



# IT Skills for..... NHS Analysts



Adam Wilks is a Data Analyst from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. In this interview, he describes how the NHS IT Skills Pathway has assisted him with his day to day work.

### **How do your duties involve the use of Microsoft Office/Windows?**

I develop reports for queries within the Hospital and the Trust regarding Pharmaceutical use. The data is generated from the Crystal reports application which isn't very easy to interpret and understand so I use Microsoft Excel to reformat the information.

I also design reports for other users within the trust regarding Pharmaceutical use. I'm given a lot of raw data that comes from our prescribing system that I then reformat in Microsoft Excel to make the information more useable and easier to understand.

### **What did you already know about Microsoft Office/Windows before taking the course?**

I have recently changed job roles from a technical to a more administrative, reporting role. I was already familiar with Excel but had only a basic understanding of what added features it had to offer so when I heard about the Microsoft Office exams I was very keen to improve my knowledge.

### **How did you hear about the NHS IT Skills Pathway?**

I heard about the Microsoft Office exams through our IT training team as they sent out a regular email regarding the courses they were offering and the Microsoft Office ones took my attention. It came at the right time as I was curious to learn more about using Microsoft Office.

### **Which exams have you completed?**

I have completed all of the exams in 2003 and 2007 including the expert exams.

### **Tell us how you went about learning?**

I was initially only interested in Excel so the training team sent me the learning guides and courseware. I started looking at the materials in my home time using the Excel ones as I luckily already had Excel on my home computer. I started reading through the learning in a very relaxed manner in evenings by reading through the guides while the TV was on. I took and passed my first exam which gave me the bug to then carry on with the learning to see what else I could pass. *(Continued on page 2)*

*"I heard about the Microsoft Office exams through our IT training team ..... it came at the right time as I was curious to learn more about using Microsoft Office."*

**For more information about the NHS IT Skills Pathway, please visit our website at:**

<http://www.cfh.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/icd/itskills/pathway>

**Alternatively you can email us at:**

[it.skills@nhs.net](mailto:it.skills@nhs.net)



---

**View Adam's story as part of the NHS  
MOST Video at [www.nhsmost.co.uk](http://www.nhsmost.co.uk)**

---

*(Continued from page 1)* **What was the experience like?**

The exam process was very enjoyable as the questions were very clear and there was no quandary as to what the question was asking me to do as they were very precise. If you thought time was getting away from you, you could skip questions to return to at the end which was useful. It was also nice that you got your result within 30 seconds of submitting your last question so you could find out there and then if you'd passed or failed.

**Now that you've taken the course, how does it help you?**

I found benefits within Word that I wasn't even aware of before doing the course. For example, I can create contents pages and bibliographies much quicker and citations are a great benefit when you actually know how to use them correctly.

However, the main function I have benefited from is using pivot tables in Excel. Pivot tables allow you take a datasheet of information and summarise it very quickly and also allows you to change the information and re-summarise the information on the spot. You can also use them to create graphs which are then easy to manipulate over the standard graphing techniques. I'd previously spent days doing what now takes me minutes using pivot tables.

*"I'm using applications that I wouldn't have even gone near before because now I understand what they can offer me in my day to day job role"*

I've never been one for doing databases so I hated Access, but now I know the fundamentals of how things fit together I've started moving away from using spreadsheets for a lot of things and have started using databases instead.

Working through Outlook was a good benefit as I use the task facility quite a lot and have recently added repetitive tasks to cover the weekly jobs I need to perform. I also use the calendar a lot especially for scheduling appointments.

**What would be your message about NHS ELITE/NHS MOST to other staff across the NHS?**

I would certainly recommend anyone within the NHS to take advantage of them. I've reaped the benefits so many times over already from my experience being increased and improved. I'm using applications that I wouldn't have even gone near before because now I understand what they can offer me in my day to day job role.

**What are the next steps for you in terms of IT learning?**

I passed the 2003 exams which is the standard within the trust but we can request the use of Office 2007 and I have Office 2007 on my machine at home so I completed the course in 2007 as well. I'm now moving onto 2010 as the trust is moving towards that and I want improve my knowledge before it comes out.

**The NHS IT Skills Pathway covers the full range of competencies for users of IT, from basic through to advanced levels. It has been developed in partnership with the NHS to provide an officially recognised route of learning and certification for the whole workforce.**

**Its purpose is to encourage everyone working within the NHS to review their current IT skills and knowledge against the national standards, determine what their skill gaps are and then identify their future training requirements based on the products that are available.**

**For more information about the NHS IT Skills Pathway, please visit our website at:**

**<http://www.cfh.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/icd/itskills/pathway>**