



University of Brighton

Apprenticeship

a view from the inside' the thoughts of a current apprentice

Why did I choose the apprenticeship?

Basically, I loved my job as a Footcare Assistant and I wanted to progress in this area. I wanted the apprenticeship for two main reasons. Firstly, the team I work with are great have a diverse range of knowledge in all areas of podiatry and I've found so far that I get a lot more hands on experience with these experts than most of my cohort who are studying podiatry as a degree. The team at ESHT have been so supportive and I do believe that I would not have done so well in my first year, if it weren't for the continuing support of my colleagues. The second reason I chose the apprenticeship was that I did not want to stop working for three years whilst studying. The apprenticeship course, even though it is hard work and requires me to stay on top of time management, allows me to have what I feel is the perfect work-life-study balance for me to still provide for my family and to be able to still spend time with my family without having to juggle university assignments, a job to support my son and to still be able to spend time with the family while he is still small. Basically, it was a fantastic opportunity and I'm grateful that I got the place so that I could further my career while being a mum.

The main differences between the university course and the apprenticeship?

So far, from what I've seen from the rest of my uni cohort, I have gained more real life experience in the area of podiatry. As working as a FCA first and during holidays coming back to work, I have managed to work more clinical hours with experts in different areas, who are always happy to answer my daft questions. I've witnessed more surgeries, diabetic foot clinics, general clinics and musculoskeletal clinics compared to the rest of my cohort. So when I am in lectures being taught the background knowledge, I find myself thinking, "oh, so that's why we do things like this," rather than wondering why certain things are relevant. It's like knowing what the puzzle picture is going to be, before you complete it.

Did I have enough information before completing it?

Honestly, there were a few glitches at first as it was a new course, but already by year 2 everything has settled down. Communication with both work and the university is great and I know that if I have any issues or queries, there are multiple people I can go to ask for help or information and everyone wants to help to make the best of the apprenticeship course.



What other information would you have wanted?

Nothing really. Everyone has been great at both sides and the support is there.

My most helpful tips prior to starting:

1. Get some experience, even if it is shadowing for a few days in a private clinic or having a conversation with a podiatrist about a typical week (I say week as the job can vary greatly day to day, it's one of the things I love about it). It will help you understand when you start the course what you are aiming for and if it really is for you. I had the light bulb moment and realised on my third day of working with podiatrists that it was definitely the carer for me.
2. Do some reading. There is so much to podiatry. There are so many areas of podiatry that you can branch off in to following the course, see what's out there that could tickle your fancy, you don't have to stick to it (I personally wanted to work with as a Diabetes Specialist Podiatrist before starting the course, but I've loved the anatomy lectures so much that I'm considering going into podiatric surgery, but also forensic podiatry is now also in the front of my mind from the human movement module). I think I'm going to struggle to pick a speciality as I've found everything we've done so far incredibly interesting.
3. Speak to an apprentice podiatrist, they'll tell you that if you're interested, just go for it.