



CALLUM PARKER

I knew at primary school that I wanted to be an accountant, but I found it challenging to secure a job in the profession. When I was unsuccessful in applying for school leaver trainee programmes, I decided to continue my accountancy studies at Ayr College with an HNC and HND. The HND qualification granted me direct access into year 3 of Accountancy at Heriot-Watt, which I felt was the best way to enhance my opportunity to secure a full-time role in an accountancy firm.

Although in some ways I benefited from only moving to university for two years, I didn't realise then the vast difference in learning styles between college and university – the transition at first was somewhat challenging. Moving to Edinburgh was also the first time I had lived far away from my family - I loved studying and living there though, and I was fortunate to build strong friendships early in my time which helped see me through my course.

I found out about the ICAS Foundation through an email from the University. I received many benefits from my time with the Foundation, but I was extremely fortunate in the opportunities I was offered. The Foundation team helped secure me a part time role in the ICAS finance function and through this, I was able to attend various events and learn more about the profession, training routes and career opportunities. They also helped me find a summer internship at RSM, which gave me experience in the audit profession. I found this insight invaluable when considering my career options and preparing for interviews for graduate positions. Without this experience, I'm not certain I would have been offered my graduate role at PwC, a firm that I'd always strived to work for, as it set me apart from other candidates and helped me excel in my interview.

There were always affordability concerns and worries when it came to planning and attending University, so the financial assistance from the Foundation really helped ease some of that stress to help me focus on my studies. Having part time jobs at ICAS and in retail to help support my living costs, I worked hard to find and maintain an appropriate balance between my part time jobs and prioritising my study requirements.

I was extremely fortunate in the assistance I received from the ICAS Foundation - it kick-started my career and helped me understand the variety of available roles in the industry. Looking back, I know the career progression and opportunities I've been presented have been highly influenced by the assistance I received from the Foundation.

Education:

Heriot-Watt University

Accountancy and
Finance

Graduated 2016 with
Upper Second Class
Honours

Role:

Crowe LLP

Audit Manager

Top Tip:

“Try and take up every opportunity that's presented to you from the Foundation, and utilise its networks to meet people.”