

"If you're looking for day to day variety, accelerated coaching and learning and the opportunity to meet and work with a vast array of clients and

Introduction

Kate is a first year associate completing the Assurance graduate scheme at PwC in Plymouth. PwC is one of the world's leading professional services organisations. They operate from 157 countries, and advise some of the most successful organisations, entrepreneurs and private businesses in the world. There is a real commitment to people at PwC and that's clear right from the recruitment process.



Image: **Kate Walker**, Assurance – PwC, Plymouth

How did you get started in your career?

I studied Accounting & Finance at the University of Reading, as part of my studies I completed an industrial placement year at Waitrose working in their Financial Planning & Analysis team. I then moved on to complete a summer placement with PwC in the Plymouth office to gain some experience in financial accounting. Following my summer placement with PwC I was offered a place on the Assurance Graduate Scheme. That's one of the benefits of doing a placement with PwC, if you do well it could result in a graduate role.

Can you outline a typical work day?

The nature of my role means that no day is the same, I am lucky to work with a variety of clients across a range industry sectors. This provides me with new and exciting challenges each day and provides a fantastic opportunity to learn and understand about the way different businesses work. In the Plymouth office, we work with some really exciting, and well known clients.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I have particularly enjoyed the variety that the Assurance scheme has offered, I am only six months into the job now but I have had the opportunity to work with lots of different clients and experience different types of work such as internal audit, data assurance and risk assurance. Working in a regional office has been a fantastic opportunity to build really strong relationships with my fellow colleagues who are so helpful and friendly. In addition to this I have been able to study for my ACA (the Chartered Accountant Qualification) with the full support of my office which for me is a particular highlight - and staying away for college is great fun - lots of free food and nice hotels. I feel very proud to be working for the no.1 Times Top 100 Graduate Employer.

What skills are important for anyone wishing to start in your profession?

We no longer take into account the UCAS tariff in our assessment process. You can join PwC with any degree. It's such a diverse organisation and the people are from such a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds. PwC want to reach the broadest range of talented students, and be a progressive and socially inclusive organisation. When it comes to skills, we assess based on our global leadership framework, this is called the PwC professional and focuses on 5 key attributes. I'd definitely recommend reading about it on our website. The same framework is also used once you join us, to help you develop your career.

What main personal attributes do you think is important for your type of job?

When people join as a graduate, they start with a number of others. Straight away they'll be part of a team so it's really important to demonstrate these types of skills in the recruitment process. You'll also get stuck in pretty quickly once you join so being a self-starter is a bonus too. Value the diversity of skills and experience you bring to the table and make sure they shine through.

Do you have any tips or suggestions on how young people and adults can enter your industry?

I'd recommend doing your research. For example, the types of opportunities PwC offer may surprise you. We have opportunities for people right from school, through to graduate and experienced personnel. As a school leaver or graduate you could join us on a work experience or placement type programme. Getting an insight into a company is so important. Most large organisations offer these sorts of programmes. Having done one myself, I'd highly recommend it.

What career progression opportunities are available in your business/sector?

When you join PwC it quickly becomes apparent how focused we are on career development. The PwC professional framework, I mentioned previously, exists internally to help employees reach their career goals. There's also plenty of programmes you can be part of throughout your career to develop your skills in leadership, for example.

Why is it important for your sector to attract and train young people and new entrants?

Traditionally, there has only been one route when school comes to an end. University→Degree→Career. But things have changed. The world of business is changing, and there are now many professional opportunities available to school leavers too. PwC have recognised that not everyone will go to university but that doesn't mean they're not talented or ambitious. Far from it! We're a progressive and socially inclusive employer.

What trends do you predict for your industry within the next 10 years? E.g. is it a growing market requiring more young entrants

Over the next 10 years, we expect the professional services industry to expand and diversify its service offerings, so we need to ensure we continue to recruit a diverse pool of talented individuals who can help us meet the needs of our clients. We're also anticipating greater innovation in the way we attract and recruit the best people, and expect there to be even greater student demand for work experience opportunities, for both school leavers and graduates.

General words of wisdom

If you're looking for day to day variety, accelerated coaching and learning and the opportunity to meet and work with a vast array of clients and teams then look no further!

Further contact/information

If you would like to speak to Kate further about her job at PwC or a career in the professional services sector, then please email her kate.j.walker@uk.pwc.com

For further information on a career with PwC visit <http://www.pwc.co.uk/careers.html>