



Student Case Study

Name:

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Institution:

University of Surrey

Studying:

BSc (Hons) in Health & Social Care
(Nurse Practitioner – Adult)



"When I left school I had no idea what to do at all. I didn't have any direction and I can't remember too much about having any advice really, there weren't many options so I went straight from school and worked in a factory. Since then I've worked in a number of different roles: as a delivery driver, in retail, as a traffic warden and in hotels. I've always enjoyed the jobs, particularly when I've been working directly with people.

About 8 years ago I started picking up work in a cottage hospital and I really enjoyed the variety, then began working full time in a hospice, providing holistic and respite care for people with life-diminishing illnesses. While I was there I was offered the chance to gain a qualification and I took up the opportunity to do some studying and gain my NVQ3. Timing was very important for me and I feel I've been able to come back to studying when other factors in my life allowed me to. It wasn't right for me straight after school, while I was raising my family, or while there were other pressures in my personal and family life, but all of a sudden I found myself with a little bit of time on my hands and it seemed the right opportunity for me.

The NVQ3 took me a year and started me thinking about the role I play in my work, what I do and the reasons why, but it didn't give me a thorough understanding. I didn't feel it pushed me far enough and I wanted to dig a bit deeper to understand the illnesses rather than just the job. Colleagues at work in the hospice were very encouraging and reassured me I'd be up to it.

Once I knew I wanted to do some higher study, I did most of my research online, but also called the university I wanted to go to and got some advice. It was also helpful to be able to pick the brains of other nurses at the hospice who do some of their training at Surrey and had enjoyed their experiences. I applied through UCAS for a degree course at Surrey University, but also made an application to do an Access Course at my local college so as not to be disappointed. Luckily, I was accepted onto the degree programme with an unconditional offer. I attended a pre-entry day a week or so before the actual course started, and met a number of other students with similar backgrounds to me, which was quite encouraging really! I did have a few worries as I didn't want to come straight onto a degree and be on the back foot, but I don't feel like that at all so far. There's a lot of support available and my tutor is there to guide me with the academic writing.

One thing that has really surprised me is the financial side of things. I always thought that university was never affordable for me, and when I was younger my parents could never afford to send me to university. But now, with the bursaries and loans that are available, financially it's not that much different from what I was getting as a wage. If I'd had known that I was so affordable, that financially it wouldn't be so difficult, maybe I would have tried it earlier.

Looking to the future, I'm keeping my options open at the moment, but I do like the background I come from, and may go back into the hospice or community environment. It's certainly been the right decision for me at this time in my life, I really enjoy it and I'm very excited about what the rest of the course holds for me."