Catherine Perry, Geology with an International Year

What are you currently doing and who are you working for? Can you give a brief description of what you did from graduation up to now?

I'm working as a geologist for Axor Experts-Conseils in Québec, Canada. My job involves describing and sampling cores, creating databases and planning the sequence of drilling and general organisation of the drilling campaign. Before this I worked for Fugro Survey Limited as a Project Geophysicist in Aberdeen for four years, initially in a dual office-offshore role and later in a purely offshore role on a seismic vessel.

Can you give a short outline of the course you studied at the University of Birmingham and how it benefited you?

I studied Geology with an International Year with my international year spent at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. This course benefited me because I got to study a subject I enjoyed and in later years I was able to choose the modules and so tailor the course to my particular interests and future career path in the subject. The international year also benefited me by giving me vital exposure to Canadian geological history that I use every day in my current job. The fieldwork offered at Birmingham was also invaluable and one of the clear differences between my education in Canada, which tended to be more theoretical rather than practical.

How did you find your first year in Birmingham?

The first year offered a good grounding in Geology and also built upon the knowledge I had gained during my A-level Geology course. Overall I found it interesting.

How did going to University benefit you?

Going to university simply offered me the chance to have a career in geology and geophysics, which would have been impossible without a degree. It also offered me the chance to explore a range of sports and activities and developed transferable skills, like producing reports to a deadline and taking responsibility for the organisation of my time.

How about campus life? Can you describe how it was to study here at Edgbaston Campus rather than in a City Centre location?

One of the reasons why I chose Edgbaston Campus was because it was leafy and green and so seemed to offer a more quiet and relaxing location, which suited my personality much better than a busy city centre location. Everything was easier to find and quicker to get to because it was on one large site rather than spread across a city.

How did you find living in Birmingham? Was it how you expected it to be? Have you found the student community here supportive?

I enjoyed living in Birmingham. It wasn't what I expected simply because I grew up surrounded by countryside, but I enjoyed the surroundings and having my friends within walking distance.

Did you join any student societies or take part in any events?

Yes, over the years I was involved in different sports including swimming, archery and ice hockey but there were so many others offered that I would have liked to have done if I had had the time! I was also part of the student:staff committee for the entire duration of my course.

What are your aspirations for the future?

My aspirations for the future are to either change career completely or move sideways in the industry to a job that involves 100% office work. I have to travel a lot for the fieldwork I do (4 weeks on a camp then 2 weeks at home) and unfortunately that's impacting on my normal life in a negative way, which wasn't really something I ever considered upon graduating and embarking on my career.

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