

Alumni in the Spotlight

Name: Katie MacKissack

Job Title: Graduate Trainee

Company: Sheffield Hallam University

Year that I left Copley: 2009



What was your dream job when you were 10?

Growing up I wanted to be a vet, until I realised, I was more interested in languages than science and I don't like blood.

What did you do when you left Copley?

After leaving Copley, I studied French, Dance, English Literature and Psychology at Ashton Sixth Form College before studying French and World Cinema at the University of Leeds, during which I spent a year as a Language Assistant in France. Since then I have worked for charities in Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso in Africa, and worked at Ashton Sixth Form College and Greater Manchester Higher organising activities that aim to inspire high school students to consider going to university. Currently I am taking part in a graduate scheme at Sheffield Hallam University and am also completing a Masters part-time in Education and International Development at UCL – the world's highest ranked University for studying Education.

What do you do day-to-day in your job?

My current job is a graduate scheme which means that it trains up university graduates in a range of different areas by letting them take part in multiple placements, hopefully meaning they will be able to progress through the company at a quicker rate than non-graduates once they secure a permanent job. My graduate scheme is at Sheffield Hallam University where I am currently on my first placement working in Human Resource Policy. This means that I spend time researching and reviewing policies concerning things such as maternity leave, the use of social media at work and sickness leave. I also work on a lot of projects that are based around making the Intranet accessible for colleagues and making sure they have all the information to do their job properly. In February I start my placement in Student Marketing and after that I will do a placement in Global Development and Partnerships which is the area I would like to work in after the graduate scheme has finished.

What skills and attributes do you need to do your job well?

To do my job well, I need to be organised, self-sufficient and have good communication skills (both spoken and written). I feel like going to university helped me to develop these skills. I also need to be very motivated as working full-time while studying for a Masters part-time is challenging.

What is your favourite part of your job?

I'm really enjoying taking part in a graduate scheme as I get to learn so many new skills and work on lots of different projects. I love working at a university as I feel like I am making a difference in young people's lives and I'm also passionate about learning and discovering new knowledge so it's great to work somewhere where so much important research takes place.

What is your favourite memory of Copley?

I really enjoyed my year 7 French lessons, discovering the language for the first time. Who'd have thought that 12 years later after finishing my degree in French, I'd get to my French language skills working in Burkina Faso - a French speaking country in Africa!