

## Apprenticeship Success Story

### Your name

Maya Patel

### Your apprenticeship programme

Level 3 ICT – Azure Cloud Support Specialist

### About you

I'm an Apprentice at AQA, developing my capability in project management after beginning my Apprenticeship in IT and completing a Level 3 Azure Cloud Support Specialist qualification with QA. I play an active role in the apprenticeship community through the Association of Apprentices Council, the North West AAN, and my advisory position with FinWELL Education. Alongside this, I mentor in local schools, supporting young people as they explore their next steps. I'm driven by personal growth, and a commitment to improving opportunities across the education and apprenticeship landscape.



### Why did you choose an apprenticeship?

I chose an apprenticeship because I wanted real responsibility and practical experience from the start. University didn't feel like the right path for me at the time, and I was eager to start building industry experience straight away. My apprenticeship allowed me to develop skills while applying them in real time, which felt like the most effective way to begin my career.

### How has the apprenticeship enhanced your career?

My apprenticeship helped me grow professionally while also teaching me a great deal about myself. It gave me clarity on the direction I want my career to take and the confidence to pursue it. It also opened opportunities I hadn't expected and encouraged me to step beyond my comfort zone, which has shaped how I approach my development.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge was adjusting straight from school into a professional environment. It was a big shift in responsibility and expectation, and at times it felt overwhelming. I overcame it by not being afraid to ask for support. I focused on learning from the people around me and gradually built confidence through experience.

### What does gaining your post nominals through the Post Apprenticeship Recognition Scheme mean to you?

Gaining my PARs feels like a great way to showcase all the hard work and skills I've developed, and it's something I can highlight on my CV. It feels like more than just post-nominals. It's real recognition for all the effort and dedication I've put in throughout my apprenticeship.

### What advice would you give to an existing apprentice?

Take every chance to learn and get involved, even if it feels challenging. An apprenticeship is more than a qualification; it's a way to understand what you enjoy and where you want to go.