



King's College London - Case study

Introduction

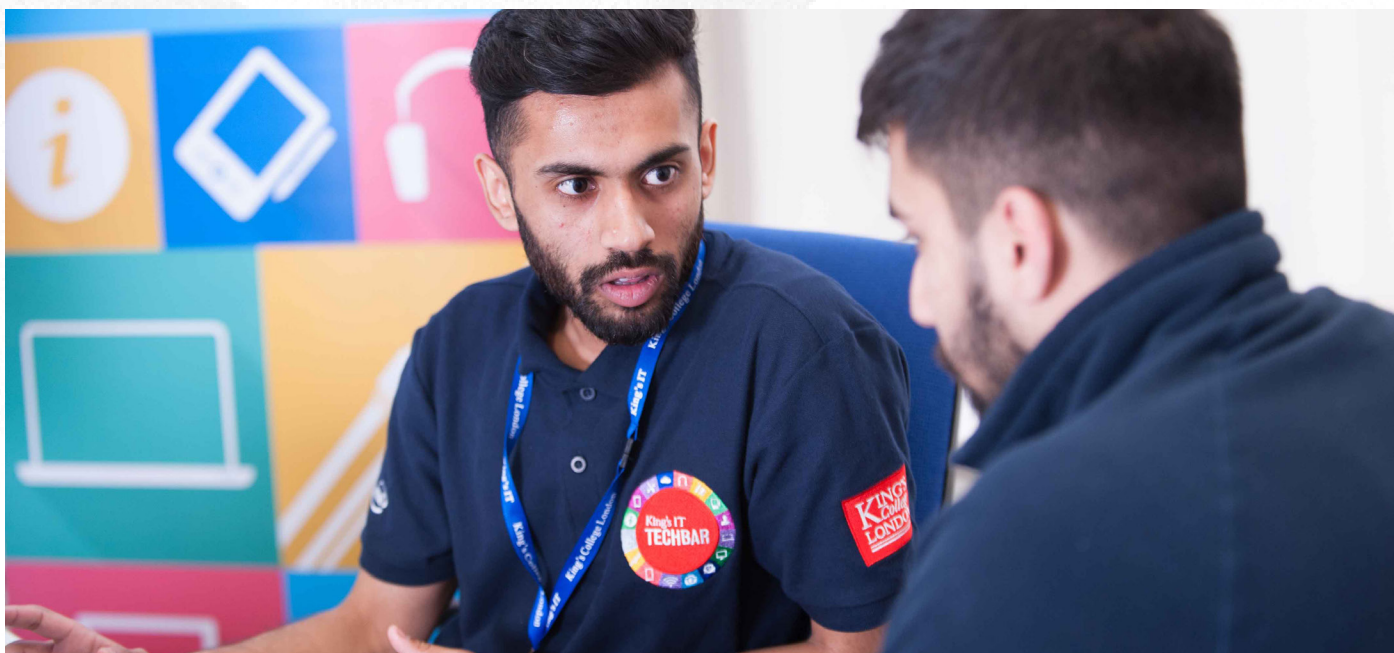
King's College London recruited their first IT apprentices in London this year, a project which saw eight level 3 apprentices working on the IT TechBars, which provide on-campus support for IT issues. The apprentices were recruited with the aim of providing King's staff and students with a friendly, face-to-face service, resolving and referring IT issues.

The apprentices were recruited in May 2016 and are all now completing their apprenticeship programme. Through working on the front-line help desk at each of the University's four main campuses, the apprentices have developed employment skills alongside the IT qualifications they have been studying for. They have gained industry-relevant skills which have enabled them to support KCL students with any technology issues that arise during their studies. The apprentices have also become ambassadors for King's College IT, having helped at student open days and various promotional events.

The apprentices have had a variety of roles and responsibilities as part of their apprenticeship, from helping people connect to Wi-Fi, installing software, resetting passwords, or any other hardware advice. When not on the service desk, they helped the End User Services teams, where tasks included audio/visual and desktop support.

"Recruiting apprentices has been fantastic for us in End User Services. We've been able to fully staff four, soon to be five, helpdesks with skilled, eager and enthusiastic staff, who have been a pleasure to welcome into our team. It has been very rewarding for us to see them develop over the course of their time with us, gaining confidence and additional skills. As well as the education provided by risual and CONEL, we've been able to assist them in obtaining industry standard qualifications, such as their ITIL Foundation Certificates."

Tom Berry, TechBar Manager, King's College London



The apprentices have also won rave reviews from the students they have helped during their time at King's. The IT department's remedy system offers every user the opportunity to submit feedback following an engagement with the help desk.

"The TechBar service has consistently achieved 100% customer satisfaction, and has always been within the IT department's strict minimum of 95%. We also find that if the apprentices go out for project work, or to help with events, the feedback from the project managers and department heads is always very positive, so we're really pleased!"

Mark Keep, Head of End User Services, King's College London

The speed with which the apprentices developed the skills required to make a real contribution to their teams exceeded the expectations of the department, and demonstrates the value and benefits of the scheme. One apprentice so excelled in his role he successfully applied for a permanent job with King's IT before completing his course. The other apprentices are now focusing on the full-time roles and further learning opportunities available to them on completion of their apprenticeships. The option of progression to Level 4 means the company can retain their apprentices for longer while they further develop their learning.

"What some of the apprentices have lacked in enterprise IT knowledge they've more than made up for with enthusiasm and drive. A great example of this is Jagveer, one of our initial recruits, succeeding at interview and joining our End User Services team of analysts at our Waterloo Campus He's fitted in brilliantly!"

Tom Berry, TechBar Manager, Kings College London



Working with risual and CONEL

"risual and Conel have been great at providing us with a team of apprentices which fitted our original brief, and at communicating with us around their academic performance. Risual, in particular, have been a pleasure to work with. They have made employing our apprentices simple by taking care of the majority of administrative tasks and support required. The fact they are a Microsoft partner is added peace of mind for us."

Tom Berry, TechBar Manager, Kings College London

Capitalising on the success of the scheme, King's IT are now looking for opportunities to move the learners onto Higher Apprenticeships, enabling them to gain further experience in the TechBar and with other teams in the department. This is supported by a business plan to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities available during their next round of recruitment, and promoting the value of apprentices across the organization.

"It's so important to have someone like risual to help with the screening process. Everyone applies for these kinds of positions at the start but risual help narrow it down to the candidates that fit best. For us, we now know what we want and what risual want. It was a gamble, but it's worked really well, and giving these young people an opportunity is what it's all about. Seeing the way some have grown in their roles, seeing them talking confidently to senior members of staff is great."

Mark Keep, Head of End User Services, Kings College, London

risual lead regular monitoring meetings with King's College, London ensuring that the learners are progressing and that delivery is adapted to suit the needs of the employer throughout the programme. These meetings mean any issues or concerns that either the employer or learners have are addressed and do not impact on the quality of learning.

The entire engagement has highlighted how well the apprenticeship scheme can work when apprentices are mentored and looked after by an employer who is committed to supporting the development of their careers. Richard Yardy, risual Education Engagement Manager, noted how 'exciting' it has been to watch them grow, and is looking forward to seeing how this scheme with King's College will develop.

"risual and Richard (risual Education Engagement Manager) have been really good about feed-back. We have had some honest conversations about underperforming apprentices. We worked with CONEL on any problems, we've enjoyed working with risual, and we're in a good position to continue this scheme. I thought the teaching facilities at CONEL were excellent."

Mark Keep, Head of End User Services, Kings College London

Selected student feedback comments

“Went to the KCL IT desk on an unrelated issue but Abdul kindly asked me about other IT issues I might have. I had trouble setting up my KCL email on my android phone since first year and couldn't figure out how to do this on my own, so the help was very much appreciated!”

“Professional and very technical advice given when using Office 365”

“Marvellous service all round including helpful TechBar staff - thank you!”

“Fahim was very patient and supportive with his IT skills at a very critical time for myself. I'm very grateful for his help.”

“The person who helped me was INCREDIBLE.. So kind and helpful and efficient. After he helped me with my problem he even helped me connect my phone to my KCL email. I am seriously so impressed.”

“My issue was resolved efficiently and the IT service desk (Nafeez) was very helpful. Thanks!”

“Thank you so much for sorting out the problems I'd been having installing the printer. Very helpful and friendly as the IT staff in the Library always are!”

“I visited the hub in the KCH WEC building and it was great to address this IT problem whilst passing through. Great service and glad to hear from WEC that all campuses have them.”



Quotes

What have you most enjoyed about being at King's?

In my short time here so far I have really enjoyed being a member of the King's team that works hard in the background to ensure services run smoothly for students and staff. I feel proud to be working for such a prestigious university and knowing that my work contributes to allowing staff and students to continue to achieve great things recognised globally. I really enjoy the supportive, community atmosphere which in turns allows me to take steps towards accomplishing great things myself.

What's the most important thing you have learned?

The most important thing I have learned at King's so far is identity. I now belong to a small team that represents King's College London and their vision and standards. I understand how crucial it is for me to uphold those standards to the public. I have learnt how to integrate into small team, which in turn integrates into a larger team and so on. This is the largest establishment I have ever worked for which means that I have learnt that it is crucial to treat every person with the respect and care they deserve and always strive to provide the best service I can.

What do you want to do next? [or, what do you want to achieve in your career in IT?]

My long term broad ambition is to have a long successful career in IT. To absorb as much knowledge as I can and to also pass that information on to others. To be a valued and integral member of the King's IT team. The more I learn as I progress on this apprenticeship the more I find myself interested in different areas of IT that I previously had no idea about. I am interested in going into cyber security in the future which means for now I need to focus on my short term goals which are to successfully complete this apprenticeship course to the standard I know I am capable of.

Nafeez Nizam

What have you most enjoyed about being at King's?

The large variety of people that I have been able to help, both during my Apprenticeship, and in my End User Services role. I get a buzz out of helping students and staff in their time of need, and it is hugely satisfying to know that someone is able to get on with their work because of my assistance.

What's the most important thing you have learned?

The fact that hard work and consistency really does pay off. In a large organisation, it can be easy to think that you can relax, and only work hard when people are looking. The apprentices that put the extra effort in are the ones that are now on a clear path towards a successful IT support career, and I think I am evidence of this!

What do you want to do next? [or, what do you want to achieve in your career in IT?]

I am still learning things all the time in my End User Services role, and I hope to eventually be reaching the same amount of knowledge that my colleagues possess. I would love to pass along knowledge and mentorship to new starters that are yet to join, and be able to give something back to the Apprenticeship system.

What have you most enjoyed about being at King's?

The large variety of people that I have been able to help, both during my Apprenticeship, and in my End User Services role. I get a buzz out of helping students and staff in their time of need, and it is hugely satisfying to know that someone is able to get on with their work because of my assistance.

What's the most important thing you have learned?

The fact that hard work and consistency really does pay off. In a large organisation, it can be easy to think that you can relax, and only work hard when people are looking. The apprentices that put the extra effort in are the ones that are now on a clear path towards a successful IT support career, and I think I am evidence of this!

What do you want to do next? [or, what do you want to achieve in your career in IT?]

I am still learning things all the time in my End User Services role, and I hope to eventually be reaching the same amount of knowledge that my colleagues possess. I would love to pass along knowledge and mentorship to new starters that are yet to join, and be able to give something back to the Apprenticeship system.

Joseph Taylor

What have you most enjoyed about being at King's?

The opportunity to work within a University of such calibre is a honour in itself. I enjoyed working alongside the End User Services; a team that is very personable and helpful. One of the other many things I enjoyed would be looking at things from a different perspective, from helping both students and staff.

What's the most important thing you have learned?

To progressively work with the very experienced and skilled End User Services team, the second line aspect of IT support, has given me great knowledge and insight as to where I can see myself in the future. From student to staff being able to observe and feel everything within King's gives me huge knowledge. Working here has evolved me personally and professionally as a person.

What do you want to do next? [or, what do you want to achieve in your career in IT?]

I see myself pretty much anywhere within IT, and being young gives me the opportunity to explore different subjects within IT. However, I am currently enjoying my role within EUS team, and would really like to continue my journey within King's which I hope to be perpetual as there is still a lot to explore. The more you learn the less you know, and therefore there's no end to progression.

Fahim Ahmed