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DUNDEE AND ANGUS
COLLEGE

Richard Gordon

A D&A Spotlight Interview

Serving Up Security: Richard's Journey from Catering to Cyber Security.

Meet Richard Gordon, Cyber Security Engineer at D&A. Richard's journey showcases that you don't have to have all the answers or know where you are going, you just need to take the first step.

When you were younger? What did you dream of doing as a job?

"When I was younger, I always wanted to work with music, the gaming sector or computing or possibly all three! I did my work experience at the College when I was in secondary school working with the ICT Team but did not go straight from school into ICT, I took the long way round."



Can you share a bit about yourself and what job you do now?

"Before joining Dundee and Angus College, when I first left school, I was taught to be a French polisher, and from there I did a few music jobs with the likes of Riptide music studios, Radio Tay and Virgin

Megastores. I also went into the catering industry and worked in places such as, Roo's Leap, Chance Inverkielior and Sharky's. I also ran an ice cream van!

One of the other jobs I had was doing security for pubs, clubs, and football stadiums. The football stadium preambles would go into reconnaissance, and cyber security with the police, this was the first time I thought about cyber security and how it interested me.

As you can tell it took me a while to fully understand what I wanted to do.

One thing is I have always been around technology in some capacity and was lucky in the 90s to have access to some expensive second-hand equipment. This is why I started to shift towards a focus on ICT and Security."

Thinking about your time at D&A, what are some standout moments or experiences that you still carry with you?

"I did my work experience with the College when I was at still at school and worked with Brian, Ian, and Gareth, who still work within ICT at the College.

Over the years I have done the Prince's Trust, via the College, which was brilliant and helped set me back on course in my life overall. This included work experience, work placements, volunteering, and different certificates such as health, hygiene, and telecommunications.

I also completed an Intro to Construction course, however, due to circumstances in my own life at the time I pulled out. The course and the staff were sensational, and I feel this is important as sometimes people feel if they have had an opportunity before that there are no longer any further options. Of course, there always are options.

Once I knew I wanted to pursue a career in Computing and Cyber Security, I began the NC Computer Science and progressed onto and completed my HND, where I managed to get an A!"

How did your experiences at D&A lay the pathway for your career? Are there any classes or staff that set you on your path?

"The courses that stood out for me, or modules that were part of the course, were of course Sharon and George for cyber security. The advice and the preparation for university as well as micro-managing time is advice that I still follow.

Claire for my professionalism and ethics class provided a very informative and relaxing learning environment but everyone learned so much.

James is another lecturer who helped set me on my path, as I could relate so much to working and studying at the same time as he was going through it too. Alan also for the communication classes, this was all-around teamwork throughout my time on the course."

It was a family feeling from a lot of different areas and I loved the care, effort and support that was shown and provided to me.

What were the first steps you took after finishing your course, and how did your time here shape your career choices?

"I went to university after completing my course, but I never finished my studies there, however, I did volunteer in shops, which led to a paid position. I gained some certifications and worked in the private sector in telecommunications as an engineer and ICT Support. This led to a lot of opportunities for me within security and now I work at the College as an ICT Technician, Cyber Security Engineer and also as Lecturer. The not giving up and having confidence, I know came from my time as a student at the College."

Where has your career taken you since those early days?

"Since being at College, I have worked in different computing repair shops. I have also worked in the private sector as an ICT Support and a Telecommunication Engineer, working with different

transport services throughout the UK, this included working with autonomous vehicles. This led to me moving into the public sector and working initially as an ICT Technician at Dundee and Angus College. I have now moved on to be a Computing Lecturer and a Cyber Security Engineer.

Throughout these roles – I have continued my progression and learning by completing a cyber security apprenticeship via the Open University for education and Dundee and Angus College for work placement. I have completed a Masters module in information security management along with various Microsoft certifications. Iterations on progression are key in ICT."

Looking at your journey so far, what are some moments of accomplishments that make you particularly proud?

"I am particularly proud of having a change in career as a mature student and the steps I took along the way. I am also proud of being able to come back and work at the College. Being here has allowed me to continue to learn and grow within my different roles. I am also proud of passing my certifications."

If you could share a piece of advice with current students based on your experiences, what would it be?

"Don't put pressure on yourself to get good grades, as this can cause you not to submit anything. It is always better to submit something, get the feedback and use this to improve rather than submit nothing at all. Learning for me works best in iterations find what way works best for you. Micro-managing your time for the good things in life can highlight the areas for fun instead of for work."

What are your hopes for the future?

"I would like to one day become a CISO chief information security officer. Continue to learn and finish my degree in cyber security. "

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