



Management Trainee – Spring/Autumn 2025 intake

MDS is the UK's foremost food industry management training provider. Founded in 1986 as a not-for-profit membership organisation, we create a pipeline of well-trained, capable leaders to work in all aspects of the food supply chain.

Fast-track your career in the food and fresh produce industry with MDS. **Apply now for our Spring 2025 or October 2025 intake** and gain unique practical experience and coaching, empowering you to lead the future of the industry.

The MDS Graduate program stands out from the rest. Designed for university leavers with leadership potential, it challenges from the start. Trainees develop their leadership skills in roles with real responsibility in several different companies during the two-year programme. At the same time, you will work towards a Level 5 Leadership and Management qualification, Operations and Departmental Manager, accredited by the Chartered Management Institute.

MDS Members are industry-leading businesses and represent all aspects of the food, fresh produce, horticulture and agriculture supply chain, from growers to supermarkets. During your two years at MDS, you will undertake at least three placements of 6 – 12 months in Member companies, giving you the broadest possible opportunity and experience. This allows you to explore your strengths, motivation and ideal fit without making a long-term commitment to one role or business.

You will be given time off by your placement to attend the modular training necessary to achieve our formal leadership qualification specific to the food industry. Throughout the programme, you will also be supported with mentoring to help you reach your potential.

As our Members are based around the UK (and some overseas) you should expect to relocate for each new placement. The roles available cover the full range of disciplines, from marketing to engineering, operations to HR, logistics to business planning. You may find that you spend six months running a project in a food processing plant and then move to a grower organising harvesting and analysis. What you can be sure of is that whichever roles you undertake, you will be expected to deliver results: MDS trainees have a reputation for achieving objectives through creative problem-solving.

At the end of the programme, our Members are invited to make offers of permanent roles to our trainees, which usually results in every individual securing employment. MDS alumni now number over 500 and hold senior positions in many leading businesses.

To be considered for MDS, you will need to demonstrate leadership potential. Whilst academic achievement is important, and most of our trainees have achieved at least a 2:1 degree, it is not the primary basis on which we select our trainees. We are interested in hard-working, highly motivated people who can develop their own ideas, set realistic goals and lead others.

This is a fast-paced industry in which salaries are rising quickly. Trainees are employed by MDS at £26,000 per annum in year one, rising to £28,000 in year two.

MDS plays an important part in promoting the food supply chain as an exciting career choice. We look for the skills and attitudes that meet the needs of this fast-paced industry and each person is carefully mentored to ensure they reach their potential.

Benefits

- Tax free relocation allowance of £500 for each relocation making it a potential £1000 extra per year
- Chartered Management Institute approved qualification
- Dedicated mentoring
- 28 days holiday
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Interest free starter loan

How to apply:

Secure a position before or after taking a gap year.

MDS recruit 60+ graduates each year, with intakes starting in April and October. You can apply at any time through our website, and we interview for positions throughout the year.

There are three stages of the application process:

- 1) Website Application – no testing, it takes around 30/40 minutes to complete
- 2) Telephone Interview
- 3) Virtual Assessment Centre

If you are ready to become part of a network of future leaders on the fast track to career success, apply now:

<https://www.mds-ltd.co.uk/careers/apply/graduate-scheme-application/>

To apply the candidate must, by the start of their employment, have permission to work in the UK and be able to relocate every six months.

Trainees benefit from up to four secondments with many being in rural locations, please be aware that public transport is not usually a viable option. All trainees will be responsible for their travel arrangements relating to their secondment and the inability to achieve this may result in a secondment not being able to be offered.