

BTEC ALUMNI CASE STUDY

KALE SHOKAR

Former BTEC Level 3 Engineering and Manufacturing learner at Exeter College

Current position: Assistant Highway Asset Technician at Devon County Council



What is your current role?

At present I work as an Assistant Highway Asset Technician at Devon County Council. Working for the local government during this time has been non-stop. As part of my role I had the opportunity to volunteer during the pandemic. I supported with the set-up of the Nightingale Hospital in Exeter, which was built to help combat the outbreak. Seeing the problems caused by the pandemic, I was quick to volunteer my services in order to help in any way that I could.

Additionally, within my team, I volunteered to distribute PPE to vulnerable and at-risk colleagues. This involved visiting different parts of Devon to deliver essential PPE, such as masks, hand sanitiser and gloves.

Furthermore, I am a STEM ambassador. Being a STEM ambassador is probably the most satisfying aspect of my career as I enjoy engaging young people. This role has allowed me to encourage learners studying these subjects to progress into STEM-related careers, thus, inspiring the next generation of STEM professionals. During the pandemic, we have been hosting online webinars for learners to join and participate in.

How did your BTEC qualification help prepare you for this current situation?

Whilst studying my BTEC, I was involved in several group projects. These projects enhanced my team-building skills and emphasised the need to work together. Whilst working as a volunteer building the Nightingale Hospital in Exeter, these skills were crucial. This work required several small teams to collate their ideas and projects in order to create to one final product. The team-working skills I learnt during my BTEC helped me tremendously!

One of the units in my BTEC was Health and Safety in the Engineering Workplace. This unit has been very beneficial as my job requires me to make constant risk assessments. It has been especially useful during the pandemic as I carried out micro risk assessments whilst working alone.

Did you feel well prepared as a BTEC learner when you moved onto your apprenticeship?

Thanks to my BTEC course and tutors, I was prepared for work. The way the BTEC is structured is to simulate the real world of work. BTEC allowed me to meet other like-minded individuals, which has increased my network and helped me grow as an individual.

Do you feel there has been an opportunity for learning/professional development during this time of crisis?

The pandemic has allowed me to improve my communication skills when meeting face to face hasn't been possible. This skill is something I used to struggle with tremendously, however, I have been able to gain confidence when using online methods of communication. This experience will benefit me during my career, especially in this age of technology. The challenges of the pandemic have made me appreciate how lucky I am and allowed me to strive to help others who aren't as fortunate. It has shown me what I am capable of and how small actions can make a massive difference to people's lives.

What was your own Results Day like?

When I passed my BTEC course, I was over the moon! I had conditional offers from several apprenticeships and universities. However, knowing that I had the grades to pursue what I truly wanted to do was life changing. It was fulfilling to see all my hard work pay off. The feeling of gratitude for my tutors was immense, without their support and guidance I wouldn't be where I am today. I decided to take the apprenticeship route as I am a practical learner. This gave me the chance to study whilst also applying the theory to real life scenarios.

I wish all learners that are getting their results all the best and I hope you achieve what you deserve!

With thanks to Exeter College and Kale