

AUTOMOTIVE

Rolls-Royce looks to induct new batch of apprentices as car-making complexity increases

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Apprentice Anna Flynn stitching seats for a Rolls-Royce car. Image courtesy of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

By STAFF REPORTS

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, now into the 14th year of its apprenticeship program, is seeking talent for 2020 to provide practical training in specialist craft skills required to build its vehicles.

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Apprentices will spend two to four years at Rolls-Royce's Goodwood, West Sussex plant in England, after which they have the option to take full-time employment with the automaker if they make the cut. The intake announcement comes during the United Kingdom's National Apprentice Week, whose theme is "Look Beyond."

"Our apprenticeship program is one of our greatest achievements, providing unique professional and personal development opportunities for talented people," said Torsten Müller-tvs, CEO of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, in a statement.

"I am delighted that so many of our previous apprentices are still with us and it is very satisfying to know that Rolls-Royce-trained craftspeople are contributing to the wider success of British manufacturing," he said.

Auto manufacturing at the high-end has always had an extreme element of bespoke options. But skills required currently go beyond simply cabinetry or handcraftsmanship, but also include comfort with technology and electric motors as cars turn eco-friendly and highly computerized.



Rolls-Royce Motor Cars apprentice Brad Smith running tests on a car in production. Image courtesy of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

Bumper sales

The Rolls-Royce call for apprentices comes a week after British rival Bentley Motors said it was looking to future-proof its workforce for the 21st century with the planned intake of trainees who are fluent in key automotive roles but with primary skills rooted in digital and technology expertise.

The Volkswagen-owned automaker is welcoming applications for 76 apprentices, undergraduates and graduates who will work at its Crewe, England headquarters ([see story](#)).

Bentley Motors and Rolls-Royce Motor Cars had a banner 2019 with record sales driven by new models and strong demand in North America and Europe.

Bentley posted a 5 percent growth to deliver 11,006 cars, while Rolls-Royce registered a 25 percent increase to 5,152 vehicles sold.

This was Bentley's seventh consecutive year with sales crossing 10,000 cars and Rolls-Royce's highest annual revenue recorded in its 116-year history ([see story](#)).



Apprentice Oli Gemain at work on a Rolls-Royce car engine. Image courtesy of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

Hands-down hands-on

Volkswagen owns [Bentley](#) and BMW Group counts [Rolls-Royce Motor Cars](#) in its portfolio.

Both automakers emphasize hands-on training for making cars and including the bespoke elements and technology that make a Rolls-Royce or Bentley stand out.

Apprentices at Rolls-Royce, for example, will work alongside its craftspeople in areas and departments such as assembly, woodshop, surface finish, leathershop, parts quality and total vehicle quality management.

Those apprentices who qualify for full-time employment will progress to senior supervisory, technical and management roles.

The Rolls-Royce program also allows candidates to acquire transferable skills, knowledge and qualifications

through formal vocational study at local further education colleges. This helps them with outside employment opportunities as well.

Applicants participate in a strict selection process to gauge their individual strengths, aptitudes, personal qualities and potential. **Applications** close March 15 and successful candidates join the automaker in August.



Apprentice Katie Hood working on a Rolls-Royce logo. Image courtesy of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

ROLLS-ROYCE'S PROGRAM was expanded last year with the introduction of the Sir Ralph Robins Degree Apprenticeship.

To complement practical training, candidates study to degree level, including B. Eng. in mechanical engineering at the University of Chichester's new Engineering & Digital Technology Park, the company said. The number of places on offer has doubled for this year.

"Our degree apprenticeships were created in 2019 to recognize the contribution to the business of Sir Ralph Robins, one of Rolls-Royce's non-executive directors," Mr. Miller-tvs said. "The response was phenomenal: the volume and quality of applications showed that this new pathway answered a real need."

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