

Title: **Case Study
Travel & Tourism
in the West of England**

Nick Hiley is taking a Foundation Degree in Tourism Management at Weston College – and the qualification could soon help his career take off.

The 19-year-old is interested in airport management. His course includes work experience placements and Nick is spending his at Bristol Airport.

He says the placement will give him a chance to look behind the scenes and explore different job opportunities.

“I have always had an interest in the operations side of airports from going on holiday with my family,” he says. “Hopefully the work experience will give me a lot more detail to look at.”

Nick went to Churchill Community School in Churchill near Weston-super-Mare and left after taking GCSEs. He went on to Weston College and did a two year BTEC National Diploma in Travel and Tourism, before progressing on to the Foundation Degree.

He has found both courses invaluable. The National Diploma included core units in the travel and tourism industry, the business side of the industry, marketing, destinations, customer service and working in the industry, as well as a range of specialist units to choose from.

The two-year Foundation Degree is much more theory-based. It is designed to develop understanding and knowledge of the tourism sector and to help students develop the skills needed in tourism management.

“Probably the best bit is the fact that it’s not just a tourism course – it’s a management course as well,” says Nick. “If you decide not to go into tourism, you still have the business side of the course to fall back on.”

When he finishes the Foundation Degree, Nick will have the choice of either using his qualification and experience to get a job in the industry, or moving on to Bath Spa University to complete a further year to top it up to a full honours degree.

His first year of the Foundation Degree included work experience at a local conference centre to learn how conferences operate. He has also gone on residential study visits to a range of holiday destinations, including Gran Canaria, Portugal, Tunisia and Bulgaria.

“You look around the resort, see what it has to offer, look at case studies regarding the resort and looking at what impact tourism has on that area,” he says.

“When I first started off I thought tourism was just going on holiday and sitting on a beach. But there’s so much more to it that people don’t realise. It really is an eye opener.”