

Case Study: Covance creates skills and talent pathways



The Science Industry Partnership in collaboration with the Office for Life Sciences (OLS), BioIndustry Association (BIA) and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) is now undertaking a wide-ranging Research Strategy which will build a clear evidence base of the status of life science skills and future scenarios to 2030.

As part of this work, science employers aligned with this work are setting out their current approach to skills development and how they see this developing in the future. These case studies will be part of the 2030 Strategy narrative as it develops.

Industry Sector:
Research Science - Covance



About the Company

Covance Inc., the drug development business of LabCorp®, is the world's most comprehensive drug development company, dedicated to advancing healthcare and delivering Solutions Made Real®. Our unique perspectives, built from decades of scientific expertise and precision delivery of the largest volume of drug development data in the world, along with our innovative technology solutions, help our clients identify new approaches and anticipate tomorrow's challenges as they evolve.

Together with our clients, Covance transforms today's healthcare challenges into tomorrow's solutions. We also offer laboratory testing services to the chemical/ agrochemical industries and are a market leader in toxicology services, central laboratory services, discovery services and a top global provider of Phase III clinical trial management services.



“Apprenticeships have allowed us to really focus on the skills we need within our company and allow us to develop employees for the future; they provide talent routes into the company and also sector for people who may not have been able to enter the science sector previously.”

Robert Watts, European Apprenticeship and Talent Programme Manager

What is the company’s particular skills challenge?

In order for us to maintain the high level of skills required for us to carry out our various processes it is key for us to create skills and talent pathways within our company.

How important are apprenticeships to develop future managers and leaders, as well as to upskill?

Apprenticeships form a key part of a number of our development programmes such as Women in Leadership and our Managing Essentials programmes, and enable us to create pathways from Team Leader all the way up to MBA level. It helps us to blend internal learning with external academic learning whilst ensuring that our employees develop the competencies and skills required for future workload.

How easy was it to take on apprentices?

Once we had identified the pathways and how we wanted the programmes to run, we found it was easy to take on apprentices.

Would you recommend this route?

Yes – this is a key part of our skills strategy.

What Apprenticeship Standards have you utilised?

We have used the following:

- Lab Tech
- Lab Scientist
- Data Analyst
- Data Scientist
- Customer Service
- Health Care Practitioner
- Business Administration
- Team Leader
- Chartered Manager
- MBA Senior Leader
- Associate Project Manager

What skills were developed/boosted?

We have developed a wide variety of skills including leadership, communication, technical skills and have developed individual drive.

What are the business benefits of recruiting apprentices?

Benefits have included a reduction in wages for developing entry-level skilled staff, clear progression routes, closing of the gender pay gap, retention, newer skills, external competency assessments.

Does your organisation undertake CPD for existing staff (eg seminars, workshops, e-learning)?

Yes - Covance is a learning organisation. We are committed to creating, acquiring, sharing and transferring knowledge. We have a number of learning programmes across both STEM and non STEM disciplines.

What is the next part of your skills journey?

The creation of new apprenticeship trailblazers and the role out of programmes across sites as well as additional feeder programmes.