

LEVEL 5 DIPLOMA IN PACKAGING TECHNOLOGY

The Diploma in Packaging Technology is internationally recognised as the premier qualification in the packaging industry and is accredited by PIABC, an awarding body of the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

The qualification prepares students to take responsibility for packaging operations at any level through the supply chain and can also lead to higher level study. The Diploma can be studied intensively either at IOM3 offices in Grantham or onsite in regional centres. An online option is also available.

Viki Taylor, Communications Manager, spoke to two recent graduates about their experience.

Why did you decide to do the L5 diploma in packaging tech?

SM: I joined the team here just over three years ago, having been made redundant in 2011, after 15 years with my previous employer. After such a long time with one company, in what was a very specialised role (Application Support for Printing Inks), I was keen to quickly gain the knowledge and experience to allow me to contribute at a high level in my new position. Although my experience in printing was very valuable, I identified that there was still a lot more to packaging that I had to learn. Looking at the courses that were available, the L5 Diploma struck me as the most appropriate and at the correct level academically. The regional course with visits to suppliers and packaging converters appealed to me, as I also like to understand practical applications when learning.

PW: Having worked in and around the packaging area for the last 19 years for Innovia Films I decided that it would be a good move for me to formalise the knowledge that I had built up over the years into a formal professional qualification.

By doing the L5 Packaging Diploma, it would allow me to build on some knowledge that I already had within certain aspects of packaging, but then open my eyes to the wider world of packaging and gain knowledge in those areas for a better overall understanding.

Why is professional development important to you?

SM: William Grant and Sons is a growing business, with employees in more than 30 countries, and an extensive portfolio of luxury brands. Opportunities are available across the business, and we have a policy of internal promotion. Continuing professional development allows me to manage and develop my career for the long term, keep up-to-date with rapidly changing practices, legislation and technology, and take advantage of opportunities that become available. Preferably somewhere with a bit less rain than the west of Scotland!

PW: Professional development is important to me in terms of progressing my career and also my knowledge base.

You have to keep looking to the future and continue to better yourself and by embracing professional development, this can be achieved. I believe the world of packaging is continually changing and it is important that you adapt and change yourself to keep up with this.



Sharon McDowall works at William Grant and Sons (WGS) Whisky Distillers, at its global customer service centre and office just outside of Glasgow. She is part of the New Product Development team, working as a Packaging Technologist.



Paul works for Innovia Films Ltd in Wigton, Cumbria. His current job title is Product and Applications Developer, working with the New Product and Market Development team.

How do your employers support professional development?

SM: Being a family-owned company with an ethos of investing in people, WGS has delivered consistent growth over the company's 127-year history. In order to continue to grow our brands worldwide and deliver premium products to our customers, all employees have regular meetings with their immediate leader where goals are set, skill gaps identified and development activities agreed. This can range from online courses or internal training to internationally recognised qualifications. Over the course of the diploma, I benefited from time off to attend the classes, colleague support in picking up my workload and talking through some of the topics learned, and study leave in advance of the exams. I also benefited from the occasional pep talk when my confidence was flagging.

PW: Innovia Films has a very robust training and development programme, which is part of the employees' yearly appraisal and allows you to maximise your training potential and development within the company.

In specific relation to the L5 Packaging Diploma, Innovia Films supported me throughout this process, not only with the time needed to attend the initial course but also the continued support to undertake the exams and project aspects which, ultimately allowed me to achieve the Diploma.

How will the L5 qualification help your career?

SM: Having this qualification definitely demonstrates my commitment to my career and the packaging industry, both to my employer and my peers. Hopefully this will assist me to be in the best position when opportunities do arise, as I have shown the ability to learn and apply this to projects that both myself and the team have been working on. The course was also a great networking opportunity and I have already asked for help with a specific issue from several of the other course attendees.

PW: The L5 Packaging Diploma qualification allows me to demonstrate to the world of packaging that I have undertaken and achieved the Diploma. In the future, this could allow me to build on this qualification and further progress within the packaging environment. I see this as the first step to other things.

Source: Materials World (December 2014 issue)

