

Veronika Fafienski

Sociology BA

Baillie Gifford in Edinburgh, investment analyst in a global team

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Profile

I learned about Baillie Gifford through a recruitment agency which the company were using to find a suitable candidate for one of the Global Investment teams.

My role enables me to meet management from various companies – well-known and young ones alike. This gives me an invaluable opportunity to learn what influences decision-making, leadership and behaviour in the business world, amongst other. Being in a predominantly financial role has enabled me to develop numerical skills including how to process company accounts and carrying out financial analysis. Finally, part of my role involves presenting investment ideas to a large, expert audience. This is an opportunity to apply presentation skills and to learn how to "pitch".

When going from sociology to working in finance I knew that a learning curve was waiting. Although there are qualitative-analytical elements to my role, the majority is based on financial analysis and calculations. At my company it is also a requirement to study for a financial exam in your free time with the volume and content of the material corresponding to a degree in finance. So I think the best advice for others getting into a similar career is to be prepared for that learning curve and to embrace it. It is an opportunity, without doubt, and in my view the combination of sociology and finance is very worthwhile.

Recently I have rotated into a new Investment team and I am enjoying the fresh perspective with which I can look at investment ideas. This team places a lot of emphasis on interdisciplinary reading which I think is a great source of inspiration for how to think about investments. I have developed a keen interest in the retail and consumer staples industry, and brand management in particular within that. I would like to learn more about this field in future. It is remarkable how great brand management can be the core of changing the fate of a business. Equally, I think there some excellent new brands emerging from different corners of the world so it is an exciting time to be analysing these sectors closely.

My time at Birmingham

Studying at The University of Birmingham has been such an exciting and rewarding experience. When I first arrived, I was instantly captivated by the campus atmosphere. All the things you need as a freshly baked student – department, the library, student union and all the friends you made along the way – were in one place. Of course everyone is unique but for my part I can say that at Birmingham I have been able to set the foundations for both career and personal development.

I have had so much support and encouragement from staff and friends across departments who continue to be a source of inspiration and who are still in touch.

To me, studying sociology at The University of Birmingham has broadened the ways in which I think about the world – be it in abstract, philosophical terms or more hands-on in form of carrying out research projects. On the one hand sociology is meant to learn about history, different global and urban cultures and existing schools of thought. On the other hand, sociology is contemporary – it evolves together with society and its subject matter is continuously shaped by it. This is why there are so many areas in which sociological imagination and insight are needed – politics, economy, technology, law, development of cities, art, health and media to name but a few.

Course information: [Sociology BA \(/undergraduate/courses/govsoc/sociology.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/govsoc/sociology.aspx)

More about the: [Sociology speed networking event \(/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2014/03/sociology-careers-event.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2014/03/sociology-careers-event.aspx)