

Brilliant Careers for STEM students in the South West: Atkins

What does Atkins do?

As one of the biggest design and engineering consultancies in the world, Atkins are at the centre of everything from huge infrastructure projects to city planning and fighting climate change. They've designed opera houses in Dubai, helped build high-speed railway in the UK, and shaped Bristol's nuclear power station at Hinkley Point.

Three key questions:

- How do you represent a river using a mathematical equation?
- How do you design a wind turbine that won't get blown over?
- How do you use big data to land more planes at Heathrow?

Employee profile: Mark Lee, Associate Director and Technical Authority for Engineering Hydrogeology

I work to understand and manage the movement of water in the ground to stop it causing problems. I constructed a 3D numerical model of groundwater for a new power plant in Suffolk, and designed the dewateringsystem for the new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C near Bristol.

Employees:

18,000+

Location:

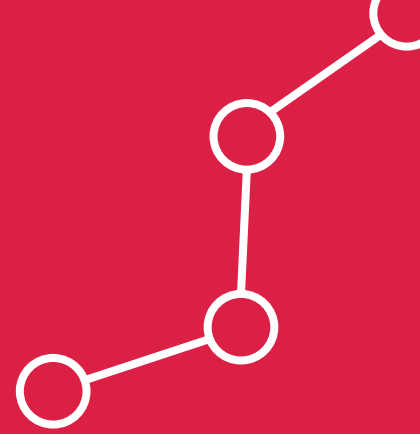
Atkins have offices in Exeter and Bristol, as well as most other major UK cities and 27 other countries across the world.

Industry:

Design, engineering and construction consultancy



As well as the UK I've been involved with projects in Germany, Turkey, the USA and Colombia, sometimes involving site visits. I can honestly say it has been an incredibly interesting and rewarding career!



How did you get started at Atkins?

Holly, Degree Apprentice:

I started straight after finishing my A-Levels, which were in geography, biology and psychology. I'd done a week's work experience at Atkins during Easter half-term, where I worked with a different team each day, and now I work with one of those teams full time!

Pete, Associate Director and Structural Engineer:

I started at Atkins as a Level 3 Apprentice Civil Engineer, which I completed after 2 years. Since then, I've started a degree apprenticeship in Environmental Management at the University of the West of England in Bristol. That way, I get to work four days a week, spend one day a week at Uni, and get a degree at the end of it.

What do you do in your job?

Holly: I do a mixture of office-based and on-site work, working in the contaminated land and hydrogeology team along with 20 or so others. On the day-to-day I manage data that we have collected on-site, write a variety of reports, and use software like AutoCad and QGIS to produce site plans.

Pete: I'm a structural engineer, which means I design buildings for the RAF, universities, schools, and lots of other organisations, working with architects. Buildings are like people:



The architect decides what you look like, but the structural engineer—me—is responsible for the skeleton that keeps you standing up!

A typical day for me might involve getting my hi-vis and hard hat on for a site visit, taking part in a project workshop, maybe designing some beams or columns for a building, and reviewing calculations that others have done.

What do you like about your job?

Holly: I like that I work on a wide range of projects, including HS2, Sizewell C (the nuclear plant) and East West Rail. It's always interesting to visit the project in-person!

Pete: No day is ever the same. Walking into a finished building that you have designed is a magical feeling, and I love showing my kids a building I've designed – it's very special.

