. I also got the opportunity to see how, what I was learning at university, applied to real projects.



Tell us about any new skills or knowledge you gained.

Learning about concrete was a big thing for me. Familiarizing myself with the different types of concrete and even performing slump tests under the supervision of my Buddy was a first one for me. Another highlight of my Internship Programme was to better understand the role of a Site or Project engineer and how managing and working with people is a large part of their role. I got lots of practical experience, working with some of the subcontractors and MCD staff creating formwork, grouting and grinding piles. On the more technical side of things, I was trained on how to write a CEP (construction execution procedure) and a job safety environmental analysis (JSEA). This helped me to better understand the construction process and empowered me to be responsible of completing those for the upcoming stages of work. One of the biggest takes for me was to learn the importance of working with your team and communicating effectively to find solutions to problems.

Do you remember your first day on site? What advice would you give others joining our programme?

My first day on site was a little overwhelming as I had no experience with construction or even an internship before. But the biggest thing I learnt was to not be afraid to ask lots of questions from anyone on site.

Were there any training sessions, workshops, or learning opportunities that you found particularly beneficial?

I got to take part in fire extinguisher training which was part of the regular safety trainings that they provide on the project. I also liked how I could freely ask questions and I felt like I was being involved in new activities. For example, I learnt to communicate with the crane operator when carrying lifts to create a safe lifting area and walkway for others.