

STACEY WALKER

CIVIL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

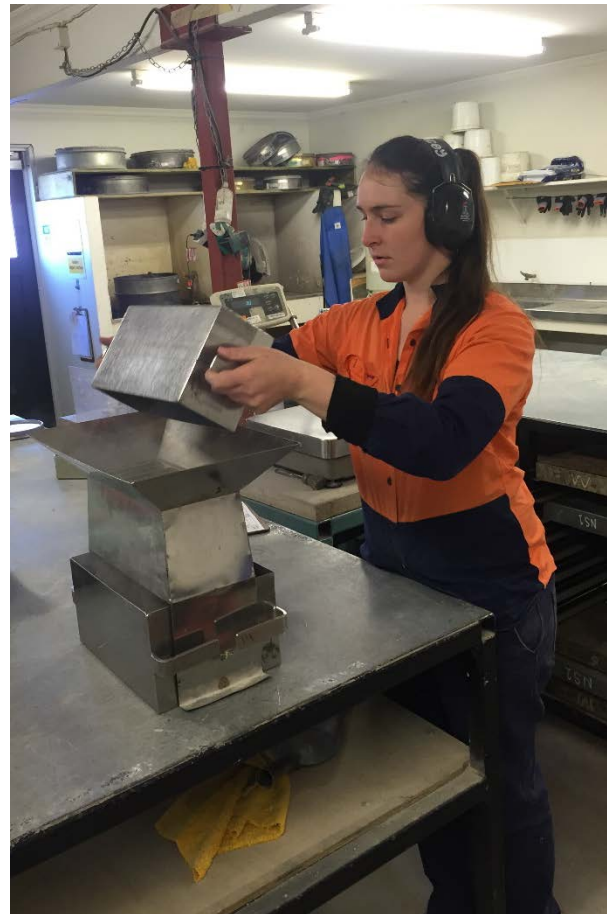
Stacey Walker was working as a pharmacy dispensary technician when she spotted an ad on Seek for a laboratory technician at Fulton Hogan. Despite not even knowing what a civil engineering testing laboratory did, Stacey was intrigued and decided to apply. A job offer and two and a half years later, Stacey is really going places in her career. In fact, she's been so successful that she has just been crowned Trainee of the Year by the Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ) Waikato branch. "I was really shocked when I won," Stacey says, "But it was great to have my achievements recognised."

Working as a civil laboratory technician has been a real eye-opener for Stacey. "Very few people have even heard of a lab technician, which is a shame because it's a great career," she explains. "There is such a variety of work here. That was something that was really missing when I was working at the pharmacy. Some days I'm out onsite collecting samples and others I'm in the lab performing tests. We test a wide range of materials including aggregate, bitumen, asphalt and soil. Most of the tests are to ensure that materials meet industry specifications. Because materials vary so hugely, each test is different – even if you're following the same procedure."

One of the biggest surprises to Stacey was that you don't necessarily need a science qualification to get a foot in the door. "You can learn everything you need on the job," she explains. "My employer encouraged and supported me to gain industry qualifications, which have a large science component. So far I've achieved a Level 4 Laboratory Technician with a strand in Aggregate. I'm now working towards the Level 5 Senior Technician qualification."

Stacey continues, "The Technician qualifications are very interesting and relevant to my job. I've learned so much – especially on the science side of things. Both of the qualifications are done entirely on-job, and the workload has been manageable. I do most of my book work during the winter months when we're a bit quieter in the lab."

Working towards her qualifications on-job meant that Stacey has been able to maintain a good work life balance and still have time for her hobbies. She's a Blue Belt at Jiu Jitsu, and also enjoys indoor netball and photography.



Stacey says that she would definitely recommend a career as a laboratory technician. “If you’re good at multi-tasking, patient, precise and good at following instructions, then it could be the perfect career. An interest in science is also a bonus. If you can tick all of those boxes I’d say ‘go for it’ and you won’t be disappointed.”