

# Charlie James Williams

## BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business

APEX COLLEGE - LONDON



### What made you choose a BTEC Higher National?

I chose the BTEC Higher National because of its flexibility and practical structure. At the time, I was already involved in entrepreneurial ventures, so it was important for me to follow a qualification that allowed me to balance my academic development alongside ongoing professional responsibilities. The course offered a clear pathway to gain industry-relevant knowledge while continuing to apply what I was learning in real-world business settings. This combination made the BTEC Higher National an ideal choice, as it supported both my education and my entrepreneurial ambitions.

### Why was this course the right fit for you?

This course was the right fit for me because it strongly aligned with my practical and application-focused learning style. The emphasis on real-world case studies, projects, and discussions allowed me to directly connect academic theory with my entrepreneurial experiences. There were several moments during the course where I could immediately apply what I was learning to my own ventures, and that's when I knew I had chosen the right path. The ability to test ideas, analyse real business challenges, and reflect on outcomes in an academic setting made the learning experience both relevant and impactful.

### How has the HN helped you move toward your career goals?

The BTEC Higher National has played a key role in supporting my long-term career goals by strengthening both my strategic thinking and practical business skills. It has provided me with a

“

The BTEC Higher National gave me the flexibility to continue building professionally while developing the academic foundation needed for long-term credibility and success in the business world.”

### Progression pathway

-  A level in Business at Barking Abbey School
-  BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business at Apex College, London
-  Planning to begin Level 6 BSc (Hons) top-up in Finance, International Relations, International Business

solid academic foundation while allowing me to continue developing my entrepreneurial projects alongside my studies. Through the programme, I have gained a deeper understanding of business planning, decision-making, and problem-solving, all of which have directly supported my professional ambitions. The qualification has also enhanced my credibility, giving me the confidence to pursue new opportunities and take my career to the next level. ►

## Have you used what you've learned in real-life or work situations?

Yes, I have consistently applied what I've learned from the BTEC Higher National in real-life and professional situations. The programme encouraged me to analyse real business challenges, which meant I could directly apply theories and frameworks to my entrepreneurial ventures. From strategic planning and market analysis to evaluating risks and making informed decisions, the knowledge gained through the course has supported my day-to-day work. This practical application reinforced my learning and helped me develop a more structured and confident approach to managing real-world business challenges.

## What would you say to someone who's unsure what to do next — maybe they didn't get into uni or are rethinking things?

I would encourage them not to compare their journey to anyone else's. Everyone progresses at a different pace, and success doesn't follow a single, fixed route. What matters most is choosing a pathway that allows you to keep learning and moving forward. A BTEC Higher National can be a great option for those who are rethinking their plans, as it offers a flexible and practical route into higher education while keeping future options open. Whether you take time to explore your interests, change direction, or build experience alongside your studies, none of it is wasted if you are gaining skills, confidence, and clarity about your goals.

## What new opportunities has the HN opened up for you?

The BTEC Higher National has opened up a range of new opportunities for me, both academically and professionally. It has provided a clear pathway for progression into further study, giving me the confidence and foundation to pursue higher-level qualifications. At the same time, the programme has reinforced my professional credibility and supported my ongoing development, enabling me to work toward recognised professional certifications. Overall, it has equipped me with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to take the next steps in my career and academic journey with clarity and purpose.

## What's been the best part of your HN experience?

The flexibility of the BTEC Higher National has been the most valuable aspect of my experience at Apex College. The course is structured in a way that allows students to balance academic commitments alongside professional or entrepreneurial responsibilities, without compromising the quality of learning. This flexibility meant I could continue developing my ventures while progressing academically, making the programme both practical and highly supportive of my personal and professional growth.

## How has your confidence or mindset changed since starting the course?

Since starting the BTEC Higher National, my confidence and mindset have grown significantly. The programme has given me the knowledge, skills, and practical experience to approach challenges with a more strategic and solution-focused mindset.

I now feel more capable of balancing multiple responsibilities, making informed decisions, and taking calculated risks in both my academic and entrepreneurial pursuits. The course has reinforced the belief that with the right support and structure, I can successfully manage my studies while continuing to grow professionally.

## What are your future plans or career ambitions?

My long-term ambition is to continue building a career within the financial services and technology sector while strengthening my governance expertise. In the near term, I plan to progress onto a top-up degree, which will further support this objective and provide a solid academic foundation for future opportunities. Looking further ahead, my goal is to combine strong academic qualifications with professional experience to operate effectively within regulated, board-level environments. The BTEC Higher National has been an essential stepping stone in this journey, equipping me with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue both further study and professional growth. ■