

# Case Study

## Why choose the School Administration Foundation Certificate?

**Allison Edwards, School Business Manager at Mereside Church of England Primary School in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, tells us about her experience of completing the School Administration Foundation Certificate delivered by Serco in collaboration with Adfecto.**

**Allison explains her career path and what she particularly enjoys about her current role:**

“I became a School Administrator in November 2002. At the time, I was keen to find a position that fitted in with family life better than my current Local Authority job. I was fortunate that a vacancy came up at the school my children attended, and despite no previous school experience, I applied, was invited for interview and successfully secured the position. I joined the school at the end of 2002 and took on the role of School Business Manager in September 2011. The role of School Business Manager is a varied and multi-faceted one but I definitely get the most enjoyment out of finance and project management!.

**Why did Allison decide to enrol onto the SAFC programme and were her line manager and colleagues supportive during her studies?**

“My aim is to study the Level 4 Diploma in School Business Management (formerly known as CSBM). Having not studied for a long time, I decided to join the SAFC programme as a stepping stone back into study and also as an entrance qualification. The Headteacher and staff were all very supportive of my studies. I involved them in the project that I undertook and worked closely with them to evaluate and improve the new dinner money system which I instigated as my project. The Headteacher was also more than happy to provide feedback on my work before every assignment submission. I also involved all staff in a questionnaire regarding one of the programme modules – they kindly completed it and actively sought feedback on the result; this not only helped with my work but also gave the whole admin team renewed recognition for the unseen work we do around the school.”

**Allison explains what she found to be the most challenging parts and what interested her most during her SAFC studies.**

“The programme started with a face-to-face workshop with our facilitator. Although we were a small group, I feel we did gain a lot out of the session which set us up for the whole course very nicely. After that, accessing the programme material was very straight forward, and the documentation and instructions were clear and really easy to follow. I stayed in contact with the other learners in my group and we did exchange emails to share good practice and bounce ideas of each other. Although I had the option of contacting my facilitator, I didn’t feel the need to do so and was able to proceed with my studies at my own pace.



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The self-evaluation aspect of the programme was definitely the most challenging part, especially when it came to identifying areas for self-improvement at the end of each module. The project work in Module 4 was fantastic as it gave me a chance to take something and run with it, evaluating changes implemented and working with the whole school community to get it working as well as possible.”

**Did the programme impact on Allison’s day-to-day practice?**

"Most definitely. I feel that I have developed a more professional attitude and also that the quality of my work has been recognised by colleagues and managers. The programme has really empowered me to voice opinions for new ideas and improvements to the day-to-day work of the admin team. I now feel ready and able to undertake the Level 4 Diploma in School Business Management."

**Allison concludes with the following advice to anyone considering applying for the School Administration Foundation Certificate.**

“Go for it! However long you have been in your role, you will get a lot out of this programme. It will challenge you and will make you really look at things from different perspectives. You will come out of it with a renewed enthusiasm for your role and also with a great feeling of achievement and pride!”



**If you wish to follow in Allison’s footsteps, please visit our website: [www.sbmpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sbmpartnership.org.uk) for further information and to apply online, or contact our SAFC team on E: [sercoprovider.support@serco.com](mailto:sercoprovider.support@serco.com); T: 01472 727272**