

Browne Jacobson's summer vacation scheme – my first week in the Exeter office

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Before continuing I must mention that Browne Jacobson were very kind and covered all my travel and hotel accommodation costs. This allowed me to focus on the work I had instead of worrying about how I was going to fund the various planned trips throughout the week.

The week began with an induction at the firm's Nottingham office. The day was packed with useful information and informative workshops. We went through the firm's IT services, legal research tools and the group projects we would complete throughout the vacation scheme. A brief lunch with current trainees provided us with a fantastic opportunity to ask questions in a relaxed, informal setting. We then played a business game which taught us the ins and outs of how businesses are run and make money. This was a particular highlight for me as it opened my eyes to the various difficulties one faces when running a successful business. To conclude the day, Iain Blatherwick, the firm's managing partner gave an insightful presentation about the firm's future strategy. As hectic as the day sounds, I'm glad we had it as it thoroughly prepared me for the week.

The following day I began my three day stay within the firm's Exeter branch. The office has great transport links with Exeter bus station across the road and Exeter Central Station a 10 minute walk away. Located a few minutes away from Princesshay shopping centre, the office also has a variety of culinary options to choose from on your lunch break.

The first thing I noticed upon arrival was the office's friendly working environment. This is partly due to the size of the office which holds around 50 employees. The size of the firm has been of great benefit as it has allowed me to work with and build better relationships with a closer group of people. The office itself has a primary focus on Education, Employment, Health and Insurance. There is a broad overlap between these departments which contributes considerably to the firm's tight-knit working culture.

From Tuesday to Thursday I spent most of my time in the Education department with short stints in the Government and Infrastructure and IPR (Insurance Property Risk) teams. Next week I will be spending some time with the Employment and HAL (Health and Litigation) teams. My vacation scheme has been very fulfilling thus far due to the responsibility I have been entrusted with. I have been given real cases to research and complete and I have seen my work go out to firm clients. The work I have done has been particularly varied and extremely interesting. I haven't yet had two similar cases!

A highlight has been the support network I have had. Everyone around me has taken time out of their busy schedules to make sure I understand unfamiliar concepts when presented with challenging tasks. Additionally, there has also been plenty of time to get to know my team members. On Thursday for example, I was invited out for lunch with a partner and senior associate.

The week concluded with a trip to the Birmingham office. The morning began with a recap of the week and a question and answer session with the trainees which provided us with great insight. A tour of the office and various introductions to the varied departments then followed. The afternoon was dedicated to team-building exercises with the rest of the vacation scheme participants. We split into different teams and tried our luck at various escape rooms. My team luckily made it out with a minute and a half to spare! To finish the day, we were treated to dinner at a pizza restaurant five minutes away from the office with some of the trainees we met earlier that morning.

To conclude, I have really enjoyed my experience on Browne Jacobson's vacation scheme thus far. The work has been challenging and fulfilling, there has been a great support network around me and there has been a great balance between working and relaxing with colleagues. I whole-heartedly recommend any interested candidate to apply!

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