



# Considering studying a BTEC in Construction?

**The construction sector is responsible for over 2 million jobs in the UK**, and now a new generation of architects, designers and construction workers is emerging.

We spoke to Jessica Rayif-Pearson from Harlow College about how her BTEC course prepared her for a career in construction. Jessica also achieved second place in the **MOBIE Home of 2030 Young Person's Design Challenge**, which was completed as part of her BTEC course.

## Why did you choose to study a BTEC in Construction?

When I completed year 11, I already knew that A Levels were not the path for me as I have always enjoyed a more hands-on and independent approach to learning. The Built Environment course stood out to me as it covered multiple job titles in the construction industry, which allowed me to learn about each one and make a final decision about my career.

## What skills have you learnt as part of your BTEC course?

Whilst studying the course I learnt technical skills ranging from using Surveying equipment, CAD functions, Civil Engineering

principles, reading technical drawings, how to solve common mathematical problems which occur on site, understanding the hierarchy of job titles on a site and the responsibilities for each role in a project. The course not only teaches technical skills, but also skills based on how to become successful at work socially.

## How do you think a BTEC prepares you for work in the construction industry?

Studying a BTEC prepares you for the working environment as it focuses on the industry you're aspiring to work in. This gives you more chance of getting a job due to your high standard of industry specific knowledge, compared to someone that has been to sixth form which teaches broader subjects. Once you begin your job in the industry you find that by being taught by a tutor who has already worked in the industry, you get a more realistic approach on what to expect so you are prepared to start.

## What has been the best part of your BTEC course so far?

The best part of my BTEC course was taking part in the MOBIE Home of 2030 Young Person's Design Challenge. The task was to

innovate your own futuristic home for 2030 which supports the current climate. This challenge involved using my imagination and getting creative with building mini prototypes to give a clearer understanding of my vision. Once your idea was finalized you then had to start looking into how you were going to make it work, this includes the material selection, cost, labour and transportation of the design. This is where you had to think realistically. I came in 2nd place for my Innovation 'INTERLOCK' in the 16-18 age category which I am very proud of. This was the best part of the course as it was practical and allowed you to use your imagination and bring your own ideas to life.

### What work experience did you complete and how did you find it?

Whilst studying my BTEC I also took part in work experience at Telford Homes, a construction company building homes around London. This work experience allowed me to get a more in-depth understanding into the different roles within the company as I spent time with multiple people throughout my days there.

I also spent time at London Underground – a railway company where I worked with the Civil engineers who showed me different case studies of works which had been completed on the tracks and issues which they had solved.

### Can you tell us about any particular units you enjoyed whilst studying your BTEC course?

I particularly enjoyed the surveying module as we were given the opportunity to

complete a site survey with a total station, tripod, and target. This was exciting as this is a common practice in construction and would be very relevant to my role. Now at my apprenticeship I have surveyed multiple times and felt comfortable doing so, which is due to the experience I have from doing the module.

### What was been the most challenging thing about your BTEC course?

The most challenging part about completing a BTEC is that the coursework can build up very quickly. This requires you to organise your time effectively to ensure that you can send off your work on schedule and to a good standard. This also helps to prepare you for University/and work.

### How did you get involved in the MOBIE Home of 2030 challenge?

I got involved with the MOBIE Challenge through college as it was part of one of our assignments to design a futuristic building, so we were able to use our designs for the MOBIE challenge and college assignment.

### What are your next steps now that you have completed your BTEC?

Currently I am a 1st year Civil Engineering Apprentice at Mace, which is a head contractor construction company. I work on site four days a week and go to the University of East London one day a week for my degree. When on-site my tasks vary, as you must deal with whatever happens on the day even if it was not planned, this means you must be a well-rounded individual to deal with the unexpected.

## What would you say to someone else thinking of doing a BTEC in Construction?

To anyone considering taking a BTEC in construction I would encourage the decision as I have noticed that companies do not look at down at BTECs compared to A Levels as they give more practical and on the job experience. I would also say that the construction industry has a lot of opportunity in all different sectors so look into the multiple roles.

## What is your perception of the Construction sector now compared to before you started your BTEC course?

Before I started my BTEC I thought that the construction industry was just men labouring on-site every day. After studying my BTEC I realized I was completely wrong as there is so much behind the scenes work which must go on to ensure a project's completion is successful.

## Did you always know what kind of job you wanted to do? Why did you think a BTEC would help with this?

I always knew I couldn't work an office job, I had to do something practical with a sense of excitement which is why I chose a BTEC

as it was different to the school environment, which I struggled with. Construction stood out to me as your work results to something physical and will be standing there for many years as a trophy of your hard work.

## What's been your greatest achievement to date?

My greatest achievement to date is coming 2nd place on my own in the MOBIE challenge. I used a lot of information I learnt on site to help detail and bring my idea to life which had obviously worked well, and it taught me a lot of impactful information.

## Anything else you'd like to tell us?

I am very grateful for BTEC as it allowed me to have a part-time job whilst studying. This gave me experience before starting my career and the opportunity to deal with time management from a young age. This has helped prepare me for my degree apprenticeship, which relies heavily on my time management capabilities.

Find out more about the variety of BTEC Construction qualifications

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