



Callum Parker

I knew from a young age that I wanted to become an accountant, however I found it challenging to secure a job in a trainee position. Having been repeatedly rejected by school leaver programmes, I decided to continue my studies at Ayrshire College with a HNC then HND in Accountancy - these granted me direct access into 3rd year of Accountancy at Heriot-Watt University, which I felt was the most likely path to help finally secure a position and commence my career in the profession.

Although in some ways I benefited from directly entering 3rd year of University, I didn't realise the vast difference in learning styles between College and University – so 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 was fortunate to build strong friendships early on which helped see me through the course.

I found out about the ICAS Foundation through an email from the University, from which I applied and was fortunately accepted. I received many benefits throughout my time with the Foundation, however was extremely fortunate with additional support and opportunities, such as help in securing a part time role in the ICAS finance department. Through this I was able to attend various CA events and learn more about the profession, training routes and potential career paths. The Foundation also helped me obtain a summer internship with RSM, providing me with invaluable experience in the audit profession.

There were always affordability concerns when it came to planning and attending University, so the financial assistance and part time job really helped ease a lot of that stress. Although I worked hard throughout, the support meant I was able to manage my time effectively and maintain a healthy balance to ensure my studying wasn't compromised by financial anxiety.

The various opportunities and support mentioned above helped shape my future career aspirations, confidence, and preparation for graduate role interviews. Without this, I'm not certain I would have obtained my first graduate accountancy role with PwC - a firm that I'd always strived to join, but was once told that I would never work at 'without a first class honours degree from the top University in Scotland'.

The Foundation team definitely kick-started my professional career and understanding of the variety of available roles in Accountancy. My career journey since the Foundation's support has helped provide a life I didn't think I could ever achieve - I honestly can't express how truly grateful I am.

Education:

Heriot-Watt University
Accountancy and Finance
Graduated 2016 with Upper
Second Class Honours

Role:

Virgin Money
Internal Audit Manager
(Pensions + Investments)

Top Tip:

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



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