

Degree case study

Alison Edmundson

Head of FM Governance and Performance
Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

Alison is the Head of FM Governance and Performance for Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust, one of the largest joint providers of mental health services in the country. She is currently in her first year on Eastwood Park's Foundation degree in hospital engineering.



Starting her career with the NHS as an Operations Manager, Alison progressed to a Head of non-clinical services role, where she specialised in E&FM. Following a number of years in facilities management, she moved to staff engagement, which even saw her travel to Ghana, scoping partnership working for training and community projects.

Returning to work after maternity leave, Alison then took a more specialised role in governance, compliance, health and safety, leading to her current role with Southern Health.

"Working within an NHS organisation, I have sent many delegates to attend the various specialised courses offered by Eastwood Park, which was how

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I first became aware of the degree programmes on offer. Also, colleagues within HEFMA had recognised and were enrolled on this programme themselves, and had shared its benefits with our branch.

"As part of ongoing professional development I was encouraged and

sponsored by our Associate Director of Estates to apply in order to gain valuable technical knowledge and accreditation to build on and enhance the years of practical experience I have gained in various roles.

"Eastwood Park was the obvious choice with the distance learning degree programmes on offer."

Commenting on the highlights of the degree so far, Alison says

"In addition to the technical knowledge, understanding and qualification that the degree is

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providing, the networking and learning amongst other professionals is invaluable.

"And as the course programme is distance learning you can fit this in and around work and family commitments."

She adds "Having my organisation support me in undertaking the programme has led to me feeling recognised, valued, supported and invested in in my role. The work-based learning approach means I have been able to realise the benefits of new found knowledge in the workplace, with the added opportunity to meet lots of great, new people at the residential study weekends."

"My advice for anyone thinking of undertaking the degree is to ensure you have the support of your Manager, and peers and that they realise the benefits of what you will bring to the workplace during and after the course.

"Be realistic with your commitment to the course and time needed to study as it is a big commitment. However, I am a full time working mum of two young children and it is manageable with good time management and discipline.

"I was daunted by the engineering science as it has been a while since I touched mathematics but it does come back and you are fully supported by great Tutors and resources.

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Once she has completed her foundation degree, Alison has plans to go on and complete the optional additional year to achieve a BSc (Hons) management degree, which she feels will give further opportunity in her career.

"I have aspirations to progress towards a Director role in the next 10 years and attaining the BSc in management engineering technologies and facilities will provide a solid foundation to enhance my skill set."