

Meet Ondrej: MAT Foundry Group's first graduate Foundry Technology Engineer. He took part in our first ever management trainee graduate programme, embarking on an 11 week programme to learn everything about the process that turns a lump of iron in to a high performance automotive component.

This is his story:

A Life-Changing Opportunity

I joined MAT as the very first Management Trainee Programme student, after graduation from BRNO University of Technology (BUT) and previous work experience at Eurac.

During the summer before my final year of study at BUT, I took the opportunity to travel to Eurac in Poole for an 11 week work placement. I worked alongside another student, Yuan, who is now Research & Development Senior Engineer at MAT Dalian in China.

The summer work placement took me across each department of production, allowing me to better understand the entire production process. This included the sand labs, core production, moulding, melting and finally, the machine shop.

My host family really helped me to feel at home, teaching me so much about the British culture. Linda, who I like to call my 3rd grandmother, was an incredible chef and provided lovely and very British meals for me each day. We're still in touch today!

After this 11 week placement, I went back to BUT to complete my final year of university. Before



Yuan and I spending our free time at the beach in Poole, UK.

leaving the UK, my master thesis project topic, comparing two different inoculants using thermal analysis, was reviewed by the Head of Quality at Eurac and was soon given the go-ahead.

These final weeks in the UK gave me the opportunity to speak with the experts at MAT and external company Asmet UK, collecting valuable industry insight and references to complete my master thesis.

Expenses accrued during my study were covered by Eurac and after months of study, I graduated as Engineer of Foundry Technology in June 2016. This acted as a gateway to join the MAT Management Trainee Programme after successfully passing the interview stage.

My first location within MAT Foundry Group was back in the beautiful UK seaside town of Poole. I was really looking forward to joining the team in Poole as I already had many connections there and was very familiar with the production.

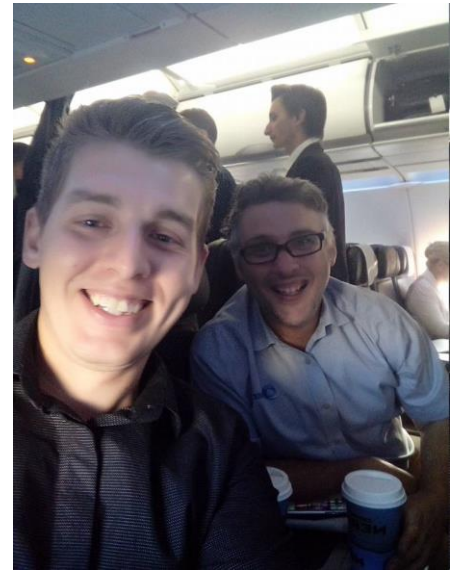
I was assigned to Reg. 90, project reported to Bosh, concerning the comparison of the performance between OEM and AM braking discs. The Project was conducted by Tim Abbiss, Contemporary Technical Support Manager, who helped me to integrate into the international executive team. This gave me

valuable insight into management of employees, the process and the statistical tools used in production.

During my time in Poole, I experienced the first business trip. Interestingly enough, this trip took me to MAT Hradec in my second homeland – Czech Republic. The initial plan was to stay in Poole for three months, however, my skills were required elsewhere which soon meant relocating to Ueckermunde in Germany after just five weeks.



I cooked *Halusky* – a Slovak national food – for Linda and her family.



My first business trip to the Czech Republic with Tim.



The Melters at Uckermunde

At the end of September 2016, I moved to Ueckermunde - a small coastal village in the northeast of Germany. This relocation also offered me a change of position and responsibility, focusing more on production and design. I spent four months in Germany with the quality department. It was very interesting for me to shadow the process engineer, Dirk Kramm, for a couple of weeks. During this period I gained a lot of experience regarding the production improvement and problem solving required during daily production.

I really appreciate the support of Jörg Hünike, General Manager of MAT Ueckermünde, who spent a couple of hours with me each week to explain the challenges MAT faces on a global scale. After four months well spent in Ueckermunde, I briefly moved to Neuenkirchen - another facility in the southwest of Germany before heading to Mexico City.

That week in Neuenkirchen was dedicated to the sand and metal laboratory, with the support of the secular manager, Ludger Wuepping.

My experience in Poole, Ueckermunde and Neuenkirchen were largely focused on intensive training and theory. Arriving at Mincer, Mexico City, the level of responsibility increased tenfold.

Mincer, a plant with grey, ductile foundry and machining shop, is in the process of expansion by installing new DISA line in one of the halls.

Hares, my colleague in Germany, and I joined the Mincer team and started to work in production process and quality. We are responsible for New Supplier Audits and contribute during regular meetings with customers and suppliers. We make decisions on new equipment, new processes and production control planning. This opportunity gives me a chance to better understand the process from a more practical perspective.

Relocating to Mexico, MAT offered me full support by providing me daily private Spanish tutoring to help me to better integrate with the culture. I am taking the Spanish classes for up to two hours each day and I'm already at the position where I can comfortably communicate. The current plan is to stay here for one year and help with the start of new production.



Hares and I in the DISA Foundry , Mincer Mexico City with Ricardo, one of the production managers at the Mincer plant.

I would like to thank MAT for giving me this incredible opportunity – not only the valuable work experience but also the chance to travel the world! It has provided me an incredible chance to meet new friends and build a valuable professional network. Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues, particularly Tim and Claire from Poole, Jan from Ueckermunde, Ludger from Neuenkirchen, for the support.