

## Student Life at Rutland Plastics

To mark the end of National Careers Week in March, we asked our current Product Design placement student, Louise, to write about her experiences here at Rutland Plastics and this is what she has to say.

Hello, I am Louise and I am a year in industry product design student from Loughborough University. This is a short post about my day to day life in the design team here at Rutland Plastics.

Once I have made my essential cup of coffee, my day usually starts with me getting myself up to date with emails. I usually start by sorting through tool quotes from our toolmaking partners and getting all of our part quotation sheets up to date. Once this is done it is a question of what tasks need to take priority that day. My role is very varied which is great!

A major part of my role involves running and maintaining our in house 3D printer. We have a Fortus 380mc system which prints in both carbon filled Nylon and ASA. We use this to print a lot of jigs and end of arm tooling which means I am involved with a number of different departments across the company such as quality. I design a lot of these 3D printed parts myself. For example, I often work closely with our automation team to design robot hands for their collaborative robot.



This can require quite a bit of problem solving to get all of the components held in the right places. It is always very satisfying seeing my designs come to fruition at the end of the projects.

As well as designing for in house purposes I spend a good chunk of time looking at the new part enquiries that we get daily. This involves liaising with customers over email and phone about their product requirements. With the assistance of our design team, I put together DFM (Design for Manufacture) documents and decide on the best tooling solutions for the customer based on their needs.

I often have to edit parts and reverse engineer customer samples using our CAD software, VISI. It is great to be involved in this side of the business as I am gaining invaluable insight into emerging design trends and new technologies.

Throughout my placement so far I have also assisted with the production of our recently updated company website. I have produced a lot of the rendered images and diagrams using Keyshot rendering software. I am also lucky to have had the opportunity to take the lead on a CAD based design project for one of our customers which I am working on currently.

Each day has been very hands on, challenging and rewarding. I have had the chance to develop many skills I wouldn't have had the chance to in an academic setting and I am looking forward to evolving these further during my remaining months here!

**We are proud to have hosted 'year in industry placement students' from Loughborough University since the 1990s, many of whom we have employed after graduation.**

**Having a student working with us brings benefits, not just for the students but for the business as well. Our passion for education and sharing knowledge is not limited to university students. We work with A-level students to promote Design and STEM subjects through factory visits and school lectures, when permitted. We also have apprentices throughout the company, who through cross departmental working, learn about design, toolmaking, the manufacturing process and quality control.**

**We believe it is important to help students learn about the world of employment and we try to do our bit to promote Engineering, Design and Manufacturing careers.**

