

Winner of the 2023 Hugh Weekes Award

Over the last seven years, Joanna has been working in the food and hospitality industry, both front and back of house. This has led her to acquire many <different skills and extensive knowledge about food service, flavours, and meeting consumer expectations. She has shown passion and dedication to the Baking & Food sector while studying for the last three years at the National Bakery School. When she started her education in 2017, her career aspiration was to become a food technologist. However, her long-term career aspiration is to work for in-house test bakeries for supermarkets to help create new seasonal products and re-design products to meet the consumers' expectations. Recently, her work in customer facing roles allowed her to see how different and individualistic customers can be and how often products need to meet specific criteria and expectations. This has shown her how imperative it is to understand specification briefs and be adaptive to give the customer a product that meets their expectations.

Joanna has shown support to her local community during the COVID pandemic. When her studies had finished in 2020 due to the lockdown, she decided to help her local hospital by undertaking cleaning duties to keep the risk of Infection to a minimum. Thus, cleaning corridors, communal areas and toilets to a high standard. Due to her efficiency and caring nature, she was approached and asked to help the carers to organise tea rounds and serve food. This led her to engaging and talking to the patients, who were either upset or confused during the pandemic. The hospital identified that Joanna had compassion towards all the patients and whom they round comfort in speaking to her.

In one scenario, Joanna got to know an elderly man who turned out to be a soldier. He had no family, so she decided to visit him every day and talk about his time during the war. He had no family, and Joanna became much like a grandchild to him, and he left all his medals and badges of honour to her. She did decline to accept these and requested that he should be laid to rest with the recognition that he served the country. While she might not have a medal to represent her dedication, she has the stories of this man's war experience and hopes to publish these for the younger generation.

For the past three years of teaching this wonderful and humble person, Joanna has continued to strive to achieve the highest marks in all subjects. While in her spare time, she was thinking of different ways to help her community while promoting and encouraging people within the bakery sector.

Yours Truly,
Dr Devon Petrie
Executive Lead & Course Director
The National Bakery School