Tamie Salter  
BSc(Hons) Computer Science, 2001  
PhD Robotics, 2007  
CEO of Que Innovations

Beginning education
Tamie came to the University as a single parent with no formal qualifications; she completed a one year access course and was accepted as an undergraduate. But what happened afterwards really did change her life. ‘The lecturers, a few in particular, were really supportive of me and helped me grow as a person. It is through the University of Hertfordshire that I received the opportunity to move to Canada.’

Having left school with no qualifications, she worked in various administration positions for different companies before deciding to resume her education. ‘I completed my degree with a 2:1 classification and then joined a PhD program at the University. Following this I worked as a Post-Doctoral Researcher at a robotics lab in Canada. After a while, I became a professor at another Canadian University where I taught Computer Science. Four years ago I set up my own company, Que Innovations.’

Successes
Whilst working as a Post-Doctoral Researcher, Tamie was frustrated that her work didn’t seem to filter into the real world which is how Que Innovations was born. ‘Que Innovations is a fledgling robotics company focused on creating devices and apps to assist in autism therapy. Our first product, QueBall, is a spherical robot that is capable of interacting with children. It can move under its own volition, sense touch, has lights, sound and a variety of sensors on-board that allows us to develop games aimed at autism issues.’ Tamie’s daily activities are varied, one day it could be making business decisions on products and the next deciding company strategy. More frequently, Tamie speaks to venture capitalists about funds and deals with government agencies on general issues such as exporting goods. ‘Every day is jam-packed with different issues and challenges, but I find negotiating them very rewarding.’

One of the main highlights for Tamie was when her company was mentioned at The Computerworld Honors Program. ‘When I found out that Que Innovations was being named a Laureate at the ‘Heroes of Technology Awards’ in Washington D.C. in the same category as Microsoft and Dell, I just couldn’t believe that we would be recognised alongside such well renowned companies.’

Recommendations
Both Tamie’s undergraduate degree and PhD have been crucial in her role. Without the relevant knowledge and education, it would be difficult to manage the company which she runs today. ‘I use the knowledge I gained from university to specify the software that our software engineers produce. My broad understanding of computer science allows me to stay abreast of the rapidly changing world of technology and of course, my PhD work has informed much of what my company is currently doing.’ For graduates who are looking to specialise in assistive technology, Tamie recommends that good computer skills are a must along with a good understanding of how technology can be used to assist people. ‘Technology changes so rapidly that you will need to be adaptable.’

Tamie now hopes to grow her company to become a leading provider in assistive technology.