



Apply your degree, start a 'real' job straight away and gain a professional qualification with KTP, one of the UK's leading graduate recruitment schemes.

Why KTP?

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) is a UK government scheme which supports projects between a graduate, an organisation and a university, lasting between 6 months and 3 years. KTP has been running for almost 40 years and is one of the largest graduate recruitment programmes across the UK, working with over 3,000 organisations – from micro-sized to large businesses such as Unilever and Rolls Royce.

KTP offers a wide range of opportunities across a range of academic disciplines and industry sectors, which means any degree subject is considered. Throughout a KTP project, you play a key role in managing and implementing strategic development in the business. KTP Associates are expected to own their project and are responsible for the outcome. In the year 2011-2012, 73% of Associates were offered employment by their host company after completion of their KTP project. Business performance outputs vary considerably from case to case, but in 2011/2012, the anticipated increase in pre-tax annual profit after the project completion was £366,000. 90% of businesses felt that the results achieved through participating in a KTP would play a significant part in improving the future performance of their business.

I would say the KTP experience was extremely worthwhile. It gave me the freedom and responsibility of a full time job but also the support and training I needed to adapt to a career in my chosen profession after coming straight from University. It opened more doors and opportunities than I would have ever hoped for and I am very grateful for the chance to lead a successful KTP project.

Rachel Walsh, The Macular Society

Why do your KTP with Aston University?

Historically, Aston has recruited the highest quality graduates as KTP Associates to work on projects that will challenge them intellectually and commercially. Our experience of over 120 KTP projects informs us that as a result of their experiences and achievements, these Associates are highly sought after on completion of their projects. The University has worked on projects throughout Aston Business School, the School of Life and Health Sciences, the School of Engineering and Applied Science and the School of Languages and Social Sciences.

Working on a KTP also gives you access to the University's city-centre facilities including state-of-the-art laboratories, library services and range of free professional development courses. Furthermore, Aston also offers support for ambitious KTP Associates who wish to undertake a higher degree during their project.

Academic partner

provides the knowledge, expertise & skills

KTP Associate transfers knowledge



Business partner uses the knowledge to improve performance



What can KTP do for you?

- Accelerate your career
- Develop your professional skills
- Provide invaluable support from experienced mentors
- Open up post-project opportunities

Accelerate your career

Having a completed KTP project on your CV can greatly enhance your career prospects. A KTP allows you to manage your own challenging project that is central to a company's strategic development and long-term growth, meaning the tangible benefits can be listed for future employers to see.

KTPs also provide the opportunity for recognition amongst the local and national business community. Working with Aston University provides the chance to engage with Aston's network of academics and local businesses, whilst the KTP programme offers the chance for national level recognition in the KTP Awards, which showcase success within KTP partnerships.



CASE STUDY



Neelam Patel is the Associate on a three-year KTP with BBR Optometry. She was a finalist in the KTP Awards' 'Business Leader of Tomorrow' category.

What are the objectives of your KTP?

The objective of my project is to develop new specialist services at BBR Optometry, allowing them to rely less on spectacle sales. I was also required to assess the financial sustainability of a range of stand-alone clinical services.

What have you achieved so far throughout your time at BBR Optometry?

With the help of my academic supervisors Dr Shehzad Naroo and Dr Frank Eperjesi, who are leading experts in their field, I have helped BBR refine their business model, creating new revenue streams and specialist services. I've also had some fantastic opportunities in my field – within a few months of starting my project I was invited to lead a discussion group on the integration of specialist services into optometric practice at the European Academy of Optometry and Optics annual meeting. I have also had the opportunity to present at UK and international conferences and network with a number of key opinion leaders. As part of my KTP project I'm studying for a PhD too so I will have a Doctorate qualification to my name on completion of the project!

Develop your professional skills

You choose your training

KTP differs from other graduate schemes because it allows Associates to gain personalised on-the-job training and further qualifications. Associates on a project of 12 months minimum are given a budget of £2,000 p.a and 10% of the overall project duration to further develop their personal and professional skills. This budget can be used to develop skills necessary for the project in hand and for long term career aspirations. Associates are expected to provide a strong business case for their decisions, which require approval from the management team. Courses range from advanced management training to marketing and effective communication, as well as job-specific technical training and membership of professional bodies.

In addition to the training budget, all Associates participate in two one-week residential management training courses. There is also an option to register for a Chartered Management Institute qualification.

This programme aims to equip Associates with the skills to successfully deliver their KTP project and at the same time obtain a degree level management qualification. The residential courses are offered on a frequent basis in many locations around the UK and allow Associates to develop a range of competencies from operational management principles and practices to the development of resource control and use.

How did previous KTP Associates find their training opportunities?

“I have focused my training opportunities around attending some of the biggest optometry conferences in the world, including travelling to Seattle to the American Academy of Optometry conference. I have also been able to work towards gaining higher qualifications specific to my field, such as glaucoma management and independent prescribing.”

Neelam Patel, BBR Optometry

“Training through KTP is a focused way to achieve not only the project objectives but also aid in future development of the Associate. The training I have received has supported me in successfully completing the project and secure a permanent job. To date I am using the skills acquired during the period of my project.”

Prabhjit Singh Chugh,
Accutronics

The most unique aspect is the opportunity to transfer academic knowledge into industry practises. This presents a way of understanding what more is required from academia to be beneficial in solving practical issues and concerns.

Prabhjit Singh Chugh, Accutronics

KTP was a great opportunity to gain a unique and rich experience in industry, take on responsibility and challenges that most graduates take years to get a chance to do and gain further professional qualifications via support by the KTP scheme.

Now almost 8 years after completing my KTP placement, those 2 years still sit proudly on my CV at the start of my professional career, and distinguish me from the rest.

Trevor Reeves, Keysoft Traffic

“Training opportunities, access to, and working with, senior management is a crucial benefit of a KTP. It has prepared me well for the future, both at a personal and career level.”

Syed Shahrukh Kazmi,
Pace Systems International

Provide invaluable support from experienced mentors

Working on a KTP at Aston University provides a large support network that can be accessed throughout the project. Aston has high quality, exploitable research over its four Schools; Aston Business School, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of Life and Health Sciences and the School of Languages and Social Sciences. The University has worked on range of projects from management strategy to optometry and photonics.

Each KTP Associate will have an academic supervisor in their field, who will support them throughout the project, providing access to Aston's facilities and membership of Research Groups. Each Associate also has an experienced Company Supervisor, a leading figure in their host company who will support them in their role.

Throughout a KTP project, the University provides networking opportunities with other Associates through LinkedIn and a networking activity day. This provides support and advice from people on similar projects, as well as the potential to create useful connections for the future.

Furthermore, each project has a KTP Adviser, employed by the project funder, who is an experienced business professional with a wealth of experience. They will spend time with the Associate on a regular basis mentoring the Associate and supporting their career and development plans.

CASE STUDY



Krishna Balthu has recently completed a two-year KTP with law firm Higgs & Sons. He is now employed by the firm. His project was rated 'Outstanding' by the Technology Strategy Board (TSB).

What were the objectives of your KTP?

My KTP was focused on transformational change, enabling Higgs & Sons to better understand client needs and expectations. I re-examined their pricing strategy and improved the operations.

What did you achieve throughout your time at Higgs & Sons?

By applying some of the novel academic techniques and frameworks in a professional service setting, we developed interesting models and innovative ways of working which enhance the service experience of clients as well as the effectiveness of lawyers. The project has directly contributed to the firm's improved financial performance and positioned it as a role model for adoption of modern operational practices in the legal sector. I had some great opportunities too, like presenting at international conferences and receiving executive education from Harvard Business School.

What are you doing now your KTP has finished?

I have recently been appointed as Higgs' manager for organisational change and project management. I am also studying for a PhD (part-time) at Aston. Our project was rated as 'Outstanding' by the TSB and completing such a successful KTP project has really helped my career progression and unlocked fantastic opportunities.

Open up post-project opportunities

After successfully completing a KTP project, Associates will be able to demonstrate to future employers that they can manage a strategically important project and deliver demonstrable tangible benefits. Many businesses see KTPs as a route to improving the skills of their workforce and as a result, 73% of Associates are offered a role with their host company on completion of the project. A completed KTP on a CV will open up a range of other opportunities. Former Aston KTP Associates have developed their careers in innovative businesses from SMEs to multinational corporations, or have returned to academia to take up research and teaching posts.

What did KTP Associates do when they finished their KTP project?

CASE STUDY

Rachel Walsh worked on a one-year project with UK charity The Macular Society with academic supervisor Dr Hannah Bartlett.

What were the objectives of your KTP?

My task was to design and implement two online nutrition portals. The first one was published on The Macular Society's website and educates patients with age-related macular

degeneration how nutrition can reduce and/or slow down the progression of their condition. The second is a more detailed portal for health professionals, on a microsite off the main website.

What did you achieve throughout your time at The Macular Society?

I finished the portal and everyone involved in the project seemed really impressed – we received positive feedback

from a large number of users. It's great to see a project from beginning to completion and be able to see the results of your hard work.

What are you doing now your KTP has finished?

After seeing my work on the KTP, Dr Bartlett suggested I do a PhD in Ocular Nutrition at Aston, so that's what I'm doing now. I don't think I would ever have this experience and type of opportunity without my KTP.



One of last year's winning posters by Rachel Walsh working with the Macular Society pictured here with Aston's Vice Chancellor Professor Dame Julia King and competition judges Dr Phil Extance, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Business Partnerships and Knowledge Transfer, and Dr Debbie Buckley-Golder, then head of Knowledge Transfer at the Technology Strategy Board.



My KTP project has been challenging and thoroughly enjoyable. It has been a fantastic opportunity to develop project management skills and gain in depth experience of the business side of my field. My KTP project has most definitely enhanced and accelerated my career.

Neelam Patel, BBR Optometry



CASE STUDY



Prabhjit Singh Chugh completed a two-year KTP with battery design, development and manufacturing company Accutronics. He now has a permanent position at the company.

What were the objectives of your KTP?

My KTP was about operational strategy – reviewing and improving operations and supply chain efficiency to gain competitiveness and reduce costs.

What did you achieve throughout your time at Accutronics?

I helped to develop an operational strategy process which identifies actions required to achieve customer expectations, making a £941k contribution to sales. Accutronics also won the Institution of Mechanical Engineers Lombard Award for Innovations in Products and Processes during my time there, something we were really proud of.

What are you doing now your KTP has finished?

When I finished my project I was appointed as Accutronics' Production Manager – I don't think I ever would have been offered this kind of position before I did my KTP. The skills I have acquired have equipped me for a wide range of roles within business sectors.



CASE STUDY



Syed Shahrukh Kazmi completed a two-year KTP with Pace Systems, a company that designs and manufactures specialist surveillance equipment. He now works as a Lead Engineer at Jaguar Land Rover.

What were the objectives of your KTP?

The objective of my KTP was to develop an integrated design and prototyping capability for short production run components and assemblies.

What did you achieve throughout your time at Pace Systems?

I developed a new product design process and robust quality protocols for key processes and launched unique new product designs. I also reduced 'concept to manufacture' time, all of which led to higher margins, growth and profitability. I led the implementation of ISO 9001 Quality Management System at Pace too, which gave me an understanding of the business and its processes. The ISO 9001 accreditation has enabled the company to promote its products and services to markets for which accreditation is a pre-requisite.

I've gained a lot of recognition through my KTP, winning awards such as the KTP Business Leader of Tomorrow award, the Matthew Boulton medal and Young Business Leader certificate. Pace Systems International was 'highly commended' for its KTP Project at the Innovation and Technology Business Awards 2010.

The KTP was awarded the highest grade of 'Outstanding' by the Technology Strategy Board for its achievement in meeting KTP's Objectives.

What are you doing now your KTP has finished?

I am currently working as a Restraints Lead Engineer in Body Engineering at Jaguar Land Rover and have recently taken an exciting additional role of Restraints Launch Leader. Completing the KTP has really helped me not only to acquire the technical skills but also a broad understanding of how processes interact with in an organisation. This is helping me in my current role at Jaguar Land Rover.

For more information about Knowledge Transfer Partnerships or an informal chat, please email ktp@aston.ac.uk or call 0121 204 4242.

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