

Matthew Mortimer

BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business

APEX COLLEGE - LONDON



What made you choose a BTEC Higher National?

After completing Sixth Form, I initially went straight into employment. While I gained valuable work experience, I soon realised the long-term benefits of further academic qualifications, particularly the opportunities that come with having a degree. I wanted to enhance my career prospects and develop a stronger foundation in business, so I decided to pursue a BTEC Higher National at Apex College, London Campus. The programme offered the perfect balance of practical skills and theoretical knowledge, allowing me to progress confidently towards my future career goals while continuing to grow personally and professionally.

Why was this course the right fit for you?

The course was a perfect fit for my learning style because it combined interactive classroom sessions with practical opportunities to apply new knowledge immediately. I particularly appreciated how real-life case studies were integrated throughout the programme, allowing me to see how the concepts we learned could be applied in real-world business scenarios. I remember a moment during a group project when I could directly implement the theories we had studied, and it all clicked, I realised this was exactly the kind of learning environment that worked for me. The mix of hands-on activities, discussions, and real-world examples made me confident that I had chosen the right path to develop both my skills and my career. ►

“

Completing my HNC and HND at Apex College London has been a defining step in my journey, giving me the knowledge, confidence, and direction to take my next leap.”

Progression pathway

- ↓ A levels in Economics and Business at West Hatch High School
- ↓ Level 4 Diploma for Financial Advisers (DipFA) at London Institute of Banking & Finance
- ↓ Employment - Director of Funds at Arvella Fund
- ↓ BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business at Apex College, London
- ↓ Planning to begin Level 6 BSc (Hons) top-up in Financial Services or Business Management

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

The BTEC Higher National has been instrumental in helping me build a strong foundation for my career. Completing the programme, and later progressing to the top-up year at university, has allowed me to establish a professional profile that stands out. In the financial industry, employers place a high value on formal qualifications, and having the HN has given me a competitive edge. Beyond credentials, the programme has also strengthened my practical skills, confidence, and understanding of real-world business challenges. I now feel better prepared to take on future opportunities and progress toward my long-term career goals with clarity and determination.

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

I have already applied many of the skills and knowledge from the programme in real workplace situations. For example, learning about external factors affecting businesses such as economic trends, regulatory changes, and market competition has helped me understand the broader environment in which my organisation operates. This knowledge has been particularly useful when navigating changes in the workplace, allowing me to respond more confidently and make informed decisions. Additionally, the practical approach of the programme, including case studies and interactive activities, meant I could translate theoretical concepts directly into my work. I now feel better equipped to tackle real-world challenges, contribute to team projects more effectively, and approach workplace problems with a strategic mindset.

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 overwhelm themselves by trying to figure out the entire journey at once. It's completely okay not to see the full path straight away. Instead, focus on identifying your next step and take it one stage at a time. Choosing a route like a BTEC Higher National can provide clarity, structure, and confidence, even if your long-term plans are still developing. What matters most is continuing to

move forward, gaining skills and qualifications along the way, and trusting that each step will help shape your future direction.

What new opportunities has the HN opened up for you?

The BTEC Higher National has opened up new academic and professional opportunities for me, particularly by developing my ability to write critically. Before starting the programme, I had never been required to analyse and evaluate information to such a high standard. Through the HN, I learned how to approach complex case studies with a structured and critical mindset. This skill has significantly improved my confidence and academic performance, enabling me to break down challenging scenarios, apply theory effectively, and present well-supported arguments. These abilities have not only prepared me for further study but have also strengthened my professional skill set, which I know will be valuable throughout my career.

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

The best part of my BTEC Higher National experience has been the teachers and support staff. Their dedication, guidance, and encouragement have made the journey both enjoyable and inspiring, creating a supportive learning environment where I always felt motivated to succeed. Their approachability and commitment to student success made the programme feel engaging and rewarding, and the time truly passed in the blink of an eye. Having such strong academic and pastoral support has played a significant role in shaping my confidence and helping me achieve my goals.

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

Since starting the course, my confidence in my future direction has grown significantly. The programme has provided me with the knowledge I need now, while also giving me the flexibility and strong foundation required to take my next steps with confidence. Rather than feeling uncertain about what comes next, I now have a clearer mindset and a sense of readiness to progress, knowing that the skills ►

and understanding I've gained will support me as I take the next leap in my academic and professional journey.

What are your future plans or career ambitions?

Alongside my studies, I have been working with an investment fund, gaining valuable industry experience while developing my academic knowledge. As I progress to my top-up year at university, I am looking forward to continuing my journey with the organisation and building on the skills I have developed through the BTEC Higher National. The programme has provided me with a strong foundation in business and finance, enabling me to contribute more confidently in a professional environment. I am excited to further develop my expertise during my top-up year and beyond, with the long-term ambition of establishing a successful career within the investment and financial services sector. ■