

# VARSITY

Guide to Careers 2022-23



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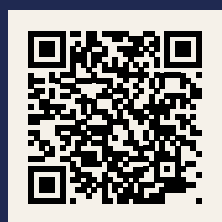
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# Welcome to the latest edition of the Varsity Guide to Careers!

There remains no doubt that many graduates will be facing a tough few years ahead, so we have opted to continue to take a slightly different approach with the Careers Guide this year; though course, we remain pleased and proud to feature introductions to some of the top firms, graduate schemes and post graduate education opportunities worldwide.

In addition though, like the guides from the last two years, we have again decided to reach out to a few Cambridge graduates from over the last ten years or so, and asked them to write about their own experiences since leaving “the bubble”. Some of them have taken less obvious paths since finishing at Cambridge, we’ve brought these articles together under the broad heading of “Finding my way” and we hope that you enjoy reading about their experiences.

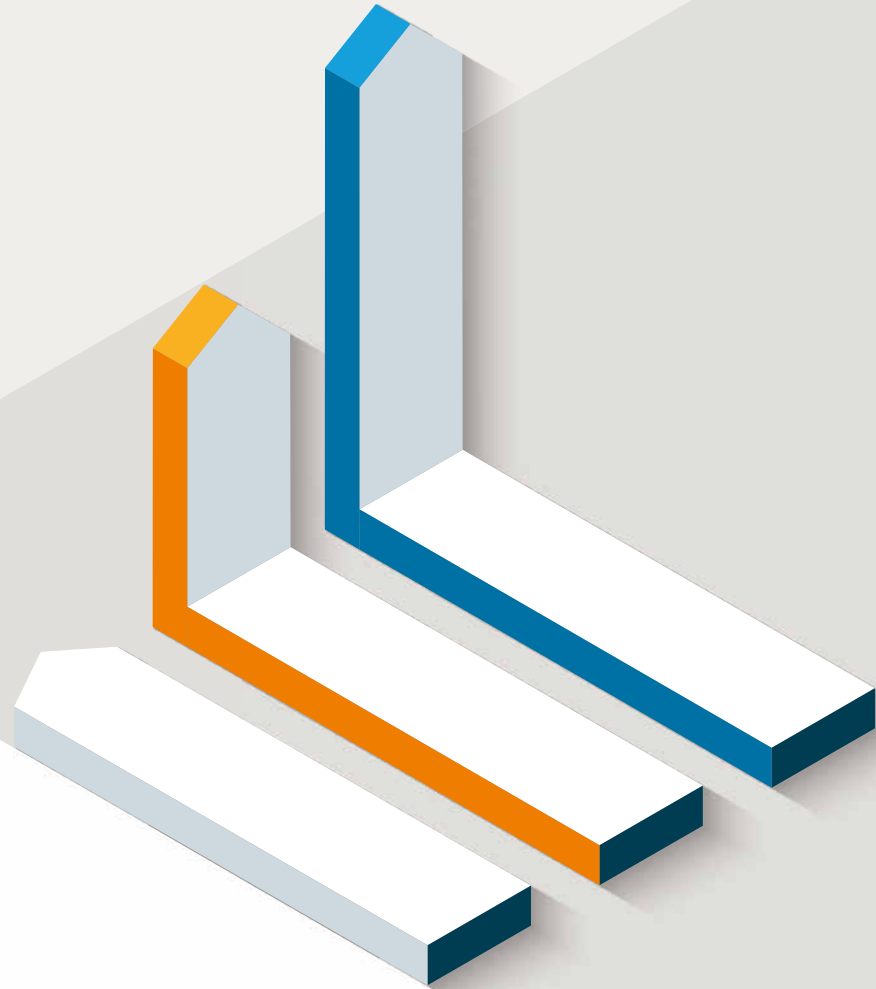
We all hope you find our publication interesting and informative! Your friends here at Varsity wish you all every success with your degrees and whatever you choose to do next!

**Mark**



# d-fine

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analytical.  
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## Your career at d-fine

We are a European consultancy firm focussed on analytical and quantitative topics and the development of sustainable solutions to bring about positive change for our clients.

### **What does d-fine offer you?**

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### **Who is eligible to join?**

Master's or PhD-level graduates in STEM fields

### **How can I apply?**

Please go to our Job Portal on our website [www.d-fine.com](http://www.d-fine.com)



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## d-fine

d-fine is a European consultancy firm with over 1,000 employees, distributed across eleven offices in seven countries. Our focus is on quantitative issues and the development of sustainable technological solutions. d-fine's consulting approach is based on years of practical experience driven by employees with analytical and technological skills.

This combination has proven itself with more than two hundred clients across all sectors of the economy, owing to its bespoke fit, efficiency and sustainable implementation.

To expand our consulting team, we are looking for students or graduates of physics, mathematics, computer science, engineering, economics or other natural sciences with quantitative or technological specializations. You must have an excellent academic record, be fluent in English and have

a high mathematical and/or technological affinity.

In addition to strong analytical skills and a result-oriented approach, we attach great importance to social competence. A “team-first” approach is at the core of our company philosophy and is reflected in project structures, employee development and incentive systems.

Our aim is that you feel at home with us and remain motivated for the long term. That is why we offer you, in addition to exciting projects, a collegial team, attractive career and salary model, and a wide range of additional benefits, such as our extensive training program as part of the d-fine Academy.

We are continually looking for new talent and would welcome your application to join d-fine.

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## SEO London

Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, Ltd. (SEO London) is a UK-registered charity delivering superior educational, training, and mentoring support to university students and young professionals from underrepresented backgrounds. SEO London programmes focus on pre-professional development (Schools programmes), career access (Careers programmes), access to meaningful employment (Beyond Barriers programme), and long-term success within elite global industries (Alumni programmes). Founded in 2000, SEO London has subsequently delivered two decades of transformative leadership in the UK workplace diversity and inclusion segment.

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SEO London's mission goes far beyond recruitment. The charity aims to create a lasting and powerful community of diverse talent with over 25,000 registered candidates from more than 120 UK universities in addition to several French, Belgian, and German universities.

Our holistic training programmes help candidates to succeed well into their careers. Our charitable mission and structure magnify our impact by permitting us to engage with more than 8,000 alumni in our training and mentorship programmes. People can join SEO London as candidates matching the following criteria: being part of an ethnic minority, gender (female and non-binary identifying), and having social mobility qualifying characteristics.

We also offer support in gaining commercial awareness through our masterclasses, personal branding workshops, and networking opportunities with our partner firms. We work with over 130 world class employers who are as enthusiastic as we are about diversity, equity, and inclusion. To become an SEO London Candidate simply sign-up through our website.

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The industries we work within are technology, investment banking, asset management, corporate law, real estate, insurance, consulting, and alternative investments.

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# Finding my way...



**Jade Cuttle** graduated from Homerton College in 2017 with a degree in MML French and Russian.

I've been working as Arts Commissioning Editor at The Times for nearly three years - writing and commissioning reviews, features and interviews for the paper with a focus on music, TV, film, visual arts and literature. Each day is different - from interviewing actors from *Stranger Things*, *Squid Game*, or *Money Heist*, to zipping off through London or Paris to review an exhibition, editing or commissioning famous names to feature in our weekly culture fix interview series.

My first break into national journalism, however, very kindly came through Varsity - a two-week placement at The Sunday Times foreign desk while I was reading Russian and French at the Homerton in Cambridge - a beautiful, stimulating and supportive place I fondly still think of as 'home'. This placement kicked off a stint at the Guardian, freelancing, working abroad as a Paris correspondent for Culture Trip, then Ambit and Poetry Society. As an undergrad I was

dabbling in Varsity after being appointed as Arts Editor, a role that mainly involved commissioning artwork and illustrations for Vulture - I still have the personalised Varsity hoody, and on occasion have worn it around the house when I couldn't find anything else.

Coming back to Cambridge recently for my MA congregation reminded me, almost painfully, just what a wonderful time of creative mingling and exploration this city once offered. It was here where I first found the inspiration to write my album of nature-inspired poem-songs 'Algal bloom' - now on Spotify, after an MA in creative writing at University of East Anglia - and sparked my foray into music and poetry, with TV and radio appearances and debut poetry collection out soon. I miss it dearly, and always looking for an excuse to wander back.

[www.jadecuttle.com](http://www.jadecuttle.com) @JadeCuttle

## Think Ahead

Times are tough for us all right now, especially for those of us living with mental health problems. But you could choose a career that changes lives. With the right support, from the right person, anyone with a mental health problem can thrive. You could be that person - giving that support. Support for the things that matter most to us all: housing, family, employment, relationships, and community. Mental health social workers play a crucial role in navigating all of this and empowering people to thrive. The Think Ahead programme is an innovative route into social work, for graduates remarkable enough to make a real difference to people with mental health problems.

- Train on the job, working alongside clinical professionals in NHS Mental Health Trusts and Local Authorities.
- Gain two qualifications: qualify as a social worker and earn a master's degree from Middlesex University.
- Join one of the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers.

Think Ahead is a highly selective programme. While you need no prior experience of social work to apply, our criteria states that you must:

- Hold or achieve at least a 2:1 degree or equivalent in a subject other than social work
- Show a passion for improving the lives of people with mental illness.
- Demonstrate key attributes including resilience, empathy, and communication skills.

When you complete the two-year programme, you will become part of the Think Ahead alumni network. Most people choose to stay in the social work profession, but there will be a number of career options available to you including becoming a leading frontline practitioner, moving into service leadership, or using your leadership experience in an alternative career.





# Become a mental health social worker

Do something that matters



Get paid to train as a mental health social worker



Join a Times Top 100 Graduate Employer



Earn a master's degree



Make a difference to people's lives from day one

Jade, Think Ahead social worker trainee

# Now, what?

**Lotte Brundle** is currently a third year studying English at Hughes Hall.

“Now, what?”. These are the words that haunted my partner when he graduated University in the Summer of 2020. At 25, he is still trying to figure out what comes next after graduations. At 23, I have even less of an idea what my future holds.



Leaving university is at once necessarily hard, whilst also seeming hardly necessary. Being in a relationship with somebody two years older than me means that I have been able to see that stages that come after graduation play out before my very eyes. So, beware. Because they are ugly. So let me break them down for you, so that you are a little less shocked when you get there.

## Stage One – Relief

The primary sentiment my boyfriend felt when completing his degree was an overwhelming sense of ‘Thank God.’ I feel my relationship to leaving university will be more complex than his, but there will definitely be aspects of life here that I am happy to wave goodbye to: College snobbery; frequent FOMO; having to pretend you’re a social smoker to artfully escape the insufferable social-climbers at society socials; and, worst of all, being chatted up by someone who is desperate to tell you about their PhD while strangers knock your pint over at Rumboogie. But the dreaded ‘Academic Rigour’ is the thing that I am most looking forward to leaving behind.

## Stage Two – Revert to childhood

On returning home, the second thing my boyfriend found is that, despite being an adult man, with no money and a giant student loan hanging over his recently mortarboard-clad head, he simply had to bite the bullet and live with his parents. Although it’s nice to have your washing done for you, after a while, it is inevitable that you will revert again to the early-teenage version of yourself. Cue slamming doors and asking your Mum and Dad for a lift into town. You’ll be nostalgic for the 5minute Voi into central Cambridge in no-time.

## Stage Three – Sad grad

You may have had grand plans to trek the Alps, attend a yoga retreat in Bali, or go on a fancy skiing holiday with your uni pals, but once that’s done and dusted, it’s likely that you’ll find yourself out of money, with friends that live in different locations around the UK nowhere near to you. Unless you were one of the lucky ones who managed to secure a post-grad job straight away, welcome to the life of a ‘Sad Grad’. Forlornly wearing your college puffer around the house and desperately refreshing the Camfess Facebook page awaits.

## Stage Four – Panic Masters

We all know someone who’s so desperate to return to uni that they apply for a panic Masters. Myself included.

## Stage Five – Get a proper job! (in other words, acceptance)

Even if you go on to do a Master or a PhD, all good things must eventually come to an end. Either you end up realising your yoga instructor in Bali/ Freelance travel writer/ Small business start-up dream, or you go to work for a big corporation. Or, like most of us will, you spend a couple of years figuring things out. Whatever you end up doing, and wherever you end up doing it, your time at Cambridge will have shaped you as an adult in indescribable ways. So, if you find yourself getting worried about graduating just remember, you’ll only find it hard to say goodbye to something if it was something you really enjoyed. That’s the bitter-sweet part about graduation.

Looking for an intellectually challenging and rewarding career option?

## KICK START YOUR CAREER AS A PATENT ATTORNEY WITH US



### What Does It Involve?

Training as a Patent Attorney is a career path that will enable you to combine your understanding of science with legal expertise.

You will leave the lab environment yet remain at the cutting edge of science and technology, applying your knowledge and skill in a commercial context. You will help to protect intellectual property assets and grow businesses.

### Sound Interesting?

J A Kemp is a leading firm of UK and European Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys with offices in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Paris and Munich.

Deadline for our Autumn 2023 intake:  
10 January 2023

[www.jakemp.com/careers](http://www.jakemp.com/careers)



**J A KEMP**  
PATENT ATTORNEYS • TRADE MARK ATTORNEYS



# Cisco-Ensoft

**Main location:** Harpenden

**About us:** We are an engineering team within Cisco that works with global service providers, developing software that connects the world. The Internet depends every day on the code we write. It's challenging work that matters. It's also fun: excelling at writing complex software is what we enjoy. We've grown by taking a few of the best graduates each year who have then built careers with us, by learning from our world-class development organisation. It's an ideal environment for bright, creative people with an interest in software.

**Opportunities available:** Software engineering

**Graduates sought:** Computer Science knowledge and coding

expertise are obviously very valuable – you'll learn how to apply them to Internet-scale complex systems – but they aren't essential if you can show us that you are enthusiastic about a career in software and have the right aptitude.

**Graduate Salary:** Competitive. Including extensive compensation plan: bonus, pension, 5 days to give to your preferred charity, birthday off on us, and much more.

**Vacation work:** 2-3 month summer internships and 1 week micro-interns

**Application advice:** The application process is really simple. Follow the links at [cs.co/ensoft](https://cs.co/ensoft) to upload a CV. Interviews will be held in Autumn term via video, just needing a couple of hours of your time.

# J A Kemp LLP

J A Kemp LLP is one of the largest UK and European Patent and Trade Mark Attorney firms, with offices in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Paris and Munich. J A Kemp's Patent Attorneys handle patent applications in the UK, Europe and worldwide. The firm works for a huge variety of clients, from startups, spinouts and SMEs through to some of the largest corporate clients and most prestigious academic institutions in the world.

Training as a Patent Attorney is a career path that will enable you to combine your understanding of science with legal expertise. You will leave the lab environment yet remain at the cutting edge of science and technology, applying your knowledge and skill in a commercial context. You will help to protect intellectual property assets and grow businesses.

We offer a programme of training to take you right through to qualification as a Patent Attorney (European and UK Chartered). We support you with one to one mentoring, external courses, internal tutorials and on-the-job training. We are very proud of our exam success rate and we will continue to support your professional development throughout your career with the firm.

If you are interested in a career as a Patent Attorney, and for information on applying for our 2023 Trainee Patent Attorney intake, please visit our website:

<https://jakemp.com/en/careers/>

# Hertie School

The Hertie School is a private post-graduate university based in Berlin and is Germany's foremost professional institution for public policy. It prepares exceptional students for leadership positions in government, business and civil society via its motto, "Understand Today, Shape Tomorrow."

Interdisciplinary and practice-oriented teaching, first-class research and an extensive international network set the Hertie School apart and position it as an ambassador of good governance, characterised by public debate and engagement. It offers the following 2-year postgraduate programmes: Master of Public Policy (MPP), Master of International Affairs (MIA), Master of Data Science for Public Policy (MDS), and an Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA).

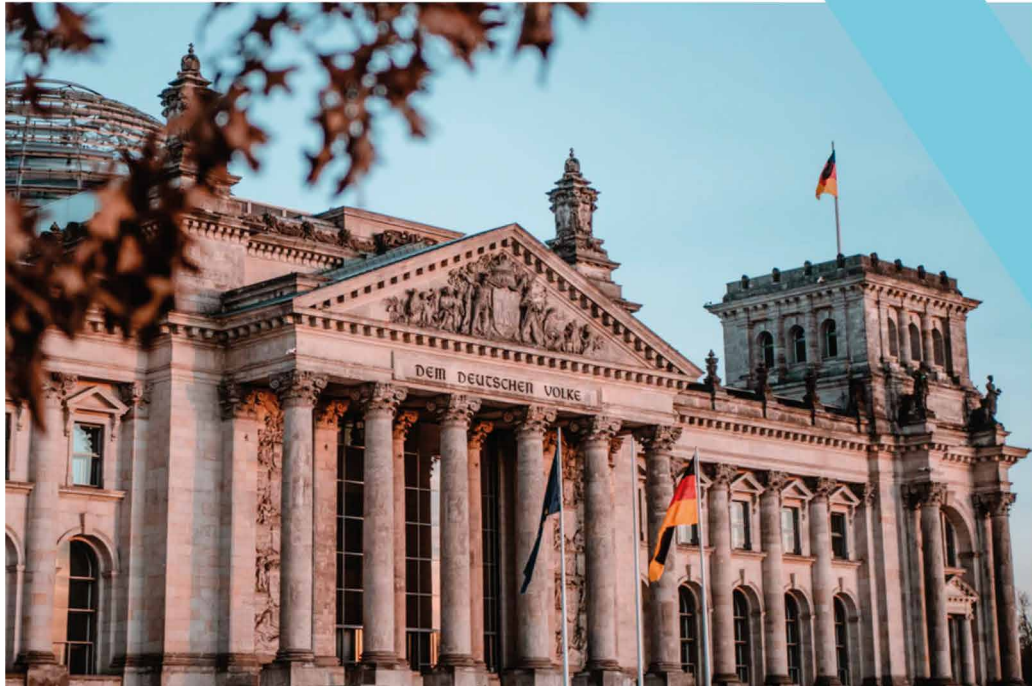
Students in these degree-courses will be guaranteed either an internship or full professional year, as well as access to the European job market upon graduation in the form of a 1.5-year job-seeking visa.

**Deadlines to apply:**

30 Nov. (Early-bird tuition waiver deadline)

1 Feb. (Priority deadline for scholarships)

1 May (Final deadline)



## Ready for a career in Europe?

Join our master's programmes in international affairs, policy and governance in the heart of Berlin.



**[hertie-school.org](https://hertie-school.org)**

# Finding my way...

**James Syrett** graduated from Magdalene College in 2013 with a degree in Natural Sciences.

Finishing my BA in Plant Sciences left me feeling buoyant over the summer, and I felt bold enough to apply for a PhD project. There are no strict entry requirements for a Doctorate, but it is unusual for someone to go straight from a Bachelor's. My personal tutor told me "A BA from here is equivalent to a Master's from a lot of places", and I guess she was right.

The project was in Agronomy, working with cut flower growers, and the project had huge media appeal. The early risers among you might have heard my voice on Radio 4's Farming Today. If you are thinking of applying for a PhD, ask yourself whether the topic is likely to get you press coverage, and whether you are comfortable with this.

I loved the work, which let me get my hands dirty and took me all over the country, but two years in, I was struggling badly, and was eventually diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome. I had struggled with low energy my whole life, but never thought much of it, but now it was too severe to ignore. The end result was a badly executed project, incompletely written up and with nothing left in the tank to salvage it, and I eventually was withdrawn without completing it. Drive is the single most important thing needed to complete a PhD, but no amount of enthusiasm for the subject can compensate for a physically draining illness.

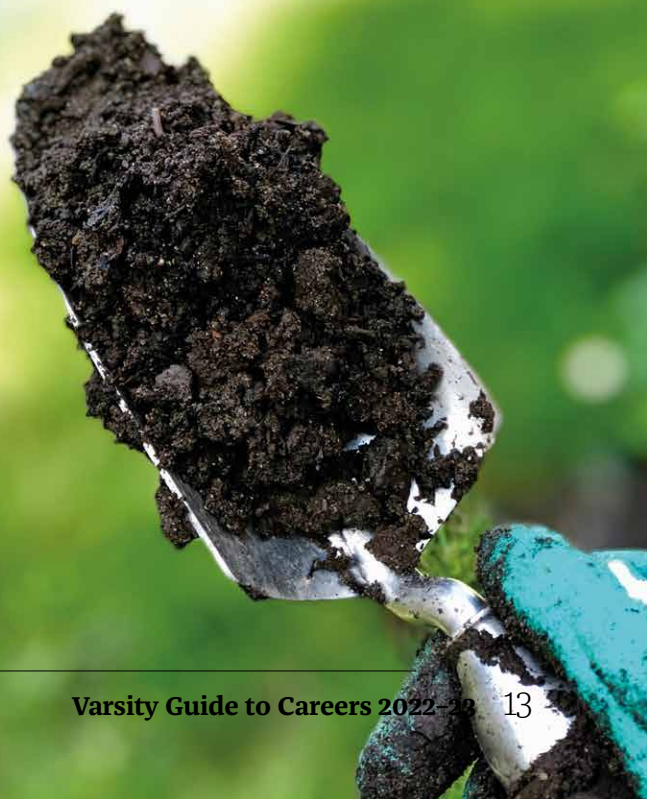
Things did not end too badly for me, though. Someone in a volunteer group suggested I work as an assessor at a land-based university. After a chat with my supervisor, we found not an assessor job, but a full-blown lecturing position – with the deadline for applications in two days. We scrambled an application in time for Friday, received an interview invitation on Monday, and went for the interview on Thursday. The plan was only to use it as an opportunity to get feedback but, to my surprise, I was offered the job the next day.

That is where I have been for the last four years. A land-based university is a wonderful place to work – with sprawling

gardens and farmland to escape into, rather than being cooped up indoors all week. We also have horses stabled and a menagerie of exotic animals for teaching purposes, so if I'm ever bored, it is easy enough to go and get peed on by a marmoset. I lecture in Agriculture and Horticulture (mainly the fresh produce side of both), and I still get to handle plants on a regular basis – something I really wanted in a career.

Every bit as important to me is the opportunity to teach to the next generation of students. Tim Minchin said in his address to graduands of his alma mater that they should all become teachers, even if only for a few years. If you feel a sense of gratitude towards your current lecturers, you will have some idea of what it is like to be on the other side.

A Cambridge degree is not a ticket to a trouble-free life and career, but you can take comfort in it as an indelible charm that keeps a lot of doors open to you. In an age where second chances seem fleetingly rare, I am grateful to get back on my feet again.

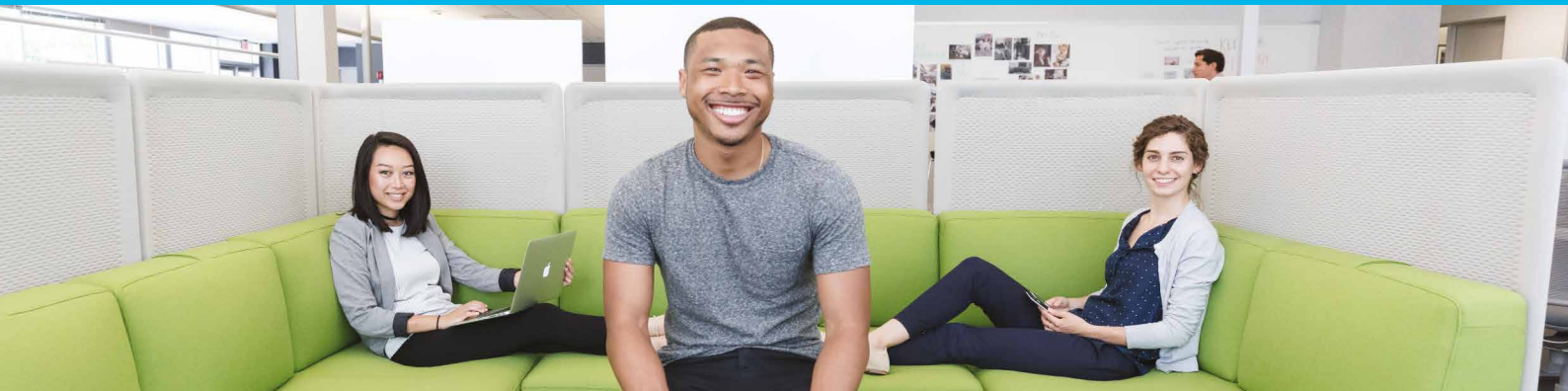






# Be You, With Us

#WeAreCisco



## Software Engineer

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# James Whistance-Smith

Maths, & Computer Science,  
Working for Cisco's Ensoft Software Engineering Team.

## How did you start working for Ensoft/Cisco?

I reached the third year of my degree knowing that I wanted to do something that makes a difference within a small, vibrant setting that I would feel a part of.

I visited the careers fairs and collected the obligatory fliers and freebies but already knew the majority were of no interest. I knew Cisco as 'the' cutting edge networking company and was intrigued by the idea of Ensoft as a small team with its own culture and identity composed of highly motivated and like-minded folks.

I went along to a presentation by a senior manager within the Ensoft team and chatted afterwards to recent graduate employees that seemed to have a real passion for both the work and the environment. It seemed to tick all my boxes and applying was a no-brainer.

## What was the recruitment process like?

The application process couldn't have been easier, I simply submitted my CV and was contacted within a couple of days inviting me to the next interview day. The interview day consisted of a logic test followed by two interviews. I was back in the college common room within two hours and feeling optimistic but not wanting to get my hopes up. I received a job offer shortly after that.

## Can you describe what you do for the company?

Primarily I'm a project and people manager and take great pride in trying to organize projects that give my team challenging and interesting work suited to their strengths and individual development. However, my role is still very technical with plenty of scope to get hands-on in software development as well as technical design and review work.

Beyond the core work I'm involved in various 'virtual teams' such as helping with technical and network support, organizing Cisco-Ensoft social activities (including a family weekend away next year) and looking out for people's wellbeing as a mental health first aider, to name just a few...

## What's it like working in Cisco's Ensoft team?

We enjoy the benefits of being part of a huge, progressive and forward-thinking company that additionally has a culture and dynamism of a small site.

As part of Cisco we have the opportunity to innovate and create software solutions targeted to the rapidly expanding needs of the world's biggest service providers and tech companies as well as enjoy the perks of working for a big company.

However, our identity as a small team with our own culture is a real positive. There are the small things like the office games (pool, table tennis, etc) and weekly breakfast, the daily self-organised sports clubs (football, climbing, running, etc) through to the organised social events such as rafting, weekends away or family summer BBQs.

Ultimately, it's a place where I find the work interesting and challenging, feel as though I'm realising satisfying career development with plenty of scope to go further and enjoy socialising with the people that I work with.

## What kind of work can people expect to be doing in their first year?

We expect to get new graduates working on production code and contributing as part of a development team in under a month. This typically means being assigned a module of code to write and test. At the same time, the close team structure includes a mentor for new graduates, which means there is plenty of support.

## Can you describe what you look for in an applicant?

We look for people who work hard and take pride in their work, and that should be backed up by a strong academic record. Some experience is useful, though not essential (we offer excellent training!). What we really want to see is an enthusiasm for software engineering - it's great to find recent graduates who have developed applications or run computer systems.

# INSEAD PhD Positions for 2023 intake. Study in Asia and Europe with five years of funding

INSEAD, one of the world's leading and largest business schools, is now accepting applications for the PhD in Management programme, mid-August 2023 intake.

We are looking for 16-18 promising potentials to join INSEAD'S premier PhD in Management programme in the following areas: Accounting, Decision Sciences, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Marketing, Organisational Behaviour, Strategy, and Technology and Operations Management. Candidates passionate about research and motivated to pursue an exciting and successful academic career are highly encouraged to apply.

Fully integrated across INSEAD's two campuses, France and Singapore, PhD students interact with faculty experts and like-minded peers, benefit from alliances with Wharton and Sorbonne and conduct world-class research in the school's state-of-the-art behavioural lab in Paris. Moreover, with the programme's formidable placement history, PhD graduates secure top academic placements globally.

The INSEAD PhD is highly interdisciplinary across eight areas offered. Its intimate size ensures critical faculty mentorship and research support. Unlike many other programmes, it seeks to admit research partners for its faculty, not research assistants.

As many leading universities try to internationalise both curriculum and faculty, having the INSEAD PhD gives students a tremendous edge with its global format over most management schools.

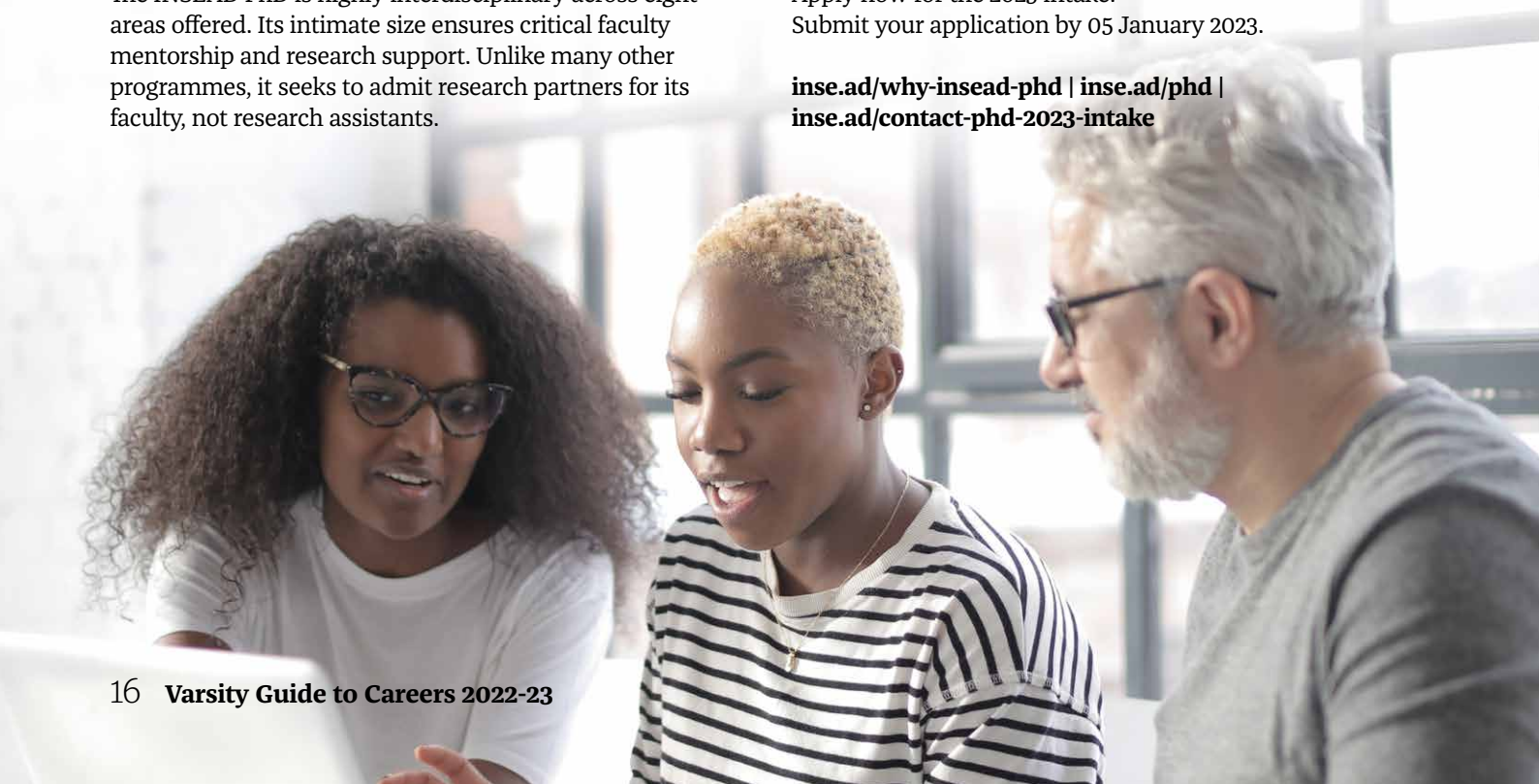
## What are we looking for in a candidate?

Our standards are high but extremely broad. We welcome applications from various backgrounds, including engineering, sciences, economics, psychology, sociology, etc., with a clear motivation to pursue an exciting career in business academia.

Prospects with a solid academic record, a competitive GMAT or GRE, research exposure, strong faculty recommendations, and a strong desire to pursue unparalleled research as a management professor are poised to apply for the INSEAD PhD. Successful applicants, regardless of background, will receive **five years full scholarship** ([insead.ad/phd-financing](https://insead.ad/phd-financing)).

Apply now for the 2023 intake.  
Submit your application by 05 January 2023.

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[insead.ad/contact-phd-2023-intake](https://insead.ad/contact-phd-2023-intake)







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for the World®



# PhD in Management

## Study in Europe and Asia with five years scholarship.

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With the INSEAD PhD, you have the unique opportunity to study in two locations, France and Singapore, go for an exchange with Wharton in the US, benefit from the partnership with Sorbonne Université, and receive five years scholarship\*.



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*\*visit [insead.ad/phd-financing](https://insead.ad/phd-financing) for the latest information.*

# Careers in engineering, science & technology

ECM Selection, helping graduates, PhDs and professionals find top roles with leading UK science and technology companies for over 30 years

At ECM Selection in Cambridge, our personal approach is there to provide you with exciting options when you are looking for a job in software, electronics, mechanical engineering, mathematics, physics, or the applied sciences. Over the years, we have worked with graduates, PhDs and postdocs as well as experienced industry veterans, throughout their careers.

## Do you work with all types of companies?

Everything from start-ups and university spin-spinouts to boutique specialists and multinationals. We have worked with companies with unicorn status, as well as those starting out in a garden shed.

## How about internships, placements, sponsorship?

We can help with permanent, full-time positions after graduation. Visa sponsorship is typically reserved for senior or very specialist jobs due to government criteria.

## How about research?

We work with commercial R&D teams in product development and applied technology, often with a strong scientific angle, offering opportunities for innovation with long term career progression.

## Why should I use a recruitment agency?

It's important for your CV to stand out from the crowd since graduate and PhD-level competition is very high. A recruiter who knows the company well can advise and guide here and on interviews and job offers. Provided they have a sufficiently strong reputation, and are specifically engaged by the company and understand their business, a recruiter's introduction can be a real asset.

## Don't you just find jobs on the internet, and suggest them to people?

Far from it. All the roles ECM offer are with companies who specifically asked for our help, are pleased to hear from us and many of whom we have known and been building

relationships with for years. Our personal approach extends to decision makers at companies as well!

## I've heard stories about variable experiences with recruitment agencies. Why are ECM different?

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# Living and working in London

**Zoah Hedges-Stocks** graduated from Murray Edwards College in 2013 with a degree in History.

*'I'm moving to London. I've got an internship in Hell and a flatshare in Mount Doom.'*

*Phil Wang, King's, 2012*

Congratulations on securing the big grad job! The stress-mill of Cambridge may have prepared you for this better than other unis, but it will still be something of an adjustment. My advice is generally about money and transport, two things that you will, by necessity, become obsessed with once you move to the capital. You may have never cared about trains in your life, but you are about to develop some very strong opinions on them.

I cannot stress enough how much London isn't Cambridge. Don't talk about university unless someone asks you about university. Even then, don't talk about it. They're just being polite.

Don't cycle in London, unless you have a death wish, or your commute is on one of the separate cycleways. In that case, it might be worth it. Yes, you'll have to shower at work and keep a change of clothes in the office, but rush hour Tube commutes are pretty sweaty too.

Get an Oyster card. It's better than using contactless because you can get a 16-25 Railcard and have the two linked. You will have to do this in person at a ticket office, which is a minor faff, but it will save you money. You should also register said Oyster card online for when you inevitably lose it whilst drunk. Not that you'll be able to afford to get drunk often, because the price of a pint in London is a pisstake only matched by the house prices.

Don't drive in London unless you hate yourself. It's expensive, you won't go anywhere fast, and you will have to dodge seemingly suicidal takeaway moped drivers.

As we're talking about takeaways: tip your delivery guy and learn to use JustEat/Deliveroo et al as nature intended: as a tool to browse for what you want before ringing the



takeaway directly. Yes, you'll have to speak to a person over the phone, which we all hate, but you'll be saving an independent business from paying commission to a megacorp and you'll usually get a discount too. This will go some way towards balancing out whatever guilt you feel about having just taken a job with a megacorp.

Use every single benefit your employer offers. An advance on your salary so you buy an annual Travelcard? Do it. Private healthcare? Time to get therapy for the neuroses you developed over three years at Cambridge. Free food? Fill your boots. Make sure they match your pension contributions. It's free money!

Respect the locals. They were here first. If you're a born and bred Londoner, live at home for as long as you feasibly can. You and your parents will adjust to the fact that you're an independent adult, eventually. Have you seen how much rent is? Now ask yourself what price the social embarrassment of telling your date that you actually live at home with your parents. A relatively minor cost.

If you're doing the rounds of flatshares, desperately trying to persuade a collection of randos that you should be the one to rent that spare bedroom, take cake with you. Or beer. They'll be 'interviewing' 20 other grads who are desperate for a place to live and bribery will make you more memorable.

Every flatshare has amongst its number at least one insanely uptight person and at least one absolute slob. If you can't identify one of these characters in your housing set-up, then I'm sorry to say that it's probably you. The key thing is to find people you can live with that are broadly the same level of tidiness as yourself.

Don't be tempted to move into a seemingly utopian warehouse community especially if they espouse polyamory or host regular sex parties. I'm not saying

that Free Love warehouse collectives are inherently bad, but communes invariably crumble due to tensions over seething sexual resentment, or housework. You don't want to be part of a "who keeps leaving condoms behind the sofa cushions?!" shitstorm in the group chat.

Expect that you will be exhausted for the first few weeks, or even months. Moving to a rigid schedule, especially if there's an expectation of overtime, is quite a large change from being a student and it will take your body some time to get used to the Monday-to-Friday grind. Don't be surprised if you just want to eat and sleep when you get home from work. You're not being boring, you're taking care of yourself until you build up your Work Stamina. Ask Occupational Health for one of those lumbar cushions. Stretch regularly, and get your office chair set up so that it is actually supporting your back; you're in it for a long time.

You will be exhausted. "I've just survived Finals at Cambridge, my blood is actually espresso, I can handle exhaustion," you say, vibrating slightly. I know, I know, you're hardcore, you thrive on stress, you do your best work during all-nighters etc etc. That's why employers keep hiring Tabs. You thought it was because we learned something during our degrees? What we learned was how to be given a seemingly impossible task in a short timeframe and come up with a solution. That and the art of bullshit (this article, obviously, is not bullshit).



## London: it is what it is



**Ellie Howcroft** graduated from Magdalene College in 2018 with a degree in English.

Like many graduates, I moved to London at the first opportunity, motivated by the all-too-predictable belief that it would be the best place in which to get a job, escape from the village I grew up in, and commence "getting on" in life, whatever that might mean.

I don't remember consciously choosing to live in London over any other city. Such is the thrill of being born in a country like the UK, with its stark divide between the capital city and Everywhere Else: you don't choose London so much as find yourself inescapably compelled towards it by the cruelty of economic necessity. For most of us, most of the time, London is where the jobs are. As one friend I surveyed for this article put it: "Careers-wise it's essential for me so it just kind of is what it is." Still, as this Careers Guide reminds us, there is still some level of personal decision-making to determine our postgraduate fate, so, with that in mind, I present for you a wholly subjective and imbalanced list of London's pros and cons.

**Pros:** It's where half of Cambridge ends up, it's full of people and you can see lots of your friends all the time. Everyone's a bit more chill now they don't have essays and exams to worry about. The public transport is great. The museums are great. The cinemas and theatres are great. The bookshops are exceptional. You can get any kind of food you want, anywhere, anytime. There are lots of big parks and old buildings and when you get a train across Blackfriars Bridge on a sunny day it strikes you that London is surely the most beautiful metropolis of its size in the world.

**Cons:** It's expensive. It's the money-laundering capital of the world, apparently, and strange American sweet shops run by shell companies have started appearing everywhere. Scientists say that going for a walk along Oxford Street is net negative for your health because the pollution outweighs the exercise benefits of walking. It's scary to cycle in. It's full of cars. It's full of people. You can't escape it. It's where half of Cambridge ends up.



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# Finding my way...



**Anna Hollingsworth** graduated from Corpus Christi College with her BA and MPhil and St John's College with her PhD (all linguistics) in 2018.

You know the types who spend their summers doing very relevant internships in investment banks/ publishing houses/ US biolabs? I took a hundred Chinese children to Bicester Village, which in retrospect looks like a blatant breach of health and safety. In third year, people around me were applying to become fast-track civil servants. I googled what a civil servant was. Then I googled why anyone would want to be one.

So, I opted for a much more interesting career path: an MPhil in linguistics and then a PhD comparing Finnish and Japanese discourse particles. Phwoar.

However, while writing my page-turner of a PhD, I started to realise that there's a limit to how fascinated I could be about the syntactic interactions of question markers; I was daunted by the prospect of the eternal short-term post-doc experience that a career in academia can be; and in seminars, I'd watch other students speak starry-eyed about the Portuguese subjunctive, when it just didn't do it for me. I'd started typing increasing numbers of words for student newspapers and other places, and little by little I convinced myself that by becoming a journalist I could explore the whole world, not just syntax, in writing. The decision was set in stone when a prominent linguist quoted my work — only not the stuff about particles but a Varsity story comparing the Moomins and gay porn.

PhD submitted, I took a chance and moved to London. The first four months I wrote unpaid book reviews, did an unpaid internship and sent off countless, increasingly desperate job applications and received countless rejection emails. I sort of knew it wouldn't work when a Daily Mail interviewer asked me why I wanted to write about Kim Kardashian's bum and I explained how I felt it could be deeply fascinating in its own way.

Eventually, I landed a job monitoring readers' online comments at The Times and The Sunday Times. It might sound like the sort of job that algorithms were created for, but I had a lot of fun weaning out the extreme expressions of conservative middle-class outrage: "I despise you, Sir!"

Somehow from there I ended up replying to the right emails at the right time and writing stuff about things like the moon landing, boarding school abuse and pandemic sex lives: "Helena vouches for digital intimacy: "This is where my creativity is thriving. Sexting is great."" Pulitzer Prize, here I come.

At the same time, though, I was getting frustrated with the reality of living in London and post-Brexit UK politics (and perhaps I wasn't totally ethically comfortable working for the Murdoch empire). Living in a house-share taught me that when I feel desperately cold in 10°C indoor temperatures, I shouldn't blame the wind blowing through my closed window or not being allowed to put the heating on, but that, as my landlord told me, I should simply eat more and keep moving. And the house was considered a good one in the nasty and brutish world of London renting.

I drew up two alternatives: move to Japan or Finland. Japan, because, even after three years of particles, I loved the language and the prospect of being able to cover myself in Hello Kitty without getting weird looks. Finland, because I'd grown up there and apparently it was the happiest place on Earth.

In the end, I landed a job with Agence France-Presse in Helsinki (as you do) seeking out disinformation on social media and debunking it. Writing this, I've been here for just over five months, and during that time I've looked into Spanish legislation on consent, debates about land law in Ukraine and how Jane Goodall doesn't actually want to cull 90 per cent of the world's population. It's so much more than syntax.

What next? I don't know. Maybe become a spinning instructor despite my questionable athletic performance, start a café with no sense of business or do a PhD in postmodern interpretations of Proust despite never reading Proust. I imagine the Career Service rolling their eyes at this but: sometimes winging it isn't such a bad idea. Unless you want to be the CEO of an investment bank before you hit 25, in which case you should probably get your internship application going.

# Finding my way...

**Julia Rampen** graduated from Newnham College in 2011 with a degree in History.

It took me most of three years to feel comfortable at Cambridge, and then, suddenly, it was time to hand back my room key and move on. I graduated in 2011, when we were still feeling the after-effects of the financial crisis, an uncertainty not unlike today. Here's what I learnt:

## Trust your gut

When I moved to London to do a journalism MA, newspaper profits were in freefall and the few journalists I had met looked at me like I was mad when I had confessed my ambition.

The fact I was doing this at all was a mixture of luck and gut instinct. After trying and failing to become a management consultant, I finally admitted to myself I was much more passionate about the student newspaper. The luck part was that my parents covered the MA fees. Although tuition fees weren't at the levels they are now, so many of my peers missed out on further study because of funding. These days, thankfully, more newspapers are running grad schemes again.

As for me, that gut instinct paid off. Digital media exploded, and shaped the world. Being a journalist gave me a pass to go everywhere and anywhere. After years of reading about history, I was writing it.

**After years of reading about history, I was writing it**

## Be pragmatic – but not too pragmatic

In 2011, there was a hideous trend for unpaid “interns”, but as a Scot in London, I knew I needed a job, so instead I contacted magazines asking for a fortnight's work experience. It was just the right amount of time to learn the ropes, get a chance to do some real work, and leave before feeling exploited. It certainly worked for me – I got my first job offer at a financial magazine that way.

Being a financial journalist was a pragmatic move, as many other wannabe journalists hated numbers. However, I always knew that I didn't want to write about it forever.

## Remember – not everyone is signed up to your life plan

As a financial journalist, I had plenty of job offers – for other, specialist financial magazines. It took a while for me to realise that the editors approaching me did so because it was convenient for them, rather than the perfect opportunity for me. Eventually I started actively searching for roles myself, and ended up working at The Mirror, and later The New Statesman.

By my mid-twenties, I longed to be taken seriously, and so when I found myself shuffled into a managerial role, I considered it a promotion. It was a good move salary-wise, but when I look back, I do mourn the freedom I had as a reporter. Don't be afraid to turn someone else's “opportunity” down if you have a different ambition.

## Take your creativity seriously

Around the same time as I was finding my way as a reporter, I joined a local writing group, but it was several more years before my friend there told me a simple truth: “If you want to get published, write an hour every day.” I started getting up at 6.15am and writing over breakfast.

Still, I'm not sure if I would have finished my novel if I hadn't moved to Liverpool and started working as a night editor. It was a lonely existence, but it meant I had two hours every morning to plough into the book. It was a gamble, but at the end of it I had a draft I could submit to novel writing competitions, and ultimately a publishing deal.

## Embrace being young and irresponsible

When I started looking for jobs, I was so aware of my inexperience, but now that I hire people, I realise how precious energy and enthusiasm is. You might not know the jargon, but if you can stay up until midnight networking and bounce into the office at eight the next morning with a big smile on your face, no one will really care.



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# Finding my way...



**Elizabeth Huang** graduated from Trinity College with a BA in Law in 2019 (and dabbled in the arts by editing *The Mays*) and a BCL degree from Magdalen College, Oxford in 2020 and is currently working as a trainee solicitor at Slaughter and May in London.

Picture the scene: it's a Saturday night and you're having a lovely time at a party when—uh oh—someone asks the dreaded question: “So, what do you do?”. Speaking from unfortunate experience, few answers (other than, perhaps, puppy-snatching) can make the spark leave someone's eyes as rapidly as telling them you work in...corporate law. Even worse, try telling them you studied law at university too (and twice at that!).

Now that you've dried your tears on my behalf, you're probably wondering why I've bothered to write this piece on “finding my way”—after all, haven't I been on the (legal) way for years? Perhaps even from birth, like those endearing yet faintly alarming children who solemnly declare they want to be lawyers or accountants when they grow up? In truth, I never really believed I'd go into law as a career until I did it, and I certainly never dreamed of corporate law as a child. Yet here I am, and—spoiler alert!—enjoying it a surprising amount, even though an enthusiasm for law didn't come immediately, or easily, to me.

Despite this, after plenty of trial and error, and approaching law from a few different angles, I feel like I've finally found a route into law that works for me. It's reassured me that you don't have to have an instantaneous “grand passion” for something to find it stimulating and make a career out of it (or at least a start!).

## Way back in the distant past (i.e. 2016)...

When I was applying to university, law appealed to me because it sounded mysterious and authoritative, something that permeated everyday life, and which could be approached from an exciting range of disciplinary angles.

The stars aligned, and so off I toddled to Cambridge to study law. Soon, however, I discovered that law was not quite what I had imagined. We spent most of our time learning rules...and exceptions to rules...and justifications for rules, over and over. At least, that was my impression of the subject—admittedly I





was a rather ambivalent student, and threw myself instead into producing zines, attending demonstrations and even, occasionally, writing for Varsity. Only in Easter term would I dutifully pull my socks up and (somewhat miraculously) become a model of academic diligence.

### Graduation blues...

By the time third year came around, I had the nagging feeling that I hadn't given law a fair chance. I had grouched my way through three years of Cambridge, but the academic spark I longed for had never really flickered fully into life. Encouraged by my wonderful tutors (who put up graciously with my tepid efforts as a supervisee), I applied to the BCL, the postgraduate law course at the Other Place. Even then, I felt a bit directionless, and worried that I was simply trudging down the path of least resistance to avoid the "adult" world of work.

I'm glad I gave law a second chance. Focusing on regulatory and socio-legal courses, the BCL provided the missing interdisciplinary puzzle piece I needed to finally understand the context and meaningfulness of the endless rules I had struggled with as an undergraduate. I even came to appreciate the technical and interpretive puzzles posed by doctrinal legal analysis.

### Gainful employment at last...

Soon enough, however (and with COVID-19 throwing a major spanner in the works), the BCL was over and I found myself deep in the déjà vu of indecision. I thought about pursuing a PhD, or going to the Bar, but ultimately decided against both. Intuitively, I knew that what I had enjoyed most about the BCL was approaching law in its context, and I wanted to work with law in a way that was hands-on rather than cerebral.

I've now been working for a year as a trainee solicitor at Slaughter and May (having rotated through Competition, Corporate and now, Financial Regulation) and can honestly say that I'm really enjoying it. Whilst we work in the "legal" industry, I find that most of what we do is problem-solving, just in a legal context. Some of the problems we deal with may be intellectually complex, but they are always grounded by the client's practical business needs. The challenge of trying my hand at new things each week and each departmental rotation (and sometimes, even, each day!) keeps me engaged and stimulated.

I never expected that I would be more interested by law in practice than law in theory, but I've surprised myself. For me and law, it seems the third time's the charm (at least for now)!



# Tips and tricks for interviews

**A**s any summer draws to a close, application season is in full force for undergraduates and graduates alike – and one of the core aspects of any application is an interview. In most cases, you'll be sat down, either in-person or virtually, with between one and three people who will ask you various questions about the company you're applying to, your motivations for doing so, what you can bring to the firm, and plenty more. But what does it actually take to succeed in an interview? Read on for some general tips and tricks.

Firstly, it's important that you are **confident**. Confidence comes in many ways – one way is through your body language and the way you present yourself. Make sure to



introduce yourself, hold eye contact, and maintain a polite, friendly, and professional attitude. This is the first time that an employer will be meeting the person behind the application, and first impressions count. Another important thing that does require confidence is asking an interviewer to explain a question or repeat it if you didn't fully understand what they said. It's better that you answer the right question even if it needed repeating rather than asking the wrong one entirely!

Confidence is also about being able to **back yourself up**. Don't be too surprised if interviewers ask challenging questions, or begin playing devil's advocate. Much like the Cambridge interview, they're not trying to trip you up; instead, they want to test your ability to **think practically** and handle pressure. It's important that you are comfortable with the content of your application and are able to support the statements you have made. Why do you want to hold this position? Why at this company in particular? Why do

you think you're a good fit for this company? These are the sorts of questions you want to be thinking about as you head into the interview.

**Avoid playing into clichés** if you can. Companies are looking for individuals who understand traditional approaches, but they are equally – if not more – interested in the more unique aspects of a person, and how they can bring something new to the table.

**Awareness of the wider world** is sometimes an overlooked aspect of the interview. It's one thing to make a claim – but another entirely to support it with evidence. It shows the interviewer that you've carried out careful research, that you are capable of making an argument, as well as showing that you are a well-rounded individual. In most jobs, engagement with contemporary affairs is necessary to succeed in a job – and some of the easiest ways of going about this are keeping up with the news, listening to relevant podcasts, or even discussing events with your peers. Getting into the habit of discussing ideas with other people is really useful at the interview stage – you musn't overlook this!

However, it won't always be possible to know the answer to every question – and if you ever find yourself in such a position, just take a breath. You're not the first, and you certainly won't be the last. **Play to your strengths**: think about what you *do* know, and how the knowledge you already have could be useful when applying it to a certain situation or scenario. Explain your thought process to the interviewer, so that they can build up a better picture of you and how you approach issues and problem solving.

Towards the end of the interview, it's understandable that you might be feeling tired or worn-out by the stress, but try and **keep up the momentum** until the end. Maintain a friendly attitude, thank everyone for their time, and – perhaps most importantly – make sure you have an **insightful question**. (or questions – but keep the number of questions reasonable). Whether it's about the company's vision, values, or their future plans, a carefully thought out question shows that you've thought carefully about the job and the company you want to be a part of. However, try and make sure this is a question that can't be answered via a quick scan of their website! *Aubrey Wilcox*






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