



My Journey to Salford

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Conquering disability

In April 2014, I had suffered with a headache for a week. One morning I went to A&E Tameside Hospital, where they did an MRI, but didn't see anything on my brain, so they sent me home, with more pain tablets. Through that day I felt more ill, but at 6pm, I started feeling sick and my husband said I was just screaming straight through him, so he phoned an ambulance. I was taken back to A&E Tameside Hospital, where by 12.30am they did another MRI scan, which they found a large blood clot on the side of my head. They had to rush me to Salford hospital and had an operation, 3am till 10am. I nearly died twice and stayed in hospital for 3 ½ months till I could go home again. I had to learn again to eat, walk, speak, and memories which was hard to do. I was also partially blind after the operation. After another 6-7 months, I was able to return to work, and slowly built myself back up again, but after 6 months, the company asked for people to leave, and one of my managers, suggested to go for redundancy. I thought it was probably the best idea and repair myself as much as I could because I didn't know how much my mind and my body could deal with.

Each year I got better and become stronger, but I got bored, so in 2019, I decided I didn't want to waste my life, so I went to college and spoke about possibilities, but I didn't have an idea what I wanted to do. While I was in hospital, one of the nurses that helped me, told me that she had been in an accident and had brain damage, and she had decided to help people and became a nurse. So I decided to do the same, and the collage suggested to do an Access to science and allied professions, which I did September 2019 to June 2020. I didn't know if I was able to do this because of the memory problems, but I thought I should try. I was shocked when I passed and was able to move onto university. I know that the tutors at collage were so helpful and directed me to ensure I had the right disability support, which was another change in my life to realise and accept myself having disabilities.

I did not have any ideas what to do getting into university, probably thinking about my age, my disabilities, things had changed over the years but my tutors at college also helped through that. I was so excited when I went seeing different universities to decide where I wanted to go, I viewed University of Manchester, Manchester MET and University of Salford, but it felt right going to Salford, I went three times to make sure. There were so many people who were very helpful, and explained about the various support help, like disabilities, mental health and so on.

I was so nervous on my first day, and I struggled a bit because of COVID-19 and it was all on line, which new computing systems that I had never used before, which is something different and had to learn. All the tutors at Salford are so helpful, it helped because everybody, including the tutors, are also having to learn new situations as well, which gave us all the ability to help each other, that gave us a stronger position for our first year.

The COVID-19 did make it harder and sometimes I felt I was not able to get through it, but with the help from my husband and family, and all tutors, students, and Salford staff, I have been able to get through my first year and now going through my second year, I know I need to keep going and work hard.

Friends keep saying how on earth I am able to do this, after what I had gone through on my operation, but also doing full time university, plus looking after my kids and family, and also doing a part-time job, I explained that my family were the main support I have got, but also all the help from the university of Salford, it is hard for all students, but having the support from tutors and staff, gives students their strong ability to get through their hard work. University is so important for people, especially young students because this is where they will become a more mature person, producing their future career and the start of their lives. I know that the operation part of my life, was horrible and I should ask why I had to go through this, but I would not be here if I had not and totally changed my life.