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Abbye Andrews, BSc Psychology

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?

'...this degree gave me an excellent grounding in research skills and critical thinking, which will be essential for my career.'

Abbye Andrews

I currently work as an Assistant Psychologist for Options Group, providing psychology services for young people who have an autistic spectrum condition or emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. I have been working in this role for over two years.

Since graduating from the University of Birmingham, I have worked in a small number of interesting and challenging positions in order to gain experience for my chosen career path. This has included working as a Support Worker with adults with learning disabilities, as an Honorary Assistant Psychologist in the NHS in an autism assessment team, and as an Honorary Research Associate at the University of Birmingham, within the Cerebra Centre for Neurodevelopmental Disorders. These experiences, coupled with my Psychology degree from the University of Birmingham, led to me gaining a much-competed-for paid Assistant Psychologist position.

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

I studied Psychology (BSc) at the University of Birmingham, which covered a broad range of areas and taught important research skills. Completing this degree was essential for my chosen career path of Clinical Psychology and it has enabled me to apply for (and obtain) various positions that require a degree in Psychology. I also believe that this degree gave me an excellent grounding in research skills and critical thinking, which will be essential for my career. Additionally, I was successful in publishing a brief report version of my dissertation, which has impressed employers and given me a sense of pride.

How did you find your first year in Birmingham?

My first year in Birmingham was exciting and challenging. I only lived 40 minutes away so I commuted rather than living in student accommodation. I really enjoyed the subject of my degree and the breadth of topics covered. However, there was a lot to the degree, even in the first year, so I had to keep on track with it all!

How did going to University as a whole benefit you?

Going to the University of Birmingham was really enjoyable and I met a diverse range of people. I made good friends with people from backgrounds and cultures that were very different to my own, and they have become lifelong friends, who I see and speak to regularly. Going to the University of Birmingham made me more open-minded and also more critically-minded, in terms of considering different options and perspectives, and analysing/reviewing research. It has also enabled me to gain exciting positions, working within Psychology.

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

The Edgbaston Campus is in a nice setting with a good atmosphere.

Any tips or words of wisdom that you would like to pass on to other students thinking of coming to study here?

I would say definitely come to the University of Birmingham as it is a great place to study and has an excellent reputation, which employers value. Be prepared to study hard and you will get the most out of your experience. The final year of the Psychology degree is really exciting as you get to choose your own modules and complete an independent research project.

What are your aspirations for the future?

I am aspiring to be a Clinical Psychologist and I am working towards this through gaining relevant experience and applying to Clinical Psychology training courses. This is very competitive but also very rewarding and definitely an interesting career. I would also love to contribute to research throughout my career.

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