

IBM APPRENTICE WINS REGIONAL AWARD

Josh White knew he didn't want to go to university straight from school – but wasn't too sure what he wanted to do. After trying different career options, a chance conversation encouraged him to look at the opportunities at IBM for people without degrees. To his delight, he discovered they ran apprenticeships – and so began a journey that has just seen Josh become an award-winning apprentice.

Exciting opportunities

IBM was one of the first major organisations to design its own apprenticeship schemes. OCR provide all of the assessment components for the Apprenticeship framework qualifications.

“It sounded ideal... an opportunity for me to learn more and try different roles because I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do...So I applied and got on it.”

Josh admits he had preconceptions about apprenticeships and the kind of fields they were available in. His experience has made him realise just how different the reality today actually is.

He is doing an **Advanced Apprenticeship in ICT** and working as a Technical Solution Specialist – Business Analyst at IBM. He's been working on a very high profile project – one of his client's largest this year. **“I've had the chance to work on a project from day one until it goes live.”** Josh has also had comprehensive support - from his designated Early Professional Manager, a task manager, a 'buddy', and colleagues who are also more than happy to help.

The apprenticeship has offered Josh a combination of benefits. As well as the experience of working, and learning from colleagues with lots of experience, he's also been able

to gain qualifications and has earned more than he thought he would too.

Working and learning

Due to the timescale between his schooling and his apprenticeship, Josh was required to take **Functional Skills in ICT** as part of the apprenticeship. He took this at Highbury College in Portsmouth – who deliver against the set OCR Apprenticeship specification.

Josh has enjoyed the opportunity to give back too. He's a member of the IBM Essential Foundation team and is the Challenges and Workshop Coordinator for other IBM graduates and apprentices.





The West Midlands regional final of the National Apprenticeship Awards, at Edgbaston Cricket Ground, Birmingham, October 2015. From l-r: Sinead Cassidy – OCR Sector Manager, Tina Upstell – Regional Director, Europe, Middle East & Latin America, Highbury College, award-winner Josh White, his father Martyn and Kashif Taj – Josh’s line manager at IBM.

Most recently, this has seen him helping to organise an innovation workshop.

Becoming an award-winner

Inspired by other IBM apprentices who had won awards, Josh enquired about entry into the National Apprenticeship Awards earlier this year – and was delighted when he found out he had been put forward. In October 2015, with his dad, Martyn, Kashif Taj – his IBM Line Manager and Tina Upstell from Highbury College, he attended the West Midlands regional final of the

National Apprenticeship Awards at Edgbaston Cricket Ground, Birmingham organised by the National Apprenticeship Service. As part of our commitment to apprenticeships at OCR, we were proud to have been one of the sponsors for this event.

Josh was surprised and delighted to win the EAL Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year.

“Being a regional winner has been absolutely brilliant.”

Tina Upstell, Regional Director, Europe, Middle East & Latin

America, Highbury College said, **“All the students from IBM are very focused and very well supported by the company. We are absolutely delighted that Josh won... It is more than deserved and he was up against some tough competition.”**

A modern way forward

After starting the programme in early 2013, Josh has just completed his Level 3 Apprenticeship and along with IBM, he’s been working with us on future apprenticeship requirements to help underpin the needs of the Digital Industry.

To find out more

ocr.org.uk/apprenticeships

or call our Customer Contact Centre on **02476 851509**

Alternatively, you can email us on **apprenticeships@ocr.org.uk**