

"Achieving Student of the Year was for me, a fantastic personal achievement. When collecting the award, Adrienne Lawler made a comment about 'a mature student'. It wasn't until a few days afterwards and I was mulling over the award and what it meant, that I recalled the comment about being a mature student.

The BIFM exams offer young and old alike the opportunity to gain some formal recognition in the FM world. Age should not be a barrier, in fact it can be a distinct advantage. Just think of the wealth of experience that can be applied to some of the questions. There are of course some practical issues about being a mature student, especially a mature student undertaking the BIFM exams supported by distance learning. There is the issue of discipline, keeping to a strict timetable. Time management is also very hard, especially in the modern climate of long working weeks and hectic weekend schedules. Finally there is the no small matter of being able to write clearly and consistently for three hours!

I consider myself very fortunate in that achieving the two distinctions and one credit, I had plenty of support along the way. The support from BPP was tremendous, including the wealth of information available in the workbooks and the regular emails and phone calls keeping me in touch and monitoring progress. The support of my employer was also crucial not least because they paid for it, but also in being flexible when it came to studying. Finally the support of my family, putting up with time spent researching and answering mock exam questions when I perhaps should have been cutting the grass, was also invaluable.

In summary, taking the BIFM Exams can be a daunting prospect, especially for someone who left school in 1979 with only three 'o' levels. But if you have the right support around you and approach them in a positive manner, then the challenge can be quite enjoyable and immensely rewarding."

Paul White, Project Manager, RAF Henlow: BIFM Student of the Year 2007