

SARAH ANIMAL CARE

"If you have a passion, pursue it! I promise it will be worth it!"

Tell us about yourself..

Hello, my name is Sarah and I am an animal lover. In 2016-2017 I completed my apprenticeship in Animal Care Level 2 with KEITS. In October 2021, I graduated from Anglia Ruskin University with first class honours in Animal Behaviour (BSc).

Why did you choose an apprenticeship?

After I did my GCSE's, I ended up staying on at my school's Sixth form. I found this really difficult, and I didn't have any passion for the subjects I was doing. My classmates all around me were applying to various universities, and I felt very lost as I didn't know where I would go next. The one thing I knew was that I certainly did not want to go to university to continue with geography! University application deadlines soon passed, and I ended up not having applied with my classmates. I therefore fell in to a 'gap year'. I realised that the one thing I was certain about was my passion for animals, and how I'd like to pursue my career involved with animals. As I had no experience, an apprenticeship seemed to be the appropriate next step for me to gain a qualification in animal care.

How did you find out about it?

As school was coming to an end and I had nothing lined up, I started searching for animal related jobs in my area. On indeed, an apprenticeship opening was advertised at a kennels and hydrotherapy centre down the road from me. It was exactly what I was looking for so I applied, and after an interview I managed to get the job.

How long have you been in the industry?

After my apprenticeship, I studied animal behaviour for 4 years at uni.

How do you feel you have benefitted from doing an apprenticeship?

My apprenticeship benefitted me hugely. After my apprenticeship, I applied to my university course in Animal Behaviour. However, my A-Levels were completely unrelated to animal care (geography, religious education and media). The course was looking for things such as A-Level biology, which I did not have. The fact that I had a qualification in animal care, as well as a year of experience working in the industry, really helped my application. I strongly believe I would not have been accepted on to the university course without this. Also during my course at uni, things would pop up every now and again which I already knew from learning on my apprenticeship (for example the RSPCA Five Freedoms). This helped me to get ahead in class.

What is the most interesting thing that has happened since being on this apprenticeship?

Since my apprenticeship I have trained llamas, and observed the behavior of meerkats, seals, elephants and even fish!

What advice would you give to someone looking to come into the industry or looking to start and apprenticeship?

My advice is please don't be afraid to start if you have no experience. I had no experience, and my apprenticeship really provided me with the tools I needed to work with animals. Life is too short to do something you do not enjoy (goodbye geography!). If you have a passion, pursue it! I promise it will be worth it.

What next for you and your future?

Now I have graduated, I am looking for my next role in the industry. I am passionate about animal welfare, and so I hope to go in to a role based around animal care education and reinforcing welfare standards.

What would you say to someone who is thinking of doing an apprenticeship?

You should absolutely go for it!

