



STORMING THE BRITISH DESIGN SCENE

GET CERTIFIED AND GET NOTICED — REAL-WORLD GRAPHIC DESIGN SKILLS LEAD TO SUCCESS

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From Coventry to Career

Becoming a successful designer takes more than just earning a degree. With so many designers, recent graduates need an impressive portfolio, connections, and demonstrated success to break into the industry.

No one knows that more than recent university graduate and freelance designer, Taylor Sharpe. Taylor graduated with Honors in Graphic Design from Coventry University, but his Adobe Certified Associate certification is really what made the difference for his future career. Find out how he used his certification and success in the ACA World Championship to launch his design career.



A Special Add+vantage

Certiport: Thanks so much for sharing more about your story with us, Taylor! We're so excited to chat with you.

Taylor: Absolutely! It's always a pleasure to share more about my experience.

Certiport: So you're a recent university graduate. Tell us about your experience at university.

Taylor: Coventry University has a great design program. It's because of them that I learned about the Adobe Certified Associate certification. The University's add+vantage program allows you to choose a subject you want to learn more about. I participated

in the Illustrator module in my second year, and Photoshop my third year. I decided, whilst I still had the opportunity I should take the InDesign course so that I could have the Specialist title, making me more attractive to prospective employers. Luckily my advisor, Joy, had enough confidence in me to take the final exam without completing the main module. All the hard work definitely paid off.



Certified to Compete

Certiport: That's amazing! So you've earned three ACA certifications?

Taylor: Luckily I did! I wanted to make sure I got the third one before I left university.

Certiport: For sure. Do you feel like having all three ACA certifications helped you in the ACA World Championship?

Taylor: I think it definitely was an advantage. I was so excited when I sat down in the competition lab. After what felt like a very long month waiting for this exact moment to happen, nerves subsided with confidence and ability taking over, I realizing that this is where I want to be stationed in my career. All my doubts fell away.

An Experienced Professional

Certiport: That's fantastic. Has your certification helped you outside of the competition?



Taylor: I do think it has helped. My ACA certifications have given me the confidence to apply for jobs that I once thought were out of reach. I feel being certified puts my

skillset up there with experienced professionals who don't have that same qualification. ACA certification has helped me get my foot in the door to impress potential clients and employers who may not have originally thought of a recent graduate as an option.

Blind Mice Designs

Certiport: Tell us more about these doors that have opened for you.

Taylor: Aside from the adventures to the USA, I would like to think it has given me a better reputation as a trusted designer, seeing the qualifications on my website make me a

professional who has achieved above and beyond my degree, rather than just another design graduate, as there are plenty of those to choose from. I have had more clients for my own freelance work and also the opportunity to continue working on brilliantly diverse creative work at a design agency for the past year. I met my employer, Nigel Hopkins, a fantastic illustrator and co-owner of Blind Mice Design alongside Selina Goodfellow, in my ACA Illustrator course. He decided to take me on in the company after being impressed by my design ability, work ethic and understanding of the software.

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- Taylor Sharpe -

Kick-start with the Competition

Certiport: Incredible! With all your experience, we just have one more question for you. What advice would you give to other students who are looking to pursue a career in design?

Taylor: My advice would be to never pass up an opportunity, as you do not know where it could lead you. Don't ever think you have enough credentials or skills, widen your expertise, and learn something unconventional that will make you stand out from the crowd. Form an interesting and diverse portfolio. I would like to thank Certiport and Prodigy Learning for my experience, as I personally learned a lot from the competition. Thank you to Prodigy for supporting me and arranging everything throughout the past few months. Without this kick start I wouldn't be where I am now and I am extremely grateful.



Get Involved

Do your students have the passion and capabilities to change the world? Give them an outlet to share their amazing talents! Learn more about the ACA World Championship at www.acachampionship.com.