

Elizabeth Hayes ECDL Level 1 and 2



‘ECDL gave me the confidence and belief that I could find employment because of the skills I had gained.’

Elizabeth Hayes

When Elizabeth Hayes visited her local training centre to enquire about adult learning, she hadn't been on a computer for around 20 years.

Elizabeth was looking to return to work after years away from employment raising her family. She knew she would have to bring her IT skills up to speed before even entering the job market.

Amethyst, a Nottingham-based **learndirect** centre, recommended that Elizabeth study ECDL at level 1, to give her a basic understanding of the IT used in today's workplace.

This was the start of a learning journey which Elizabeth describes as her 'second chance' and which has led her to full time employment in a role she enjoys as a call centre agent.

'The programme was like baby steps that have given me the chance to start again in today's digital world.'

Elizabeth Hayes

THE BACKGROUND

When Elizabeth Hayes was ready to return to work after raising her family, she was too scared to even look for a job.

'I hadn't used a computer for 20 years,' says Elizabeth, aware that most jobs now required some level of IT skills and that, even for searching and applying for work, she would need basic IT knowledge.

'I felt I had neither the skills nor the confidence to head in the right direction,' says Elizabeth. 'That's why I came to Amethyst. It helped me to break my routine and actually take steps towards getting a job.'

Amethyst asked Elizabeth to take a short diagnostic test and concluded that she should study ECDL Level 1¹, from BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT – the awarding body dedicated to IT qualifications. This would provide her with an ideal introduction to using a computer and the internet.

As the leading international computer skills qualification, ECDL sets the benchmark for digital literacy in training centres around the world. In the UK alone, over 2.5 million people have taken ECDL since 1997.

¹BCS Level 1 Award in IT User Skills (ECDL Essentials)

²BCS Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills (ECDL Extra)

THE JOURNEY

Elizabeth admits that she struggled at first to adjust to her new training routine.

'I'd been out of the working environment for so long,' she says. 'While I found the course relatively easy, remembering it all was quite difficult. The good thing about ECDL is that you can go over the learning as many times as you need, at your own pace, so I soon settled into a training pattern that worked for me.'

ECDL is a modular qualification with learning assessed at the end of each module.

'Having the programme broken down into units was great because the thought of one big test at the end made me nervous,' says Elizabeth.

Achieving ECDL Level 1 gave Elizabeth a real boost to her self-esteem and the belief that her development could – and would – lead to employment.

To progress to the next level, Elizabeth needed to improve her English and Maths. She was determined to keep going so she completed courses in both and then went on to achieve ECDL Level 2² a few months later.

Now Elizabeth works full time as a call centre agent, a role for which IT skills were specified in the job description and discussed at interview.

THE BENEFITS

'Before gaining my BCS qualifications, I wouldn't have even applied for work because of my limited skills,' says Elizabeth. 'Now I'm using a computer full time and I feel confident in what I do. I use Word and Outlook, both programmes I didn't know before my ECDL qualifications. I also use an in-house system which I'd have found impossible if I did not have my new IT knowledge.'

ECDL is available at levels 1, 2 and 3 and covers a wide range of computer applications including email, word processing and spreadsheets.

'Looking back, I realise now just how much my lack of skills and confidence was holding me back in life. I feel like I've been given a second chance - what's more I can now keep up with my kids!'

'Learning at the training centre was so worthwhile,' continues Elizabeth. 'Seeing others around me gaining qualifications encouraged me to keep going. Later in the course, I even found myself helping others as I remembered how hard I'd found it when I started.'

And Elizabeth's advice for anyone wanting to find work but nervous about learning new things? 'Don't think about it, just do it and stick with it.'

To learn more about ECDL, visit [bcs.org/ecdl](https://www.bcs.org/ecdl)