

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR DIGITAL IT APPRENTICESHIPS

Emma Harding
Communications Apprentice,
Brighton Dome

Digital IT Apprenticeship standard: Digital Marketer Level 3, with training provider Creative Process Digital



Make sure you choose the route that you want, rather than the route that everyone else is taking.

I'm a Communications Apprentice at the entertainment venue Brighton Dome. The apprenticeship is split 20% training, 80% work. I have Fridays off for training – whether that's with the provider or at home studying, and the rest of the time I'm in the office.

Day-to-day I'm involved in different aspects of digital marketing, from posting on social media through to publishing blog posts and working on our website. Each member of my team is allocated certain shows or projects to focus on each season.

"I love the variety – there's quite a few things you have to juggle, but that makes the work quite exciting."

I was late to discover apprenticeships. At college it felt like my options were either to get a full-time job or go to university – we were constantly told university was the next step. Therefore, after completing my art and design course at college, I started a degree in fashion communication at the University of Brighton.

My course was also more creative than I'd expected, and I'd hoped to gain more technical skills and experience. Therefore, after completing my first year I left, extending the hours of my part-time retail job while I figured out what I wanted to do.

"University isn't perfect for everyone and people need to stop looking at apprenticeships as a secondary option."

Although I'd planned to leave, it still felt like a shock to be out in the world without the next thing lined up. The university was there to help me find potential placements, but they were never something I felt I could live off, so they didn't seem like a realistic option. But things changed for me when I spotted an advert for a free digital accelerator course.

I've always naturally been drawn towards graphics and design, but it was only as I learnt about the different digital skill sets that my interest in technology and digital marketing really grew. Over the three-week course we learnt the basics of Photoshop, Illustrator and WordPress. It was also great learning alongside a wide variety of people, from young students like me through to freelancers and business owners who were interested in improving their digital skills.

When I discovered the course's training provider also ran apprenticeships I started to look into what they offered and well, the rest is history!

An apprenticeship was the perfect fit for me, I learn best on the job. I personally think an apprenticeship pushes you harder and you get great workplace experience.

For me, one of the highlights of being an apprentice is getting to apply what you've learnt in your training to the work.

"It's great to see the real-life impact of the work I do, how the blog posts I write or social media I post helps the company."

What did surprise me though, was that I really enjoyed learning to code. I thought it would be something I'd do the bare minimum in, as it looked so complicated and confusing. However, I really enjoyed learning it – it's almost like learning a different language.

I'm really enjoying working here and hope that when my apprenticeship ends I'll have the opportunity to stay on in digital marketing. If that doesn't happen though, I think I may well look into going into coding. That's something I never thought I'd say!

"I really enjoyed learning to code – it's like learning a different language!"

Top tips for would-be apprentices:

- Originally, I chose university because I just didn't know what else was out there. Spend time looking into your options.
- Whether you pick university or an apprenticeship, make sure you do it for you, and not just because it feels like the choice everyone else is making.
- Think about how you work – if you enjoy learning in a more practical way an apprenticeship might be the better option for you.
- Don't hesitate to ask people for help and information when thinking about what to do.
- Time management is really important, it's key to balancing your work and training.

www.bcs.org/apprenticeships



BCS The Chartered Institute for IT
First Floor Block D North Star House North Star Avenue Swindon SN2 1FA
T +44(0)1793 417 417 | **www.bcs.org**

© BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT is the business name of The British Computer Society
(Registered charity no.292786) 2018

If you require this document in accessible format please call +44 (0) 1793 417 600