

Azeefa Sajad

Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Graduates and Graduands, Colleagues, families and friends, today it is my pleasant duty to present to you and the University, Azeefa Sajad for the award of the 2015 Vice chancellors Prize.

Azzefa was born in Yardley and attended Cockshut Hill Technical College. She describes her experience in the lower sixth as particularly traumatic, with which I am sure many here could sympathise, but despite that trauma she was successful under the A2B scheme and came to this University to study nursing in 2012, the first of her family to attend University. The A2B tutor writes that even at that stage she was seen as a natural leader, taking a major role in tutorials and group discussions. During her time at University she continued to assist with the A2B scheme, passing on her experience and enthusiasm. She also received much assistance from staff in the Academic Skills Centre, whose magnificent work often remains hidden in the busy life of this University. She prospered academically and graduates today with a first class degree. Her final year marks were exceptional, with 100 out of 120 credits being marked at greater than 80%. Her dissertation was entitled "How effective is therapeutic clowning in reducing pre-operative anxiety", which led this engineer into a whole new world of knowledge when I looked up exactly what therapeutic clowning was on Google.

Her commitment to the wider student community has been demonstrated through her work through MedSoc. As a non-drinker I am told she has volunteered to be present at the Guild on party nights to help look after students who are vulnerable because they have been enjoying themselves rather too much. She has been a student ambassador and has represented the University on open days, and recently she represented the University at the prestigious "Student Nursing Times" Awards in London. She has taken part in the Teddy Bear doctor scheme in local schools teaching children basic health and hygiene and has presented at a Healthcare networking conference in Cambridge. Outside the University she is active in her local Muslim Community and is participating in charity work through her Mosque. She is now working at Birmingham Children's Hospital on the neo-natal surgical ward.

Here today to see her receive her prize we welcome her father Sajid, her mother Shahee, sister Aamna, brother Faez and her grandparents Mr and Mrs Suleman. They can be proud of her accomplishments, and she and they can look forward to her future when, in the opinion of her tutor and her department, she will become one of the nurse leaders of tomorrow.

Vice Chancellor, for her success at this University, and for her commitment to her profession and to the wider community, I present to you and the University Azeefa Sajad for the award of the Vice Chancellor's prize 2015.