

Leeds student and lecturer win national awards for educational excellence, outshining hundreds of nominees

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Local **student Robert Noble** and **Lecturer Barry Falconer** from **Leeds College of Building** have been named as **Outstanding BTEC Construction Student of the Year** and **Outstanding BTEC Teacher/Tutor of the Year**, respectively, at the National BTEC Awards held in London on 3rd July 2014.

The ceremony was held in recognition of the nearly one million students around the country who are studying BTEC qualifications this year. Pearson, who own Edexcel, the awarding body for BTECs, received over **1000 nominations** across the **20 award categories** for this year's Awards.

Now in their fourth year, the Awards were hosted by **DJ and Presenter Jameela Jamil**, at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London. The attendees (who included the winning students, teachers, and leaders in education) also heard from **philanthropist and presenter, Katie Piper**, and were treated to a dance performance from BTEC students.

Ahead of the Awards Ceremony, the winners, their family, friends and nominators attended a Parliamentary reception in the **House of Lords**, hosted by Government Education Spokesperson **Baroness Sharp**.

Mark Anderson, Managing Director, Pearson UK said, *"The National BTEC Awards are a fantastic way to celebrate all that is excellent in vocational education and I always enjoy meeting these truly inspirational teachers and students.*

"Every year, thousands of BTEC students go on to university and good jobs that really value their skills. They achieve great things in a wide variety of industries vital to the economy, ranging from business and engineering to ICT and healthcare.

"At a time when the value of vocational learning at school and college is continuing to be robustly debated, we believe the example set by these Award winners is part of a growing body of evidence that clearly demonstrates their valuable contribution to both the education system and the broader economy.

"It is vital to support and celebrate the hard work and achievements of outstanding BTEC students and their teachers. This year's judges were impressed by the quality and number of nominations we received but Rob and Barry really stood out as a truly exceptional individuals".

Award winner Barry Falconer said: *"It is an honour bestowed on myself, which I could not have achieved without the superb team at Leeds College of Building. I am proud to have won but it could have been any one of the team as we all strive to inspire lives and build the future of our students. The pressure is now on to maintain these high standards".*

Award winner Robert Noble said: *"I am very appreciative of this award and the recognition that surrounds it. The value of the BTEC construction and built environment course I was on at Leeds College of Building was and still is huge. The course content was current, valid and important, which in a fast moving industry such as construction is a difficult task. It has given me a running start to shaping my career exactly how I wanted; as a Building Surveyor at a leading firm."*

Andy Dransfield, Associate Director at Faithful+Gould where Robert now works, said: *"We are delighted that Rob's efforts have been rewarded in such a prestigious manner. It is testament to the hard work and dedication that he has shown, not only with his studies, but since joining the Building Surveying team here in Leeds. We are in no doubt that Rob will continue this excellent start to his career and we will endeavour to assist him with his future ambitions."*

ENDS

WINNER BIOGRAPHIES

2014 Outstanding BTEC Teacher/Tutor of the Year: Barry Falconer, Leeds College of Building

Nominated by his colleague Vicky Patterson, Barry Falconer is a Lecturer at Leeds College of Building. He came to teaching after 30 years working as a Contractor in the Civil Engineering Industry and his commitment to and enthusiasm for Civil Engineering is unquestionable. He inspires his students and his colleagues – a feat recognised by his peers when he was voted Outstanding Lecturer of the Year in 2013. He is an inspirational and innovative educator who passionately believes that the student experience is paramount.

Quite simply, Barry ticks all the boxes for a shining example of vocational excellence in teaching BTECs. He uses his industrial background in civil engineering to inspire and motivate

his students, and provides them with real industrial experience through site visits and practical work. His list of achievements is formidable - producing the country's first Institute of Civil Engineers Advanced Technical Apprentices and Higher Level Apprentices; playing a pivotal role on the North East Technician Apprenticeship Consortium; training two students who won the National Construction and the Built Environment Higher Apprenticeship Skills Competition in 2013 and being nominated as an Apprenticeship Ambassador.

Barry is an excellent and innovative educator who consistently produces high performing students and couples his phenomenal subject knowledge with an infectious enthusiasm.

2014 Outstanding BTEC Construction Student of the Year: Robert Noble, Leeds College of Building

Rob Noble was nominated by his Curriculum Manager, Greg Bourke, who describes him as a committed and tenacious individual with a strong drive to succeed. He was awarded a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment by Leeds College of Building in 2013, gaining the highest grade possible.

During his course, not only did Rob achieve straight distinctions, he also gained full time employment as a Building Surveyor with Faithful+Gould who are now funding his degree. Rob actively worked towards such an opportunity initially from when he started the BTEC. These opportunities are not common; other students may have given up, but not Rob. He met with Faithful+Gould and outlined the value of them taking him on as a Trainee Surveyor. They were so impressed with his knowledge of construction and drive to flourish that they offered him a well-deserved position.

Rob firmly believes that education is as much about self-evaluation and personal development as it is about the qualification. In recognition of the opportunities his BTEC gave him, he now returns to college in his own time to talk to new students about his BTEC journey and career experiences. Rob is a true BTEC ambassador and a shining example of what the qualification can achieve.

Notes to editors:

1. **About Pearson.** Pearson is the world's leading learning company, with 40,000 employees in more than 80 countries working to help people of all ages to make measurable progress in their lives through learning. Learn more at www.pearson.com/uk
2. The independent judging panel for the Awards included the TES' Darren Evans, FE Week's Shane Mann and Zoe Jackson, Founder and Managing Director of performing arts company 'Living the Dream', as well as Mark Anderson, Managing Director of Pearson UK and other senior Pearson staff and employer representatives.
3. The full list of Award Winners is as follows:

Sector Awards

- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Business & Enterprise Student of the Year: Ben Piper, Highbury College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Creative Art & Design Student of the Year: Connor Thomas, Bridgend College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Construction Student of the Year: Robert Noble, Leeds College of Building
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Engineering Student of the Year: Sam Sebire, Guernsey College of Further Education
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Hospitality, Travel & Tourism Student of the Year: Rosie Birch, Exeter College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Child and Social Care Student of the Year: Bethany Alsbury, City of Bath College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC IT Student of the Year: Jacob Allen, York College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Land Based Student of the Year: Katie Piper, Eastern and Otley College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Media Student of the Year: Sophie Stacey, Harlow College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Performing Arts Student of the Year: Luke Robinson, Birmingham Metropolitan College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Public Services Student of the Year: Reanna Kileen McGuirk, Exeter College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Science Student of the Year: Jake Gorton, Salford City College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Sport Student of the Year: Joe Holland, Herne Bay High School

Main Awards

- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Student of the Year: Connor Thomas, Bridgend College
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Adult Learner of the Year: Simon Wilson, City College Brighton and Hove
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding International BTEC Student of the Year: Konstantina Sardella, AKMI Metropolitan College Athens
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Apprentice of the Year (16-18 years): Jasmine Welsh, Sheffield College

- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Apprentice of the Year (19+ years): Bethany Wilson, Leeds College of Building
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC Teacher/Tutor of the Year: Barry Falconer, Leeds College of Building
- ≡ 2014 Outstanding BTEC School/College of the Year: Exeter College

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