

John Craigen has received an unconditional offer of acceptance on to the BA (Hons) Television course at Edinburgh Napier University. He will begin the course in September which marks just the latest in a long line of successes for John.

John began working with Access to Industry (AI) in April last year when he took on the role of volunteer on AI's *Access Media* course. John had been working with Intowork following personal battles with confidence and low self esteem and was advised to apply for a place on AI's innovative course. *Access Media* gave students an insight into film-making, even giving them the opportunity to become involved in the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Unfortunately, because he already held an HND in Creative Industries Television from Jewel & Esk College, John was told that he was slightly over qualified for the course but that an even more challenging role was available...

With a wealth of volunteering experience, notably with West Lothian Youth Action Project, John was told that a volunteer was needed to assist the *Access Media* students whilst they completed the course. John applied for the position and ended up attending the course every day. He was driven by the thought that some of the students on the course may have wanted to overcome similar issues to the ones he had faced, such as feeling too old to change career or move on to college just like he had done only a couple of years before.

Showtime!

During a separate stint of volunteering he completed after his work on *Access Media*, John came across the recruitment advert for the *Access Showtime* course on the AI website. *Access Showtime* is a traineeship run in partnership with the Edinburgh Playhouse Theatre which provides an opportunity for people to access employment in front-of-house theatre. The traineeship provides students with specialist customer service training and an SQA unit in Job Seeking Skills. Since John has always loved the Playhouse, he thought "nothing ventured, nothing gained" and applied for a place on the course.

As a direct result of completing the course, John was offered the opportunity to complete 3 shadow shifts and an interview at the Playhouse. He has now been working front-of-house at the Playhouse since 11th December 2009. John is delighted with his 15 hours a week shifts there. His tasks range from selling programmes and ice cream to ushering. John will soon be moving on to selling refreshments at the kiosk at busy times during shows - something he thought he would never have the confidence to do. John loves his job at the Playhouse and attributes a lot of this to the friendliness of his fellow staff members.

Living the dream!

John's work at the Playhouse has given him lots of confidence to pursue his further goals, the main one of which was to apply for university. Having always had a big interest in the media, John applied to Edinburgh's Napier University to study television. John had been keeping an eye on the recruitment market in the field of film and television and discovered that he would need a degree to ensure a better chance of starting at the bottom rung of the industry. John is delighted he has been accepted on to the course and is looking forward to starting it immensely not least because it will give him a chance to enter Scottish Screen's NETS (Creative Scotland – New Entrants Training Programme) course which around 25,000 people apply for but offers only 8 places per year.

After completing his degree, John is planning to complete a Masters at the Screen Academy at Edinburgh's Napier University. He feels he is now "living the dream"!

Notice to Editors

Photos can be supplied to accompany this article.

Access to Industry, funded by the South East Forum, supports excluded people to move into education and on to employment across the South East of Scotland.

We do this through the creation and development of new education and training programmes. These are delivered through partnerships with key education and training providers. We also work closely with employers to provide supported work experience placements.

Our opportunities provide students with the self confidence, skills, and qualifications to move towards a career through further education. Our opportunities are free, and benefits are not affected.