



Imogen and Eliza Hick

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Different routes but the same success for graduate twins

Twin sisters who graduated from Northumbria University last year have both kick-started their careers with the same high-profile company – and in the same department.

Imogen and Eliza Hick gained a Bachelor and a Master's degree respectively from Northumbria's Newcastle Business School in 2022. And now the 23-year-olds from Sheffield have secured high quality graduate roles in the Human Resources department of Kier Group - a leading UK infrastructure

services, construction and property group. As one of the UK's top contractors for Government and private clients, working on high-prestige projects such as HS2, working for Kier has been a dream career move for the twins. But while they are now working together in HR, their journeys to success were quite different.

Having missed the A-level grades she needed to enrol on a business degree directly, Imogen opted for a Foundation course at Northumbria and has not looked back.

She explains: “My first option wasn’t possible, so I went through Clearing and Northumbria said they had the Foundation course available in business, which was my area of interest. I really wanted to be in Newcastle as well, so I eagerly accepted. I went through the Foundation year and had a really good time, settled in well, understood the university, met some amazing people and was then able to choose the course I wanted, BA Human Resource Management. It was ideal because it included a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development qualification alongside the degree – so a dual qualification and very career-focused.

“Northumbria has a massive emphasis on employability and improving your skill sets throughout the whole course. Modules included mock interviews, psychometric testing and the tutors were great. The Graduates Futures and graduates career pages were also excellent and paired me really well with securing an amazing placement with GlaxoSmithKline – even during lockdown.

“I graduated in July last year with First Class Honours and having gone through the recruitment rounds I started with Kier in September. Overall, I had a really good university experience and to now be working alongside my sister with a major company like Kier is incredibly exciting and rewarding.”

Eliza studied Psychology at undergraduate level at the University of Liverpool. After graduation she decided to study for a Masters in business and join her sister at Northumbria’s Newcastle Business School.

She says: “The vibe at Northumbria and the city of Newcastle in general was excellent. The amount of contact I had with my personal tutors at Northumbria was also on a different level. That face-to-face contact was incredibly important for me and meant I enjoyed my Masters year way more

than I did my undergraduate degree. I could also see Imogen and other people that I knew were doing so well and getting great results so I could tell the Business School was really good.

“Imogen and I are also keen dancers. It sounds ridiculous but we both wanted to go somewhere that had a really good dance team – and I knew Northumbria had that. I always wanted to be in Newcastle as well and being able to move in with Imogen was ideal. Now, working together at Kier is just the icing on the cake.”

Eliza graduated with Distinction with an MSc in Business with Human Resource Management from Northumbria’s Newcastle Business School in December last year.

Summing up and reflecting on her Foundation route, Imogen added: “Not getting my A Level grades felt like the end of the world initially but looking back I could not recommend the Foundation year enough. It was an ideal stepping-stone to a degree course and personally I don’t think I would have done as well without it. At the end of the Foundation year, I knew the ropes, what the University wanted from me, what I needed to include in essays; just lots of small but really important details. It really did give me a leg up and I felt a lot more comfortable.

“For Eliza and me I think our story shows that you can go through different routes and still have the same positive outcome.”

Dr Dawn Whitton, Assistant Professor at Newcastle Business School, adds: “The pathway to securing a graduate position can be a challenge, and for both Imogen and Eliza to achieve this at the same organisation is testament to their hard work and commitment. In Imogen’s case securing a placement, and utilising support from Graduate Futures demonstrates that value of work-based experience. Eliza also gained work experience prior to joining her Master’s programme which again reinforces the importance and value of practical experience which employers often seek. At the Business School we encourage all undergraduate students to undertake a placement, we have fantastic links with industry both regionally and nationally.”

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Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk