Apprenticeship FAQ

Q: What is the social life like in your area?

A: Malvern is generally quite quiet but it's a 10/15 minute train/car ride from Worcester where there are more things to do with regards to socialising.

Q: How did you decide that Payara was for you?

A: The office was local to me and all of the correspondence I'd had with the company before getting the role was very positive and pleasant - the company just gives off good vibes

Q: Why did you choose to apply for the apprenticeship?

A: I knew I didn't want to go to University but still wanted to pursue a career in software and an apprenticeship was the best way into it without following the "traditional" path

Q: What made you not want to choose a standard university degree?

A: Mainly the fees tied to them, I didn't particularly fancy the idea of paying tens of thousands in debt for most of my life

Q: What do you suggest I do between now and starting the apprenticeship to best prepare for the new challenge?

A: Read up on some Java related things, do some little projects involving the basics to get you familiar with the syntax of the language and just don't get too in your head about it, an apprenticeship is all about learning and making mistakes so don't feel down for not being a crazy coding expert!

Q: What was the first thing you did in the apprenticeship?

A: The first thing we did in the apprenticeship was have a tour around the office and facilities, then setup our workstations.

Q: Who are the main clients you work with?

A: BMW and Rakuten.

Q: What type of projects are you currently working on?

A: I'm working on customer hub which is a customer-facing portal for all our services, however, at the moment the focus has been implementing a knowledge base and getting it to a state for it to replace one of the products we use called Zendesk.

Q: What do the day to day duties typically involve as a Payara digital apprentice?

A: A typical day involves working on issues in my currently assigned project and meetings, however, most days have something different to do ranging from server administration and infrastructure to giving presentations at my former college to students.

Q: What are the main technologies/programming languages that are used?

A: The main technologies you will use will be git, Java and Maven primarily, however you may be exposed to docker and Kubernetes; Jenkins and groovy if on QA/CI; JAX-RS, JSF, a little bit of Javascript, and CSS if on customer hub.

Q: What are some of the challenges and problems that the company and apprentices face?

A: As apprentices, we have high expectations to meet when working with such top class developers. It can be a challenge if you don't take advantage of their experience and ask for help when needed. Of course if I were to have less of an ego this might be less of an issue! At Payara we have the opportunity to be very front-facing and be assigned very important and complicated tasks. This can be daunting with the wrong mindset, but it's helped when you use the abundant support offered by the other developers. We obviously have technical challenges as well. Using Java, we become exposed to the best selection of issues from concurrency problems to typing issues. Having said this, I'd much rather be solving problems in Java than any other language!

Q: What sort of speed of progression is there in terms of taking on workload for the apprentices?

A: Although we have the label of apprentice, we are still able to take on tasks that any other developer would do. To help you get to this point you'll have a 7 week crash course at Aston upon commencing the programme, and be started on an Apprentice Training task list at work. This helps quickly accelerate you to the ability level to be able to tackle the real bugs and tasks in the company. I found that within a couple of months I was working on real issues most days. Would it be appropriate for my to mention/link my GitHub account here?

Q: What is the balance between work days and university days over the course of the apprenticeship?

A: You'll have very few University days. Outside of the aforementioned crash course at the beginning of the programme, we generally attend university for one or two days at the start and end of each module block. In practice this tends to be once every couple of months. You're allowed to have about an afternoon per week for university work, and the rest is completed in your own time. In the first year you'll generally have 1-2 lectures per week as well as a couple of tutorials. Each of these will take about an hour in the evening to complete.