

Case Study: Alumni

Andrew, Chemical Engineering (MEng)

Graduation Year: 2004

Job Title: Trainee

Employer: Allen & Overy

Department: Corporate - Private Equity



What has been your career path up until now?

After graduating from Imperial College in 2004, I spent a further two years studying for the graduate diploma in law and the bar vocational course. In March 2008 I joined Allen & Overy as a trainee.

What does your job involve?

My work at Allen & Overy is extremely varied. Currently I am sitting in a corporate seat which can involve anything from advising a company on a takeover deal to assisting a foreign company with setting up a business in the UK. Although there can be long hours involved, the work is exciting, very challenging and gives you the opportunity to work with very experienced people in all fields. Due to the variety of clients and deals, there is no such thing as a typical day. Some of the tasks I have been involved with over the past few months include reviewing contracts, researching new areas of law and drafting the documents required to incorporate a public company. As part of my training, I have had the opportunity to attend client meetings with senior management and observe senior lawyers negotiating various agreements.

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- Andrew

Do you use skills that you obtained during your Imperial course?

The team work skills developed throughout my studies at Imperial College have proved to be a real asset at Allen & Overy. Given the complexity of deals that Allen & Overy work on, we often work with large external teams such as investment banks and accountancy firms. In addition to team work, the analytical skills developed on the Chemical Engineering degree have really helped me to quickly understand the key issues behind client problems and think of practical solutions.

What are your future plans?

For the next two years I will be changing seats every six months. This gives me a great opportunity to experience many different areas of work at Allen & Overy before choosing where to qualify. At the moment I am not sure where I will qualify but the firm encourages trainees to keep an open mind before committing to a specific area.



Can you name three things you like about your job?

Three things I enjoy about my job include:

1. The opportunity to experience and learn about different industries
2. Challenging work which changes every day
3. Working with extremely capable people

Is there anything you are less keen on?

The hours lawyers work can be very unpredictable. Given the urgency and nature of some of our work, planning to do things during the evenings is difficult because I never know when I might be expected to work late. However, despite the horror stories about City law firms I have not yet had to work a weekend.

Did you choose your course with this particular occupation in mind?

No. I chose Chemical Engineering because I enjoyed the practical application of science and was convinced that Chemical Engineering would develop skills that would be very transferable to a range of jobs – my career in law has proven this right.

What part of your course did you particularly enjoy?

I particularly enjoyed the group projects such as the fourth year design project.

Did you gain work experience or an internship whilst at Imperial?

I was very fortunate to undertake an internship every summer including working at a major oil company and an engineering consultancy. This was invaluable experience and gave me the opportunity to think about what I wanted from my future career.

Were you involved in any extracurricular activities?

While at Imperial I was involved in the Scandinavian Society both as a member and Treasurer. This was a great opportunity to socialise and gain a position of responsibility outside of my course.

Did you use the Careers Service or go to Careers events (e.g. job fairs, employer talks)?

I attended many careers talks and used the resources within the careers centre to research different careers. I found the opportunity to talk to recent graduates particularly helpful at giving a realistic picture of different careers.

Could you give us one or more career tips for Imperial graduates?

Law is a very competitive field and anything students can do to differentiate themselves will give them an advantage. At Imperial College students should join clubs and gain a position of responsibility such as club secretary or president. Outside of Imperial College students should participate in activities that demonstrate an interest in the legal profession such as volunteering at a Citizens' Advice Bureau or attending legal workshops run by law firms.