

Santina Bunting

BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Civil Engineering



Progression pathway



GCSEs at King Edward VI Camp Hill Grammar School



BTEC L3 National Diploma in Civil Engineering at Solihull College and University Centre



Level 6 degree apprenticeship in Civil Engineering whilst working

1 How do you think BTEC helped get you where you are now?

BTEC programmes place a strong emphasis on practical skills and hands-on learning so through undertaking my Level 3 BTEC in Civil Engineering, I have gained practical skills and a deep understanding of the practical aspects of engineering. It has helped to contextualise the work that I do when undertaking my apprenticeship as the courses content was highly relevant to the demands of the workplace. This in turn helped me to complete tasks correctly and more onto more complicated tasks. As BTECs are a recognised qualification, my successful completion of the course will help me to get into my chosen university, where I can continue to progress my education.

2 What was your BTEC experience like?

My BTEC experience was different from a regular full-time student as I was studying my BTEC part time alongside doing my Level 3 Civil Engineering apprenticeship at Arup. This entailed going into college one day a week and had a reduced number of topics in my course due to the part time nature of it.

My BTEC course included a diverse blend of assessment methods. It included a combination of written coursework assessments and examinations, along with engaging classroom sessions and hands-on practical experiments conducted outdoors. I enjoyed this approach to learning as the variety of experiences made the course more enjoyable.



Being the only one out of 150 students in year 11 to undertake a BTEC qualification as part of an apprenticeship, was the best decision I could ever make.



What top 5 skills did you gain from your BTEC?



Digital skills



Organisation



Time management



Problem solving



Communication

3 How is studying BTEC preparing you for your future career?

Studying a Level 3 BTEC in Civil Engineering has been an invaluable step in preparing me to progress onto higher education and continuing down the career pathway that I have set for myself.

My BTEC has provided an excellent foundation for my academic pursuits at university. The comprehensive coursework and practical experience I gained

have given me a head start in understanding some of the key concepts and principles of civil engineering. My course complemented the practical work I do at Arup by allowing me to grasp the underlying principles and theories that support the real-world projects and challenges I encounter in my job. ▶



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4 What did you like most about taking a BTEC?

One of the most appealing aspects of my BTEC experience was being surrounded by a diverse group of individuals from various engineering companies and backgrounds, whether they were undergoing a complete career change and upskilling or those who had finished secondary school like me. It just showed to me the fact that BTECs are for anyone regardless of age or background.

I appreciated that the coursework was not solely theoretical but also included hands-on experiences and projects that closely mirrored the challenges encountered in professional engineering settings.

5 Why would you recommend BTEC?

BTEC programmes are designed with a strong focus on practical, real-world application. This emphasis on practical skills and knowledge aligns perfectly with the demands of the engineering industry and other sectors.

Another advantage of BTECs programmes, as potentially opposed to A levels, are that they are tailored to prepare students for the workforce, which I found extremely valuable. The coursework, assignments, and assessments are directly relevant to the skills and competencies required in various careers. This approach, I believe, helps someone to experience an easier transition from education to the professional world.

Lastly, BTEC programmes offer a degree of flexibility by allowing students to choose from a range of modules and tailor their learning to their specific interests and career goals. I believe this flexibility is beneficial as it allows students to focus on areas of subjects that they are very passionate about.

6 Which skills did you gain from your BTEC?

During my BTEC course, I acquired and developed a range of skills that have proven to be very valuable in my academic and professional journey.

Firstly, my digital skills and competency have increased through gaining proficiency in using software like Revit to render and create 3D models of various buildings. This skill is vital when visualising and designing structures, which is essential in the field of civil engineering.

Balancing a four-day workweek with academic responsibilities has significantly helped to improve my organisational skills. I became efficient at managing my time effectively, ensuring that I completed assignments within their deadlines and reserved time for exam preparation which allowed me to maintain my work-study balance.

Through my BTEC course, I deepened my understanding of engineering-specific concepts, principles, and practices, as well as improving my problem-solving skills when undertaking mathematical problems or doing practical experiments outside, which I transferred to my everyday tasks.

Lastly through doing group projects, presentations, and discussions within my BTEC course, I have improved my ability to convey and communicate technical information clearly and concisely.

