



Once I've completed the course at Derby, I'd like to move into a management position and gain wider experiences to develop my career. I'd really like to move abroad and work for our parent company LafargeHolcim in Canada or the USA so will continue to look for relevant training and qualifications to help further my career over there.

If anyone is thinking about whether the quarrying industry is right for them I say go for it. There is so much to learn and there are good training programmes and courses on offer. Companies know they benefit by supporting you through the training but you also benefit as a person and you will find that the industry will open many doors for you.

IQ

The Institute
of Quarrying

Case Study: Dale Cooper Careers in Quarrying



Dale Cooper lives in the small town of Harthill in North Lanarkshire. He is a Process Operator in the wash plant at Levenseat Sand Quarry operated by Aggregate Industries. Dale explains how he got into the industry and how his career has progressed.

I always wanted to work in the quarrying industry. Numerous family members had worked in the industry so it always had an appeal to me. However, there were no opportunities available to me when I left school at the end of 2007 so I became a moulding machine operator. For four and a half years I worked for a worldwide engineering company supplying the medical and electronics industries. I was responsible for checking the quality of the machine moulded parts and making any necessary adjustments.

Aggregate Industries quarries, manufactures and supplies a wide range of heavy building materials to the construction industry. Its Levenseat Sand Quarry is based in Scotland and is one of three specialist silica sand sites in the UK. Levenseat produces high quality grit, building, concrete and medium construction sands as well as products to suit sports and leisure facilities such as golf courses, football pitches and equestrian centres.

When a family member told me about the position available at Levenseat, I jumped at the chance. I now work in the wash plant which is where crushed material is screened and then treated with water, a process that aims to remove any impurities. The grains are sorted according to size using hydrosizers and allowed to dry. The purity and size of grain determines where the product is ultimately used – concrete, asphalt, construction, golf courses, football pitches etc.

We need to keep production going so a typical day involves constant monitoring of all plant equipment to ensure that all apparatus is in fine working condition. We also need to manage the maintenance and any repairs to make sure the process continues running and running efficiently.

The challenges involved in my job vary from day to day, but it's this variety that I really like about the job. I have to make sure that any issues are spotted well in advance before they become a major issue and cause production downtime. Due to the volumes of water and sand involved in the wash plant process it can be very easy for pumps, sumps or pipe lines to become choked but it's not so easy to clear the blockages.

I've been doing the job for coming up to a year and I was asked whether I'd be interested in doing any further study to help progress my career. Well, it was simply an offer I couldn't refuse! So I'm now enrolled in my first year of the Foundation Degree in Mineral Extractives Technology course at the University of Derby.

IQ believes that higher education pathways should be available to all in the mineral extractives industry. In partnership with the University of Derby we provide a suite of qualifications from higher apprenticeships through to honours degrees. The Foundation Degree is 2-3 year distance learning programme that provides the fundamental knowledge of quarrying operations.

The course is great because it teaches you about the challenges that other people in the industry face. Understanding what management, engineers and site fitters have to do gives you a wider perspective about what it takes to keep a steady production going whilst keeping everyone safe as this is the number one priority.

Outside of work I have an interest in cars so the subject I find most interesting is engineering. I find it interesting to know how things work and what goes into making a product which many people overlook or take for granted.

Dale Cooper
Process Operator at Aggregate Industries

Discover industry leading training & development opportunities at [Quarrying.org](https://www.Quarrying.org)