

Mia Sandham

BTEC Higher National Certificate in Electrical/Electronic Engineering

SOLIHULL COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY CENTRE



What made you choose a BTEC Higher National?

It was always my plan to go into higher education after my A Levels. After a great deal of thought, I felt a degree apprenticeship was the best route for me, giving me the best of both worlds: gaining practical work experience while studying part-time towards a degree.

The BTEC Higher National is the first step in this five-year process towards completing my degree.

Why was this course the right fit for you?

On completion of my A Levels, I was lucky enough to secure an engineering degree apprenticeship at AtkinsRéalis.

AtkinsRéalis has links with Solihull College & University Centre, giving me the opportunity to work full-time as an engineer while completing my academic studies part-time.

As I am dyslexic, a more hands-on, practical style of learning is more beneficial for my development. Solihull College & University Centre has been able to support me with my learning needs.

“My BTEC Higher National in Electrical/Electronic Engineering has given me academic and practical skills, providing me with the initial building blocks towards my degree.”

Progression pathway

- ↓ A Level Maths, Physics, Chemistry, and AS Level EPQ
- ↓ BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Electrical/Electronic Engineering
- ↓ Foundation Degree in Electrical/Electronic Engineering at Oxford Brookes University
- ↓ BEng (Hons) Electrical/Electronic Engineering at Oxford Brookes University

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

During my BTEC, I completed a module on PLCs, which gave me an insight into how they operate and a greater understanding of their internal architecture. I was able to relate this knowledge to the PLCs I use at work.

The knowledge gained from the CAD unit enabled me to produce engineering drawings to British Standards.

What would you say to someone who's unsure what to do next?

Education is an ever-evolving process, and in recent years more opportunities have developed to allow individuals to achieve their goals, whether studying full-time to become

an engineer or undertaking an apprenticeship route. It's a case of "What works best for you." So, my advice is to explore all options.

What new opportunities has the BTEC Higher National opened up for you?

The BTEC Higher National allows for continued study and progression onto the next stage of my degree apprenticeship. Having moved away from Cumbria to Birmingham, I have not only developed new academic skills but also met new people and made new friendships as I carve out a life in a new city. This has increased my confidence both professionally and socially. Not just a new career, but a new way of life!

What's been the best part of your BTEC Higher National experience?

My graduation — getting dressed up in my cap and gown and celebrating my success with family and friends, along with winning a special recognition award. Meeting new people and developing new friendships.

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

My mindset and confidence have changed dramatically. Moving to the second biggest city in the country from a small town on the edge of the Lake District was a big step. I have developed a new life, new skills, and new friendships while working full-time. Luckily, it has all gone to plan, and I am enjoying all aspects of my new life, which has brought about an abundance of confidence and, most importantly, a very happy mindset.

What are your future plans or career ambitions?

Continuing my studies at Solihull College & University Centre, working towards my BEng Electrical/Electronic Degree while completing my Level 6 apprenticeship with AtkinsRéalis. Gaining valuable work experience will allow me to become a Chartered Engineer. ■

