

#MonthlyMotivation: Alexandra Butterworth (class of 2018)



Alexandra would recommend taking a working gap year to anyone. "It was one of the best years of my life to date", and here's why...

What did you do during your gap year?

When I left Putney, just under two years ago now (the time has flown by), I spent my gap year working in the City for one of the UK's largest investment managers, [Schroders](#). It was a really exciting role working within the Corporate Communications team. I had an amazing team and boss, and I was earning my first salary!

What were you able to get involved with?

At Schroders I had many opportunities to lead projects, receive training and see different parts of the business. As strange as it may sound, coming into work every day

was a joy - seeing the City skyline on my morning commute gave me a real sense of accomplishment that I was exactly where I was supposed to be, especially after a difficult year of A-levels. As part of the traineeship, I was also given the opportunity to sit my CFA Institute Investment Foundations Certificate, which is an industry recognised qualification.

What would you say was one of your top highlights?

Definitely being asked to write for [MoneyLens](#), Schroders' personal finance site for millennials. For one of my articles, "[My plan to become a financially independent 'grown-up' by 19 year-old me](#)", I had the opportunity to work with a leading expert in personal finance. I was delighted to find it had been read over 10,000 times, and was one of the top five performing articles of the year on the site. I was amazed that anyone would want to read a teenager's thoughts on personal finance!

What made you choose a working gap year and Schroders in particular?

Back in February 2018, I had offers to study Chinese at university. However, after several weeks I realised that this simply was not what I wanted to do anymore, and I decided to take a working gap year to figure out my options. I had always enjoyed Economics at school, and so I looked into jobs in the City working in finance. Once I had decided to take a working gap year, I had this strong, overwhelming feeling in my gut that this was the right path for me, and I felt a burden lift off my shoulders. I had previously been to an insight event at Schroders and really loved the offices, so they were at the top of my list when I started researching and making applications.

What was the application process like?

I had applied to countless schemes only to be met with rejection after rejection. It takes a lot of resilience and can sometimes feel like you are not good enough, however, I knew that at the end of the day, all I needed was one offer. Luckily I got the one at the top of my list, and although I had to interview with Schroders in the midst of my A-level exams, receiving that offer was an incredible day.

How do you think Putney helped you prepare?

Putney taught me a lot about resilience, and also gave me the confidence to pursue my goals. The teaching was also fantastic - I felt particularly inspired to pursue business after a conversation with Mr McLaughlin, where he actively encouraged me to pursue that path when I was having a dilemma in the midst of choosing my A-levels.

What are you doing now?

After completing my traineeship with Schroders, I started my Economics degree at the University of Warwick in September 2019, and have just finished two terms there. I've also received an offer (after countless internship applications) for a Spring Week at the investment manager [BlackRock](#).

How are you finding university?

I have really enjoyed my time at Warwick so far. Working in the City has shown me how much I love Economics, and I'm so glad I have work experience to put my degree into context.

I'm also really enjoying taking a module in Chinese, as I missed studying the language in a formalised context (in particular I miss the rigorous teaching of Ms Wen and Ms Huang!).

Settling into university life was challenging for me at first, as I had been out of academia for a year. However, once I figured out how to study again and threw myself into societies I started having a blast.

What's next?

Hopefully, my degree will lead me back to a career in the exciting world of the City, where I can pursue my dream of being a successful business woman.