

# Apprenticeship Case Study

## Alasdair Blair

### Sounding: Senior Academic

Career: Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic at De Montfort University

I had substantial experience in academia prior to starting my apprenticeship. I studied an undergraduate degree at the University of Aberdeen and in America as an exchange student at Earlham College. I first came to Leicester in 1992 to study for an MA in Diplomatic Studies at the University of Leicester and stayed on to complete a Ph.D. in International Relations. I then held a number of temporary lecturing and research positions before securing a permanent contract at Coventry University, from which I joined DMU in 2008.



I have always been committed to continuing my education while at work and after completing the mandatory Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education when I joined Coventry University, I went on to complete an MA in Higher Education.

I've studied a variety of modules so far, including finance, leadership and strategy. The finance module has been helpful as my day job requires me to undertake financial analysis for numerous projects. I also have a strong interest in leadership theory, and I recently undertook the Postgraduate Professional Coaching Course at DMU which was a wonderful experience that opened new avenues including gaining accreditation to become an Executive Coach.

The apprenticeship fits nicely with the practical elements of my everyday work whilst also providing insight into academic areas such as strategy which complements my study of international relations. I have found it particularly useful to experience what it is like being a student again. It has provided me with a better understanding as to how DMU works from a student perspective.

Although it might seem a bit strange going back to being a student again, I have found the process really invaluable in opening new thinking and ensuring that I am challenging myself through study. The apprenticeship format suits my work commitments and it is great being able to work through practical and theoretical examples in the classes.

The teaching quality has been excellent and it has been a privilege to be in the classes and experience first-hand our colleagues' knowledge. I have also enjoyed having the opportunity to learn from guest lecturers and to participate in innovative assessment exercises such as simulation which enable theory to be put into practice. The highlight for me has been meeting other students and learning from them and their experiences in a really supportive environment.