



WHY IT MATTERS... DESIGN



Loughborough University

Kathy Wilson-Ellis

Head of Human Factors

Whilst I choose to do my MSc out of necessity to gain promotion it actually changed my life!

It wasn't easy juggling uni with life and work but I proved to myself how resilient and organised I could be! I set a role model for my children to keep pushing and working hard. I also found I wasn't as thick as I thought I was! I knew a lot of the subject matter on the course but from a practical application perspective rather than the academic scientific perspective. I now have a more rounded understanding and something to prove my level of expertise.

And now I lead in human factors!



Post 16 Education BTEC Business and Finance	Higher Education MSc Human Factors in Transport
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Why did you choose go study for a degree?

I found myself at a specific stage in my career where my lack of a degree began to hinder my ability to get promotion. I therefore began to look at what degrees I could do in order to achieve "the magic piece of paper" that would help my promotion ambitions.

I came across the MSc at Loughborough in Human Factors that appealed to me. The university took my extensive work experience into account and permitted me onto the course.

The MSc is about understanding why do people do what they do, what factors influence our behaviours and our actions. It explored many aspects from Anthropometry (peoples difference sizes and how this effects design) to biomechanics and biology (how we physically react to factors such as heat and light) and psychology (how we interpret the information around us).





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Kathy's experience as a student

I attended Loughborough as a middle aged married mother of two almost grown children, working full time! The course was over 3 years and was module based so I would be required to attend and stay on campus for one week every few months for intense learning. Often this involved a presentation or test at the end of the week. Then I would return home, pick up all the chores from home and the backlog of work whilst then trying to complete an assignment for the module I had just done! Unfortunately I never had the time whilst on campus to enjoy the social life – it was all work work work for me!

Kathy's Career

I am now head of Human Factors in the Intelligence Transport Services working for a global organisation known as WSP. I have been here two years and love it! However, I never set out to work in a consultancy and never knew what human factors are when I started my journey (I took the scenic route with no idea where my destination was!!). I started work in Police Intelligence understanding why people committed crime and disrupting that sequence of events. Then I worked at Highways England preventing incidents and collisions on the motorways before moving to WSP. Human Factors was at the core of everything I have done – I just didn't know it at the time!

Kathy's advice: It's ok not to have all the answers all the time! Also, on your life's journey, from now to where you end up, you have two choices. You can go the direct way, be clear on where you are going and how to get there and take the most direct route achieving your goal as planned. Or, you can go the scenic route, life may throw you many twists and turns and hills for you to navigate but you will still get to your destination even if at the start of your journey you don't know where that destination is.

Don't worry about the journey or the destination, just enjoy the ride!

Loughborough University offers undergraduate degrees in

Design, Industrial Design, Product Design and Technology, Product Design Engineering, Graphic Design

Please note: Degrees and their titles change over time. Some of these graduates may have studied degrees that have evolved and changed in response to changes in demand from employers.