



KAYLEY McCOMBE

Although I thought about attending university, it wasn't until I studied Higher Accounting and achieved good grades that I seriously considered going on to further education. My family encouraged me to continue studying, as having a degree would open more doors for me, and I chose the University of Stirling as I love the city.

It was my school Accounting teacher who told me about the ICAS Foundation programme, and I quickly saw the value it could offer. I really benefited from the mentoring support – my mentor helped me identify ways to improve my academic writing, and to see accountancy as a realistic career option. The Foundation staff team also encouraged me, and I knew that if I needed assistance, I could always reach out and ask for it.

I loved my time at university, and I always focused on how I could achieve a good degree result. It was difficult in early years when I commuted, leaving Glasgow at 5am for classes, but the long-term benefit of prioritising my studies was so clear. The Foundation bursary supported my travel and textbook costs - this meant that I could balance my studies with my part-time job and still have time to enjoy university activities, without becoming overly stressed about my financial situation.

I took advantage of the opportunities offered by the Foundation, such as attending a dinner at Stirling Castle where I met other Foundation students, CAs and the ICAS President. It was great to have the opportunity to benefit from the experience and advice of others - it meant so much to me and gave me much more confidence when I was applying for graduate roles.

I originally planned to take a year out after university to gain some office experience and then apply for graduate roles, but Covid-19 and lockdown delayed me finding the right role. I was keen to work in a smaller practice where I could gain a wide range of experience, so I was delighted when Nelson Gilmour Smith offered me a role where I can work and complete my CA qualification – working in a small office means that I've got to know the team and our clients so much quicker.

I'm proud to be the first in my family to attend university. The ICAS Foundation was an incredible support throughout my studies, and being part of the Foundation programme gave me the self-belief and confidence that a career in accountancy was for me. If you are planning to study accountancy or finance at university, then I would definitely recommend applying to the ICAS Foundation – you have nothing to lose!

Education:

University of Stirling

Accountancy

Graduated 2019 with
Upper Second Class
Honours

Role:

Nelson Gilmour Smith

Trainee Chartered
Accountant

Top Tip:

“Don't limit yourself in your applications – as a CA, it's important to be adaptable so be open to different firms and a change of location.”