



IT Skills for..... NHS Administrators



Daniel Edwards is a Patient Database Administrator based in the Speech and Language Therapy Department at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust. In this interview, he describes how undertaking higher level IT Learning and Certification via the NHS IT Skills Pathway has assisted him with his work.

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

I spend a lot of time in Excel setting up spreadsheets, managing them and keeping records of patient waiting times.

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

I already used Excel a lot in my job but I thought it would help me to learn more and it has, it's also saved me a lot of time.

How did you hear about NHS ELITE/NHS MOST Programme?

Paul from our IT Training department came out to see us with a slideshow that explained how to do the courses, what was available, how long the courses took and what other levels we could go on to do.

Tell us how you went about learning?

I decided to go down the classroom based route, I thought I would find it easier as I prefer to have someone with me who is an expert themselves so they can help me out if I need it.

What was the experience like?

The practice tests were good as it was nice to see that the real tests weren't going to be too harsh and I could also then see how the questions were going to be laid out. I wasn't nervous about the actual exam as I'd done a lot of practice tests which eased me into it, I knew how the questions were going to be based and there was no trickery or anything like that. I did a lot of revision, it was easy, and it was a good feeling to know I'd passed. It's nice to not have to go away and think, "have I passed, have I not passed" and to not have to worry about it or wonder if you'd have to re-book, it was really nice knowing straight away.

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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





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Can you give some specific example of how the skills you learned help you in your duties?

I found that the IF function was incredibly useful for my job. It's good having something to tell me if a patient has passed the appropriate waiting time for a clinic, and to have it really simply pointed out to me on a spreadsheet rather than having to figure it out myself.

Format painter is something very, very simple but it does save me a lot of time on spreadsheets especially on formatting by copying down from the line above, it saves going into all the different menus.

How does what you've learned directly/indirectly help with patient care?

After taking the course I found that I am helping patients get faster treatment because I have set up a bright red flag to show those who are near the maximum waiting time. In the past we might have missed this where as now we can identify the people and pass them on to the therapists immediately.

"When you get back to your job you'll find that you're easily saving an hour or two hours a week with the shortcuts you learn"

What would be your message about the Learning and Certification to other staff across the NHS?

I found that the course and qualification itself was useful to me not only for my job but also for the future. When applying for new jobs it will look good on my CV as it will show that I'm an expert in that area and it's another way of showing experience.

Because Microsoft is so well known, an employer will understand the value of a Microsoft qualification and will know it will help you to save a lot of time in your job. Just go for it, a lot of people will think they can't be bothered or it takes too much time but for the amount of time it saves, it's well worth it. Although the course does take time, when you get back to your job you'll find that you're easily saving an hour or two hours a week with the shortcuts you learn and the formula's that save you working things out yourself.

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

I hope to take some more qualifications, particularly the Excel Expert and Word as we use a lot of Word and I therefore think it would be beneficial to me.

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>