



Student case study: Emma Eastham

Currently studying: BSc (Hons) Animal Science at Reading University

Emma achieved a distinction in her BTEC National Diploma in Animal Management at Reaseheath College. She decided post-GCSEs that a National Diploma would give her the opportunity to gain a more practical based qualification compared to A levels. Emma decided to do the National Diploma because exams weren't her forte and the different approach to learning suited her better. She then looked for a location to study after doing a taster day as part of her rural sciences GCSE.

Emma really enjoyed the stock duty that was part of the National Diploma and the experience in practical animal handling as part of the course. This has stood her in good stead for her current role at the Centre for Dairy Research at Reading University where she works part time alongside studying, to help with the financial cost of Higher Education and gain experience working on a research farm.

Emma decided, during her National Diploma, that she would like to progress onto a veterinary course and looked at the route through taking an Animal Science degree first to give her broader experience. She found out about the course at Reading and the reputation the university has for agriculture, applied and was accepted onto the course. Emma is really enjoying her studies, especially learning more of the scientific theory behind the practical work done in her National Diploma and going on different trips to see part of the Animal Science industry she hasn't experienced before. The biggest challenge to Emma was the somewhat daunting step to take from National Diploma to University and she feels well supported by lecturers, especially those who challenge her to work something out for herself to help develop her own learning maturity. Emma found the different approach to learning at University a challenge, as her National Diploma involved a lot of coursework and less exams, but she feels very well prepared for the coursework that is set as part of her current studies due to the amount of research that she has already done as part of her National Diploma. Overall the step from FE to HE for Emma was easier than she expected it to be and she particularly enjoys the social side to University and being independent!

Emma's advice to anyone thinking about doing a National Diploma would be to thoroughly look into the field you are thinking of going into and looking at routes there that suit your style of learning best (e.g. whether you are a more practical or theoretical learner). Take a look at which qualifications Universities readily accept and see which route will help you achieve the best results.

In the future Emma hopes to go to veterinary college but knows it is very competitive. She is also looking at other options still within the field of animal and veterinary science, knowing that her background of getting a degree as well as having practical experience is being more and more sought after by employers.