

Throughout my undergraduate Building Surveying studies, I was unsure on what I wanted to specialise in when I graduated. During my third year of study at Robert Gordons University, students are encouraged to seek a work placement for a term. The placement requires a number of learning outcomes to be achieved and acts as a great introduction to working within an organisation. I applied and was accepted to undertake a 6 month work placement within the Building Standards team at Aberdeen City Council.

At the time of my appointment I had very little awareness of Building Standards, only what we had been taught at university.

During my placement I undertook both office based and site inspection work; this gave me a greater understanding of Building Standards and the construction industry as a whole. Initially my work entailed shadowing colleagues, allowing me to learn how to check plans, inspect building sites and understand the reasons decisions were being made. My colleagues always encouraged me to ask questions about any queries I had, and I had a lot !. As a result of the work shadowing, I acquired a great deal of construction related knowledge becoming more confident and feeling capable to review work with limited supervision.

As I gained experience whilst under supervision of others, I was quickly given more responsibilities and my own case load to work through.

Having successfully completed my placement, I continued to work with the team on a part time basis and return to my studies. I went on to graduate from my RICS accredited degree in July 2014, obtaining a 2:1 classification in Building Surveying.

In October 2014 a full-time Building Standards Officer post became available in Aberdeen. Without the experience I had gained from my work placement, it is unlikely that I would have had the confidence or knowledge to be a successful applicant. I was successfully appointed the position and started my career as a Building Standards Officer later that month. Whilst obtaining my degree was crucial for this job opportunity, I feel that my on the job experience obtained during my placement was the main contributing factor to my success.

I have now been a Building Standards Officer for over 5 years and I am involved with a large variety of projects throughout Aberdeen City. My skillset allows me to work on projects ranging from domestic alterations and extensions, multi-plot housing developments, to non-domestic projects such as office accommodation and residential buildings. In addition to this, I am also undertaking my RICS Assessment of Professional Competence, with the hope to have this completed and be Chartered by 2021.

Throughout my placement I was rewarded with an invaluable variety of skills and experience that greatly assisted me in my final year of University and beyond, growing both as an employee and an individual.

There were a large number of positives that came from my placement, the biggest of which was that it gave me a better awareness of the options available to me once I graduated and thus helped me decide which role within the Built Environment I wished to pursue. My time with Building Standards provided me with a career path that I was excited and passionate about.

Today I am working in a role I did not previously know existed, with a career I can see myself in for the foreseeable future and all because of my university placement.

