

UK Graduate profile transcripts

Marie

In graduate school I took a class on International Finance, and that was really what sparked my interest in capital markets in general and in asset management in particular. And then in my previous jobs I had the opportunity to work with some clients that were financial services providers, and that's also how I heard about Fidelity as one of the top players in the asset management space.

I thought the recruitment process for the programme was very thorough and comprehensive, actually, but I think in hindsight I found that very useful, because I remember coming out of the recruitment process and being able to really answer the question do I think I would fit in and do I think I would like the spirit and the culture of Fidelity, and that was very important to me.

One of the key benefits of the programme in my opinion is that you get to experience different areas of the business, so not only do you learn different skill sets, but you also get to see the value chain that goes in to a business as large as Fidelity, so that was definitely one of the key benefits that I identified when I was looking at different programmes.

I don't think there is one particular person I have learned most from. I think that I've learned from quite a lot of people who have given me the opportunity to work on interesting and meaningful projects from the start. People are very willing to sit down with you to explain a particular type of client that you need to know about, so while it's challenging on the one hand, it's also quite rewarding to be exposed to such a wide range of different clients.

One thing that surprised me very much about Fidelity is that on a day to day basis, in your every day work, there is not much sense of hierarchy. You'll work with people that have been with Fidelity for a very long time, and that might be very senior, but when you're gathering around a conference table to discuss a project everyone's opinion matters and I found that quite surprising that hierarchy really doesn't matter at all, you don't see it very much on an every day basis.

In terms of what the future holds and exciting opportunities in the future, what I like about the financial services industry is that it's so fast moving and constantly evolving. We have to innovate on a constant basis to stay at the top of our game and to be relevant to investors, so there are constantly new ideas being launched throughout the business. And as long as you are interested and want to create opportunities for yourself, you can always get involved with various new initiatives that are being launched. So, hopefully, the future is full of interesting and exciting new challenges.

Richard

I first found out about Fidelity through the eFinancial Careers brochure. I was reading about the various sectors which you can go in to in the financial services industry, and I honed in on asset management as being the one that best suited my skill set really. And I spoke to a few people that I knew that worked in the City, and in terms of the best companies with the best reputation really and Fidelity certainly seemed to be mentioned quite a lot, so I went on to the website and applied for the grad role.

The recruitment process was an online application. It also involved a numerical test following a phone interview as well, and after that I went to an assessment centre, which was for the entire day, and involved about five interviews and a group exercise.

I met a variety of fairly senior people now, as I understand it, which is quite funny to look back on it. You obviously don't realise who you're actually meeting, and when you start working with them it's quite daunting to imagine you were speaking to them to actually apply for the job.

I guess the thing that surprised me most about working at Fidelity is how friendly the people are. I didn't really have any expectations as to how they treat a new graduate, but I think they recognise that it is quite a tough process to get through. I think Fidelity's renowned as being quite a collegiate atmosphere based on the fact that it's privately owned, and it's certainly something that I found working here. A lot of my friends do work for publicly owned companies, and I guess it is quite a different atmosphere. I do enjoy the atmosphere that's at Fidelity, so certainly it is an added bonus.

The biggest challenge is quite a difficult one, I guess. It depends on the rotation that I was doing at the time. The first rotation was very difficult being so new to the company. It was a Project Manager based role which really requires you to have a broad understanding of what everybody does in the company in relation to that project, which I felt was particularly challenging for somebody quite new to the industry and to the company. I've had three rotations on the graduate programme, and through each role I guess I've had one or two people take me under their wing, so I do owe quite a lot to two or three individuals I guess, throughout my graduate programme.

I've been quite surprised at the time that they'll take to explain things to you. I've been fortunate enough to build relationships with portfolio managers and traders who are willing to spend the time teaching you different things, providing that you have the right attitude and you actually are interested in what you're asking about.

And I've picked up a lot of things. Really it's a cliché, but you do learn something new every day. I'm surrounded by traders, by portfolio managers, so I'm constantly learning new things.

I've had exposure to quite a few senior figures at Fidelity throughout the graduate programme, be it working on a project which is needed signing off from quite a senior figure, or even working with the portfolio managers or the traders.

Outside of work, I generally spend my time either playing or watching football. I organise a five-a-side football match on a weekly basis for the guys at Fidelity, and also it's a way for me to keep in touch with the guys I knew in my previous rotations, so it's quite a nice thing to do at the end of the week.

Caroline

I came to join Fidelity after I finished my university degree. I studied Sport Science, so not necessarily related to the financial industry. But I think that that demonstrates that you don't necessarily have to have done a particular degree in a specific field to work here at Fidelity.

After I finished my degree I knew that I wanted to do a job that involved some sort of customer service or face-to-face contact with customers. I had heard about Fidelity as a local reputable company. I was aware of what they did, and I found a role within customer services before becoming an internal intake on the graduate programme here at Fidelity.

What appealed to me the most about it was the fact that I could rotate around the business, have a lot of interaction with senior management. I knew I'd be able to improve my skills, but also my knowledge and understanding of the products and services that we provide, again, to the different areas I knew that I'd be able to get a better scope and feel to where I felt I would fit in the best within the business, and that's what really appealed to me about getting involved with the programme.

The process is actually quite well structured by the HR department here. They give you a lot of guidance as to what they expect on their actual assessment days, and they also give you guidance in terms of the presentation topics for which they would like you to address.

They're really just there to allow you to show what you can offer and what you could bring to Fidelity.

The biggest challenge I've had on the graduate programme so far was in my first rotation. I had worked within a team for a couple of weeks, and then was asked if my passport was in check, and I'd be ready to go abroad. I didn't really know what was planned until I answered the question to confirm, and then I was told that I was going to be based in Germany three days a week, and in the UK two days a week. This was to work on a high profile project that Fidelity was completing at the time, which was a fantastic opportunity for me, because it was something Fidelity had never done before, so to be part of that as a graduate was really good.

The people at Fidelity are very fun, welcoming and supportive. The senior management here I find are very supportive of your career and developing you as an individual. They are fun, they work hard and they play hard. There's a very good social culture here at Fidelity. You find that people are often on the same wavelength as you and share the same goals and the sort of aspirations that you do, which not only helps within your day to day job, but also as a result of your personal development at Fidelity.

Russell

I suppose my background's probably not the stereotypical background you'd expect to work in finance, because I studied ancient history at university, so it's not your normal, say, Economics or Accounting degree. And I suppose what they look for is less what you've learnt before you come there, as more what you think you can learn when you actually get in to the role.

I think the one thing that appealed to me was the independence that you're taught. You're almost chucked in at the deep end, which sounds a bit daunting, but looking back on it I think it's the best way to actually learn, having been here now for almost two years, definitely it's the best learning ground really just to be thrown in like that.

So my role is in the equity division, and I get given a bundle of 30 to 40 stocks, and then it's up to me to decide whether or not we buy ourselves shares in those companies. Very simply, it's whether you think that you can buy something cheaply and then sell it at the higher price, and that's really, I suppose, what the world of investments is all about.

The one thing that I enjoy the most about it is just the whole variety of things that we look at, and we're given maybe 30 to 40 stocks as opposed to five to ten stocks, which you look at on the sales side. I like learning about companies, I like learning about how people make money, and so I suppose this is really sort of at the heart of what we do.

The way that it works is that we're given a specific sector for about two years, and I've been given the shipping sector. Shipping is a global industry, and so a lot of my job's actually looking over at different countries and looking at infrastructure spending, how much they're building over there, and trying to work out what the demand is and then what the supply of shipping is.

If I go back about a year I was lucky enough to go to China for 10 days, which for me I've never been to China before, so it was an eye-opening experience just in terms of going to a new country. I think what I found most exciting and probably, again, most unusual, was just seeing a whole host of different companies related to the shipping sector, which was fascinating, and you're thrown in to an environment which is completely alien to your normal working environment. So I was down an iron ore mine, and then in a steel mill in China, so wearing hard hats and watching people do their day to day jobs, learning more about these companies. I think, for me, that was one of the - definitely the most unusual and also the most enjoyable trips, and also one of the most enjoyable days that I've actually had over the last couple of years. If I was to look back in say five years time I think the one thing that I really need to make sure that you keep doing is learning from people here. I think that's one of the best ways of actually sort of encouraging your training and climbing the ladder.

You are working with the portfolio managers, and these guys have been working in this industry for, say, ten to 20 years, so they've got lots of experience. They'll never say I'm sorry, I'm busy, or I don't want to go through this with you. They'll always say, okay, let's sit down on this for ten minutes and I'll run you through my thoughts on this. I think it's those senior guys that you really learn the most from. I think the investment intelligence filters down through them, and so that's really one of the best aspects of working here.