

MR. DERMOT CAHALAN

**SYSTEMS ENGINEER
PARKER AEROSPACE
BRISTOL
UK**

www.parker.com



Education and Training

→ B. Eng. (Hons) Aeronautical Eng, University of Limerick, Ireland, 2004

Current Position

Title	Dates	Employer
Systems Engineer	2008-Present	Parker Aerospace, Bristol, UK

Previous Positions

Title	Dates	Employer
Systems Engineer	2006-2008	Airbus UK
Graduate Engineer	2004-2006	Filton, Bristol, UK

"Home" Town(s)/County(s)

Terryglas, Co. Tipperary

Please describe your current job

I currently work for Parker Aerospace, an American company who supply, design and manufacture aircraft systems. Airbus is one of our major customers. I predominately work within fuel system development. My role is to liaise with Airbus in order to understand their system requirements and then communicate those requirements back to our hardware/software design teams in New York. I'm based in Bristol but I get to spend plenty of time in New York.

To date, I've led the development of FL10, which was a software upgrade for the A340-500/600 fuel system. I've also produced the top-level system design for the A350 Fuel Gauging System.

Please describe your career path since graduating with your B.Eng. Aeronautical Eng.

I joined the Airbus Graduate Development Program in September 2004 shortly after graduation from UL. It was a two year international leadership program which gave me the opportunity to work within different divisions across Airbus. I worked within Fuel System Development, Continuous Product Development, Flight Test, Wing Manufacturing and Wing Design.

Over the two years I had opportunity to work some of the most respected engineers in the business and travel all over Europe. The highlight was undoubtedly the 2006 Farnborough Airshow, where I **had the honour of escorting Prime Minister Tony Blair** on a tour of the A380 flight test aircraft.

In September 2006 I returned to the Fuel Systems department to work on the design of the A400M Air-to-Air refuelling system. After completing the conceptual design phase in 2008 I took responsibility for managing the avionic interfaces between the A400M Fuel System and all other aircraft systems. My role was to ensure that when the fuel system was connected to aircraft that it successfully talked to the other aircraft systems. This gave me the opportunity to liaise with 16 different design teams located across France, Germany and Spain.

What made you decide to study Aeronautical Engineering at UL?

I choose my degree based on what sounded most interesting on the CAO form... I knew I wanted to do engineering but wasn't sure which type! I knew the first year was quite general so I could easily change. But I liked it!

Are you glad you did?

Yes, I had a great time in UL and met my best friends there.

I've had extremely enjoyable career to date. My career has given the opportunity to travel the world, be involved in very high profile engineering projects and even meet Prime Ministers. I can't complain!

What did you most enjoy about studying at UL - academically, and also non-academically?

I loved the sporting facilities.

The social life was brilliant.

Academically the course offered great variety - it was constantly interesting.

Where did you do your COOP?

FLS Aerospace. Dublin.

I had a brilliant time. I was living the student lifestyle in Dublin but I had an income!

What advice would you give school-goers considering choosing Aeronautical Engineering?

Choosing Aeronautical Engineering will open the door to a career within Aerospace.

Aerospace can be a fantastically satisfying place to work.

It gives a tremendous sense of pride to be involved in an aircraft development and then see the fruits of your labour hurtling down a runway. Very few professions can give that.

In addition, it does offer an excellent work-life balance. Most engineers will work 37 hours and have a completely free weekend.

Aviation is a continuously growing sector, but it is not a hugely profitable business. You can be quite confident of having a well-paid and secure job, but it probably won't offer the dizzy salaries of investment banking, management consultancy etc...

Choosing Aeronautical Engineering will not constrain you to a career within Aerospace. In terms of career potential it can be held on a par with any engineering degree. An engineering degree will open a huge variety of career routes. The advantage of Aeronautical Engineering over many other engineering degrees is that it is really interesting - why not spend your time studying what you will enjoy.

What advice would you give future graduates of Aeronautical Engineering?

Take the time and effort to think about what you really want to do with your life.

Take advice from as many people as you can and keep an open mind.

Don't feel constrained - an engineering degree opens many doors.

The greatest asset you can have in your career is enthusiasm and motivation - that comes from having a clear idea of what you want.