

Tom Quarmby, Sport, Physical Education and Community Studies, 2005

Current role

Lecturer in Physical Education at Leeds Metropolitan University, teaching on a range of modules that centre on the socio-cultural aspects of Physical Education, activity and sport. In addition, I am continuing to pursue research that explores young people's engagement with physical activity, sport and physical culture, especially as they pertain to different family structures.

Career experiences

After graduating in July 2005 with a 2:1 I found employment working for a training company in Northamptonshire. I was the Procurement Officer and therefore responsible for planning and applying for government tenders and bids to enable the company to carry out sponsored training for people across various NVQ disciplines. During this time I was successful in attaining government contracts to deliver the ongoing Train to Gain Initiative in both the East and West Midlands and Yorkshire; valued at a potential £7 million.

However, I always wanted to pursue further education whilst applying for a masters course at Loughborough University, I was invited to apply to the University of Birmingham and study for an MPhil/PhD within the School of Education in September 2006.



'I expected a quality university and I got a quality university and degree.'

Tom Quarmby

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

It would take too long for me to cover everything I enjoyable aspect of what I am currently doing so I will try to be succinct as possible. Obviously I am hugely passionate about the nature of my research and thoroughly enjoy the experience of lecturing and presenting to a variety of audiences. Similarly, the nature of my PhD allows me to work to flexible times providing I meet my own deadlines, though perhaps one of the best things is that I get the chance to attend national and international conferences, for a variety of reasons:

- The opportunity to showcase my current research to leading scholars around the world;
- The chance to meet new people who are in the same situation as me, and;
- The ability to experience new cultures, for example, attended the AIESEP 2008 World Congress in Japan earlier this year.

And the worst thing?

Without doubt the worst thing about doing a PhD, for me, is the lack of finance I have had to deal with during the first two years. Fortunately this year I was awarded a scholarship but as the first two years were self funded it meant that I had to carefully manage what money I had whilst balancing this with paid work to ensure I could continue to support myself.

Whilst the department have supported me wherever possible, by allowing me to deliver paid lectures/modules, not all PhD's will be like this. The majority of PhD's are funded by universities and their departments and external organisations.

What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

Having graduate over three years ago, I can honestly say the best thing about studying here was the friends I made. We are all still in touch and meet up regularly in Birmingham for SPECS '05 Reunions.

In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

Put simply, I expected a quality university and I got a quality university and degree. The whole university experience was exceptional which is mainly why I returned to study for a PhD. Being at Birmingham, and the support provided throughout my PhD, helped me to present at worldwide academic conferences, gain the AIESEP Young Scholar Award and publish in high quality academic journals.

What advice would you give to current students wishing to get into your career?

The first piece of advice I would give is that you must be passionate about doing research. Consider whether you enjoyed your dissertation and if this is something you would like to do on a larger scale. If so, and you have a particular area that are passionate about then a Masters or PhD may be the thing for you.

On top of this, I would suggest that you really research where you could do such work. Find suitable institutions that offer scholarships and are keen to conduct research in the area of your interest. Many universities offer many postgraduate research scholarships, but you do need to make sure that the scholarship you apply for matches your particular area of interest.

Finally, you must realize that while doing a PhD has its many perks – it is A LOT of hard work which only increases as you progress throughout the three years.