

Apprentice insight: Life as an apprentice at Sanctuary

Meet Faisal, he completed an AAT qualification through an apprenticeship



How did you find your apprenticeship?

I found my apprenticeship through the training provider. I searched 'accountancy apprenticeships' as I have always been great at Maths. I applied for an apprenticeship at Sanctuary, and during the interview I was really impressed with the values Sanctuary holds and a high percentage of apprentices go on to secure full time positions. I also applied for University. I was very fortunate to have been offered a university place and an accountancy apprenticeship at Sanctuary to study the Accountancy Associations Technicians qualification (AAT). This meant I had to make the difficult decision on which to accept. I defied my parents and took the 'risk' and accepted, the apprenticeship offers, and I have not looked back since.

How was your apprenticeship delivered?

My apprenticeship was delivered by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association (WGTA). I attended college one day a week and worked in the office on the other days. Sanctuary implements a buddy system where all apprentices have a colleague, they can seek advice from or have additional support within the working environment. This really helped me to balance my apprenticeship and my work.

What are the benefits of completing an apprenticeship?

For me, the great part about completing an apprenticeship was the knowledge, skills and behaviours I learnt. My apprenticeship spanned three years, and I experienced working in various finance departments across Sanctuary. This allowed me to acquire professional skills within finance, accountancy, and leadership. I built a network with not only my work colleagues at Sanctuary but even wider with other apprentices, training providers and employers. This supported my confidence, communication, and organisation skills too.

Doing an apprenticeship has given me opportunities I would never have imagined. I have been fortunate to be able to attend events such as a round table to meet with MPs and visit the House of Commons to meet MPs. I continue advocating apprenticeships across the West Midlands by sharing my experience at Careers Fairs, and I deliver speeches at Schools and colleges around my successes.

Have you had any memorable achievements?

Because of my hard work, dedication and commitment through my apprenticeship I have been awarded two awards - WGTA Accountancy apprentice of the year and The Worcestershire Apprentice Ambassador of the Year. My parents are very proud of me for completing the apprenticeship programme and today champion my success.



To search for apprenticeship opportunities for you, visit: [Find an apprenticeship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

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Has your apprenticeship expanded your career options?

After completing my apprenticeship programme and becoming AAT qualified, I secured a permanent role at Sanctuary as a Finance Officer. Sanctuary has lots of opportunities for progression and I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to move into Project Management as a Technology Project Manager, where I manage my own projects, from system upgrades to new implementations of Technology. It still involves finances elements and allows me to lean on my accountancy apprenticeship. Sanctuary has been an integral part of my progression and success.



What are your plans for the future?

I would like to stay within project management and expand my portfolio, but I have aspirations to be in a senior manager role. I am currently studying towards the PRINCE2 qualification, and I would like to complete a degree apprenticeship in project management in the future.

What motivates you?

My two biggest motivations in my life are: My religion and my family. They inspire me to be the best I can be professionally and personally and in turn motivate me to inspire and help others.



What is your advice to others?

My advice to others is, always keep your options open and do not see apprenticeships as a “back up plan” but a genuine alternative to university. I am one of many success stories of the apprenticeship pathway. It gives you the opportunity to earn whilst you learn and is real work experience. It allows you to gain recognised qualifications, and enhances your knowledge, skills and networking skills which not only benefit your working life but even outside work (skills such as leadership and communication have assisted me outside of work where I am currently the captain of both my cricket and football teams).

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