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# In the driving seat

## How Ford put Ed on road to success

**BOOTED out of sixth form as he was getting nowhere with his A-levels, Eddie Flack felt lost with no clue what he should do.**

Unsure where to head with his life, he decided he should get some good old fashioned skills and find a career. Today, Eddie, 20, from Barking in East London, has landed a dream job as a junior software engineer with car giant Ford – and is ready to take the techie world by storm.

### How did your plans change?

In truth I didn't really know what I wanted to do as a career. I was studying my A-levels and assuming I would go to university at some point. I was enjoying my subjects but at the end of the first year I was told I had to leave – I just wasn't getting the grades.

I felt awful with no clue what I was going to do. I was so disappointed to start with but knew I had to get myself some qualifications.

My stepbrother was doing really well in IT and I figured I had always liked the odd computer game so why not? I got lucky and spotted a BTEC course at my local Barking and Dagenham Digital Career College which specialises in vocational qualifications.

It didn't feel like sixth form – it was

all about learning proper skills and gaining relevant knowledge. It was life-changing for me. I found something I loved and worked really hard.

### Did you get more than a qualification?

Yes. Not only did I get the BTEC which is equivalent to three A-levels, I was also involved in two major projects with the

likes of Comic Relief and Amazon Web Services where my team, writing software solutions and apps, won awards.

As part of that I had to do presentations and my confidence just soared. It also gave me so much to talk about when it came time to doing interviews for jobs.

### What took you to Ford?

I was so excited that I had decided at last what I wanted to do and started to apply for university, but also a load of

apprenticeships. I wanted lots of options. The career office at college got in touch one day to say they had spotted a degree apprenticeship at Ford which would suit me down to the ground. I



added it to my applications.

The process took most of the past year and when I got my BTEC results this summer I was still not sure whether I would take up a uni place or an apprenticeship.

Ford had said I was on a waiting list in case someone else dropped off the scheme. I thought they were letting me

down gently but on results day they called to ask whether I was interested. I leapt at it – who could turn down the chance to get a degree with no debt and a mountain of experience?

### What are you doing now?

In September I started work. I am studying for an IT degree at the University of Greenwich one day a week and working at Ford for the other four days. I absolutely love it. I am currently working on an order management system for people buying new cars. If I work hard and get my degree I will have a job at the end of four years.

### CONTACTS

Career Colleges ([careercolleges.org.uk](http://careercolleges.org.uk)) throughout the country help 14 to 19-year-olds like Eddie to get the vocational and practical skills and experience they need in areas such as engineering, construction, tourism, defence, hospitality and catering.

### IT JOBS

We have found 47,470 IT jobs which still need techie skills and aptitude. You never know where it could take you.

At [fish4jobs.co.uk](http://fish4jobs.co.uk) there are 5,496 vacancies ranging from an IT technician in Bishop's Stortford (£20,416) and an IT analyst in London (£23,800 to £25,300), to a data officer in Old Trafford, Manchester (£21,074) and a finance systems manager in Bodmin, Cornwall (£28,050 to £36,644).

There are another 28,265 full and part-time IT jobs at [gov.uk/jobsearch](http://gov.uk/jobsearch) including an IT specialist in Chelmsford (up to £36,000) and an IT consultant in Hounslow (£32,500).

We spotted a further 12,714 jobs of all types from software engineers to web developers at [cwjobs.co.uk](http://cwjobs.co.uk).

If you're starting out then an appren-

ticeship might be right for you. We found 995 opportunities at [getingofar.gov.uk](http://getingofar.gov.uk).

I should  
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