

Title: **Case Study**  
**Land-based & Environmental**  
**in the West of England**

**James Rugman** is in his final year studying for a BSc honours degree in Animal Science at Hartpury College in Gloucestershire.

Since leaving school he has taken a range of courses and qualifications in animal care. And when he graduates James, aged 25, aims to move on to a postgraduate qualification so he can teach the subject at a further education college.

He was inspired by his own experiences as a student at Norton Radstock college, where he had the chance to mentor younger students. "I really enjoyed helping them out and teaching them things," he says.

James was a pupil at Brislington School (now Brislington Enterprise College) Bristol. He left after taking GCSEs and enrolled at Norton Radstock College to take an NVQ Level 2 in Animal Care.

Initially unsure about what he wanted to do, he didn't complete the course. But after working for a year, James decided to go back to college and have another go. "A lot of the same staff were there and they were really friendly and welcoming," he says.

After completing the NVQ, he moved on to take a BTEC First and then a two year BTEC National Diploma in Animal Management at the college's Animal Care Study Centre at Ellsbridge House, Keynsham.

The centre has a wide collection of animals, including rodents, reptiles, birds, amphibians and fish. "Having the animals there makes learning more fun and interesting," says James. "It actually puts it into context rather than just having it spoken at you."

After leaving college James moved on to higher education. His degree course is designed to train potential animal scientists and give a thorough understanding of animal anatomy and physiology, health, nutrition and welfare.

It also has optional modules such as animal psychology or pharmacology to allow you to tailor your degree around your own interests and career aims.

Studying a higher level qualification in animal care does require commitment and a willingness to learn, says James. And you need a good understanding of science and maths. "It's very challenging – it really gets you thinking," he says.