

# Graduate Trainee Scheme

# Case Study



UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL

## Lewis Smith

### What attracted you to a career in Higher Education Management?

"I have friends who work in HE and from hearing about their experience; I decided to consider this sector for myself. A career in HE could give you great geographical mobility with the opportunity to travel."

### What parts of the programme have you enjoyed the most and why?

"I have enjoyed the level of responsibility I have been given, even in my first placement where I managed the marketing activity of a £68 million University development. This was extremely challenging but rewarding. The ILM programme has also helped me understand the theory of leadership, management and of academia."

### What have been the main benefits of working in different departments across the university?

"I have gained a broad amount of experience and been lucky enough to undertake 4 diverse placements. This has helped me to gain an organisational perspective and allowed me to use my skills across departments."

### Which parts of the programme so far have you found most challenging?

"The transition period every 6 months was challenging at first as I had really invested in my first placement. I also found it hard to settle into a large organisation and get my bearings. However this resolved itself through networking and the ILM programme."



"I would love to stay in the University; I think the progression path is clear."

"I studied Sociology here for 3 years and am originally from Rugby. I like how the university is ethical it's not profit driven and it has a comfortable and friendly environment."

**Tell us about the training and support you have received and how this has helped?**

“I have found the different training opportunities available to undertake really interesting. I have completed a variety of courses for example; minute taking workshops, first aid training and when I worked in the marketing department I completed digital content training for the web. My placements have been very supportive through formal and on the job training, my colleagues have been patient and aware of what training I may need now or in the future. I also have a Mentor who gives me 1-1 support and it’s great having Nicole (other graduate trainee) for support as we are going through a similar experience.”

**Would you say you have changed since you started the programme? And if so in what way?**

“Yes, I feel as though I have changed massively, as I started with no office working experience and I never really got the opportunity to apply my skills before now. I feel much more confident and have gained perspective and feel as though I have a more professional outlook. I also feel as though I have become more assertive.”

**How useful have you found it having a University Mentor?**

“I have found it extremely useful having someone outside of your work who is non-intrusive and who you can go and talk to. She has helped me with the ILM qualification by sharing some of her managerial experience with me and having a mentor who is senior is also beneficial as she has been able to put me into contact with other people who can help further my development.”

**What could the University do to make the experience even more positive?**

“I feel as though we could have had more of an input into our placement decisions to make it more suitable to our individual needs. Also promote the Graduate Trainee Scheme more internally to make more staff and departments aware that there is a Graduate Trainee Scheme currently in place.”

**What advice would you give to other graduates who might be considering the graduate trainee programme at the University of Liverpool?**

“To consider pursuing a career in HE as you will get a similar experience to work in a larger business organisation and the University is very diverse. Also allow yourself to be challenged as the University have put a lot of trust in you and be willing to learn as it is an educational institute and there is a lot to take in.”

**What are your ambitions and hopes for the future?**

“I would love to stay in the University; I think the progression path is clear.”

