

Fitzgerald Chikoba

BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Civil Engineering at Leeds College of Building

Current position: **Apprentice for Leeds City Council - Highways and Transportation Department**



How have you managed your studies during the pandemic?

Due to the pandemic we were unable to attend college, studying from home became the new normal. At first, this was difficult due to the lack of face to face interaction with my tutors and colleagues. However, I quickly adapted to studying at home. By using Microsoft Teams, setting up a suitable learning environment and creating a clear structure to my day enabled me to focus. We live in a world where most people rely on technology, I used that to my advantage by attending the online classes. The BTEC course has improved my competency with different computer software packages which helped me when using Microsoft Teams and other methods to communicate easily with everyone online.

Leeds College of Building has been very supportive during this time, ensuring there is open communication whilst we are working from home. My BTEC tutors set regular meetings on Microsoft Teams, allowing us to discuss work and ask any questions we had. The communications skills I learnt during my BTEC really helped me to correspond with my tutors during this pandemic.

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

My BTEC in Civil Engineering has proved useful throughout this pandemic, I have been able to build upon my organisation, communication, and problem-solving skills learnt on the BTEC course. Being able to stay focused and organised whilst working from home has ensured I finish my assignments on time and stay disciplined to complete my college work to the best of my ability.

What inspired you to want to go into key worker supporting industry?

Civil Engineering is one of the best industries to work in for numerous reasons. We live in a constantly growing and evolving world therefore demand for infrastructure is also increasing. I love that I can help shape the world around me to meet the demands of the future, whilst also working in a sector I enjoy. Furthermore, I find it rewarding to give back to the community that I live in by working on schemes around the city.

If you were to recommend a BTEC, what are the reasons you would give?

I would recommend BTEC as you gain suitable hands on experience in the industry you are studying for. This is great for your development, not only do you gain a qualification, you will also be industry-ready. BTEC will ensure you obtain the skills employers require; with a BTEC your CV will stand out.

Do you have plans for further study?

The next step in my career is completing a BTEC Higher National in Civil Engineering, as part of my Higher-Level Apprenticeship. Once I have undertaken this, I am hoping to progress on to the Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering. In terms of the industry experience, I am continuously improving my knowledge which will enable me to progress further into larger projects and supervise bigger schemes in the future.

With thanks to Leeds College of Building and Fitzgerald