

Meet our Vacation Scheme student - Lydia

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I'd applied to Browne Jacobson because it is a full-service law firm. I knew that as a trainee I would have a really good range of seat options and that in some areas I could be working with national experts in their fields. It gets really confusing when you are

reading website after website of law firms wondering whether the values the firm claims apply in reality and whether you can muster the confidence to put together an application, but the Browne Jacobson site really called out to me. I am so glad that I trusted my instincts, worked extremely hard on the application and in the assessment centre. I am so grateful to have been given this great opportunity.

I've spent my scheme in the Built Environment Real Estate team in the Manchester office. Although I'm a (very recent!) law graduate I hadn't studied a Real Estate elective so I was nervous before starting the scheme. What would I be expected to know, would I feel like an idiot or worse, make some terrible mistake and let everyone down? My fears were allayed from the start. Lack of subject knowledge in the area where you are "sitting" for the scheme doesn't matter! My supervisor is extremely approachable and friendly and has really helped me settle in. It turns out that they do not expect you to be an expert in the area, (that's their job!).

The vacation scheme has been virtual, but the culture of the firm has really shone through. The values of the firm are encompassed and apparent through every interaction with the staff I have met at the firm. I have a trainee buddy who I can chat / video call with whenever I have any questions or need any assistance. I've met the other current trainees and newly qualified solicitors who have given the vacation schemers an overview of their own training seats and answered all our questions (whether these were erudite or more prosaic!). I've had the chance to listen to talks from Associates/Partners, who through their experience, have been able to showcase the firm's expertise and offer their insights. It's given me a much better idea of areas which might interest me if I'm lucky enough to get a training contract. I'm now keen on areas that I have not previously considered as options.

Obviously, we're being assessed during the scheme and the process has been clear and transparent. We've all been given work for our team which we're doing over the course of the scheme and which will be marked against set criteria by supervisors. Graduate recruitment will review this with us in a dedicated session. We've also been put into groups to put together group presentations for the end of the scheme. We're going to present them to a panel of assessors. I've loved this project as it has allowed me to interact more with other vacation scheme students to share ideas, plan our meetings and construct the presentation.

So, what work have I had the chance to see or be involved in? I've attended a meeting with the Corporate team to discuss the property aspect of an acquisition, sat in on a Property Professional Negligence Training, reviewed leases and constructed lease summaries. I have a daily meeting with my supervisor to track my progress and set me tasks. I have the chance to feedback my findings / what I've learnt. Although the scheme has been virtual, I've still had the opportunity to meet the Built Environment Real Estate Team via the weekly catch-up on Microsoft Teams. Everyone has gone out of their way to make me feel like a part of the team. They have made a genuine effort into getting to know me – asking about my personal life in terms of hobbies and interests as well as my academic work. The team are down to earth, approachable and happy to help with any questions that arise from your work.

Overall, my first week at the firm has been extremely positive. If you're wondering whether to apply, do it! If you're like me (just finished the LLB) you get the opportunity to apply your passion from your studies and transfer your skills to engage with real legal tasks. It is a tremendous opportunity, not only does the firm get to see if you are the correct fit for their culture – you can test out the waters and see if the firm is for you! Keep your fingers crossed for me – I know I'd be happy here!

Written by Lydia.

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