

CELEBRATING *Success* DIPLOMA AWARDS 2018



A record year for student achievement as the 'Class of 2018' graduates

More than 70 graduates of the NAFD Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration (DipFA), Diploma in Funeral Directing (DipFD) and Certificate in Education gathered with friends and family at Birmingham City University (BCU), in December, to receive their awards and celebrate their achievements. It was the Association's largest-ever cohort of students to graduate at the same time.

The event was held, once again, in the Birmingham City University Business School, and graduates caught up with fellow students, their tutors, members of the NAFD Board of Education and Chief Executive Officer, Jon Levett, as they prepared to receive the awards for which they had worked so hard.

Lynn Fulford, Associate Dean who heads the business school, welcomed the graduates, highlighting the importance of their role in society: "The role of a funeral arranger and funeral director is, without doubt, a role that commands a wide breadth of knowledge and a multitude of abilities, including an exceptional level of interpersonal skills.

"Your roles are unique. Who else can we turn to at a time when one of our own friends or a member of our



▲ NAFD tutor, Kate Edwards (second from the right) with her successful students Naomi Franks, Kimberley Mullaney, Joanne Russell and Joy Roe (NAFD Education team)

own family dies? Who else can we turn to for help and understanding, sometimes a shoulder to cry on, at a time when we are not at our best either mentally or physically? Who else can we turn to, to provide a broad service encompassing all of our needs, and who else can we turn to, but true professionals like those of you who are receiving your Diplomas today to organise and to take care of us?

"Today is a celebration of success. Today gives us the opportunity to celebrate and offer recognition for all the hard work you have done. Today is also a day for thanking your friends and family for their support



“As a young person in the funeral profession I wanted to gain as much knowledge as I could. At the age of 22, I feel completing the qualifications has made me more professional and given me a good general all round knowledge. In this job you need to think on your feet, and completing the Diploma has given me that extra confidence.”

Lara Cabourn (DipFD)



during your period of learning and a day to congratulate you on your professionalism, your commitment and your motivation to educate yourselves ultimately so that you are able to provide an excellent service, to be of help and assistance to the bereaved.”

There was also praise for the tutors and examiners who have played such an important part in the success of the NAFD’s qualifications programmes.

Addressing the graduates as she bestowed their Diplomas upon them, NAFD President Abi Pattenden added: “Celebrating your successes with you is a privilege. Today is a day to enjoy and, yes, to celebrate. You can finally relax!

“The long hours of study and completing coursework are over. The exam revision and “Will I remember the answers?” is over. The writing of reflective logs is over. The exam nerves are over. The hours of self doubt are over, and the thoughts of “I should have answered that question another way” are over too. And last, but not least, the nervous wait for the notification of those all-important results is over!

“There is one certainty, which is that most people worry. In your worries you will not have been alone. Your worries prove you are conscientious, that your studies are important to you and that you want to do well.

“One thing I will share with you is that there is no such thing as a typical NAFD graduate. During today’s ceremony we have observed a huge diversity of graduates - people at all stages of their careers, employed by an equally diverse range of employers - all of whom are working in funeral service to help care for bereaved people. Despite the demands of their everyday lives, our graduates took a decision to embrace a challenge and chose to study with the National Association of Funeral Directors.

“I’m sure that each graduate has their own story to tell. Behind each graduate there is a support network, which often includes close family and friends, employers, funeral

directors qualified as tutors and examiners, other NAFD education staff, peer support groups and study partners. For our graduates, who have juggled study, family life and work, this support group is invaluable in helping to make this balancing act more manageable. Whether it’s revision help, a nudge to pick up the learning materials again or taking care of the kids when an assignment deadline is approaching, everyone needs the help of others at some point during their studies. Some graduates will have required extra time or support to help them succeed, while others may have raced through. That doesn’t matter. You have got here. Today is your day to celebrate and for us to acknowledge your success.



▲ High achiever recipient of the Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration, Amy Swinbourne, with her personalised Funeral Products trophy



▲ High achiever recipient of the Diploma in Funeral Directing, Alexis Nicklin

“Let’s not forget, there are other graduates who have been unable to attend today’s celebration - they too should be applauded for their hard work, their determination and their achievement. All NAFD graduates of 2018 feature in the programme and are equally thought of as true achievers.”

High Achiever Award winners for 2018 - Amy Swinbourne (Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration) and Alexis Nicklin (Diploma in Funeral Directing) were also presented with cheques for £100 in celebration of their achievements, and a personalised trophy created by event sponsor, Funeral Products, based on one of its ceramic urn designs.

After receiving their awards, the graduates enjoyed a celebration lunch with their families and friends and a chance to reflect on their achievements. Student Olivia Goodwin, who works for Clarabut & Plumbe and funded herself through the Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration, urged others to consider studying for a qualification: “I would say go for it! Broaden your horizons and take on the challenge with an open mind and dedication. It is so beneficial to all kinds of arrangers, regardless of experience or style. I loved graduating and feel keen to begin the next stage as soon as possible and, of course, best of luck to those that take on the task.”



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“Exam day was a nerve wracking 3½ hours. As well as the pressure of revision, my wife and I were preparing for the birth of our baby - who was due on exam day! Fortunately the exam went well. I was pleased with the outcome and my baby daughter arrived a week later.” **Daniel Barke (DipFD)**

Develop your professional skills in 2019

If you are inspired by the success of the ‘Class of 2018’ why not think about adding an NAFD qualification to your professional achievements?

The Association’s two Diploma courses provide comprehensive training for funeral service professionals and are considered the ‘gold standard’ qualifications for the sector. The Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration and the Diploma in Funeral Directing are studied across a period of between 9-15 months (dependent upon the qualification) and are delivered by a team of highly-qualified NAFD approved tutors and assessed by the NAFD Board of Examiners. There are qualified NAFD tutors based in member funeral businesses across the UK, from Southampton to Dundee, and from Belfast in Northern Ireland to Norwich in the East of England.

As well as the two Diplomas, the Association is also supported in the delivery of its education programme by the London Association of Funeral Directors (LAFD), which operates the LAFD Certificate in Funeral Arranging & Administration. Launched in 2007, the twelve-week LAFD course has been designed specifically as a qualification for those in the frontline of funeral service. Course alumni have been drawn from a variety of funeral service backgrounds - from those with several years’ experience to relatively new staff, and from the smallest to the largest member firms.

With both the Diplomas and the LAFD certificate, graduates are entitled to use a post nominal after their name to indicate their successful completion of the qualification.

For further information about NAFD qualifications please visit nafdqualifications.org.uk (where full details of the Diploma courses and all fees can be found) or contact the NAFD Education team by email to trainingadministration@nafd.org.uk or by telephone on 0121 711 1343.

Information on the LAFD Certificate can be found at www.lafd.org.uk or by contacting the course administrator, LAFD Secretary Judith Williams, at secretary@lafd.org.uk or on 07776 995335.

“After starting in my wife's family firm, I felt that it would be an advantage to return to study and complete the Diploma in Funeral Arranging & Administration in order to broaden my knowledge and give me a recognised qualification. Since completing the qualification I have felt a bit more confident in the information that I am giving to families on a day-to-day basis, as well as being assured in my own abilities. Doing a Diploma is a ‘must’ in my view - not only is there the learning aspect of the course, there is the valuable networking ability within the workshops.”

**Michael Humphreys
(Dip FAA)**

“I found the balance of work and study challenging at times, but nothing-ventured nothing-gained, you have to put in the effort anywhere to succeed. Being qualified has changed my role for the better as it has enhanced my confidence greatly. Having the right tutor is key, and I would advise others looking at commencing the course to go for it...it's rewarding, fun you meet a great team and you know deep down...it's a vocation...a job for life.”

Michelle Low (Dip FAA)



“It is one of the best things I have ever done. I thoroughly enjoyed my time doing the DipFAA course, and am looking forward to doing the DipFD course. Although it can be difficult and there is a lot to learn, it is so rewarding at the end. My tutor, Kate, made the whole experience fun and as easy as possible. Please do not hesitate - it is well worth the time and effort.”

Jack Kelly (DipFAA)

