



IT Skills for.....



Human Resources

Natalie Plows is an Assistant Personnel & Development Manager for Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust. In this case study she outlines how getting Microsoft Office certified not only helps her with her day to day work but also has a positive impact on other team members.

How do your duties involve the use of IT?

I use all of the main Microsoft Office packages on a daily basis - Outlook for email and calendar management, Word for letters, Excel for data analysis and PowerPoint for various training presentations.

How did you hear about the training and why did you decide to enrol?

Our IM&T training team leader (Richard Lupson) did a presentation about the IT training that was available to all NHS staff and, although I thought I already had fairly strong IT skills I had no way of quantifying or proving this. Undertaking the training and passing exams means that I now have both!

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Which subjects have you studied?

I've completed all of the requirements to become a Microsoft Office Master. That means I've passed Word and Excel at Expert Level and PowerPoint and Outlook at Core Level.

Tell us how you went about learning?

I did all my studying by way of distance learning using the workbooks provided free of charge by the IT training department. I used the exercises at the end of the chapters to help consolidate my learning and then attended sessions for the practice and live exams.

What was the exam experience like?

The Expert exams were tough especially Excel but the practice tests gave me a strong indication of what to expect in the live exams.

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

First of all I've learned new things and I've also learned faster ways to do things I was already doing. I spend a lot less time using the help facility because I have a clearer understanding of the tasks I'm undertaking. Things like comparing and merging Word documents is really useful and something I didn't even know existed before carrying out the learning.

How does what you've learned help your colleagues?

It's made me the guru for Microsoft in our office! Some of the other staff now come to me with their queries so it's not only saving me time but saving them time too. It's also reassuring to know that being more efficient with our clinical staff saves them admin time which in turn means they have more time for patients.

How much time are you saving as a result of doing the training?

When you add up all the minutes that are being saved I would say it's at least an hour per week.

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

I'm having a break at the moment because other staff in our team are now doing the training as a result of seeing my certificates! A lot of people now use Office 2010 so, looking forward, it would be useful to continue my learning and complete the exams in the latest version too.

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What would be your message about Microsoft Office Training to other staff across the NHS?

It's free and it's a benefit so take advantage of it! I'm so grateful for having the opportunity.

From an HR perspective, what would you say to other organisations about the learning?

The better the IT skills of the staff in the organisation, the more competent and efficient the workforce will be as a result. Staff will also gain a great sense of achievement by proving and improving their skills in this area.

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.

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