

Finance



I am a Financial Reporting Manager at Lloyds Banking Group. I have worked for the Group for around 14 years gaining experience in various areas of Banking and Finance. My University Degree was in Brewing and Distilling but, despite a change in career path post-graduation, I have found there are many transferable skills which I have used on my journey.

Background:

At school, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I chose to do a degree at Heriot Watt in Brewing and Distilling. I realised during work experience on the course that the practical element of the industry entailed living in remote parts of Scotland. I didn't want to leave the city, and I found after my degree, that I was overqualified for basic roles in the Distillery Companies and yet didn't have the experience for senior roles.

I decided to sign up at an agency. They tested me to work out my strong points and my skills, so that they could match me up with the right job. I joined the Bank of Scotland, and started by inputting data.

Lloyds Bank owns:

Bank of Scotland

Halifax

Scottish Widows

MBNA

Black Horse

Lex Autolease

LDC

AMC

Birmingham Midshires

It has over 75,000 employees.

The Bank of Scotland was founded in 1695, and introduced paper money in 1696.

Lloyds Bank began in 1765.

It is now a very diverse and inclusive company but didn't employ women initially until the first world war. IN 1959 a computer was first used, and by 1972, the first cash machine was installed. Now it utilises modern technologies and is very progressive.

My career path:

I joined the bank in 2005, and after data entry in the Accounts Payable Office, I moved to Project work, Finance integration, Systems Support, Financial Control and now Financial Reporting.

I started out by working hard, and becoming as expert as I could on the systems I was using. I put myself forward for project work, and always tried to meet different people, and put myself outside my comfort zone. I helped to design an expenses

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form, and to implement it. I went to Germany to do this, and 2 days after being there, I got a promotion from the person I helped in Germany. In 2008, the Bank of Scotland was acquired by Lloyds. I helped with the finance integration role. Our task was to merge 15 million customers from one bank to another over a weekend. I spent a lot of time working in London.

Extra Qualifications:

After 4 - 5 years working at the bank, I decided to work towards some specific professional qualifications in accountancy. I carried on working and studied at the same time. This led to different roles in systems support and financial control.

Present job role:

As a Finance Reporting Manager, I work in commercial banking. We have given loans to over 25,000 companies, from big commercial firms like real-estate to start-up firms.

We translate the data into the annual accounts, under the financial requirements from the government and EU. We also do funding for internal loans in the Treasury dept, so we are looking at trillions.

My daily work:

My transferable skills from my degree include problem solving. This is the biggest part of our day. We need to find the root of the problem to work out solutions. A good working knowledge of Excel has been vital. We use Excel for spreadsheets with a million lines of data, and we are a small part of a very large organisation. It is important to be good at communication - we need to understand the requirements of our clients.

If you want a job in Finance:

Edinburgh is a financial hub. Many people I have met in my organisation did different degrees, have learnt from their peers whilst in the job or have gained additional professional qualifications.

Questions:

How many people are in your team?

There are 60 in all, 7 or 8 report to me. There are similar teams in Halifax and Bristol. There is a hierarchical structure, but we are all linked.

What is your favourite part of the year?

I generally enjoy my job, but my least favourite part is January as we have to compile the end of year report.

Can you go into banking straight from school?

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We have a scheme for Finance apprentices. It is quite competitive - over 600 applicants, but you can go straight from school sometimes. I have a few apprentices in my team - it is good to see their career starting.

To get more opportunities, work hard and communicate with your colleagues. There are so many different roles, and it is possible to move between them.

My advice is try to stand out from the crowd. Be enthusiastic, research the job you want thoroughly, show an interest and prove that you want to do the role. Studying Maths at school is obviously beneficial, as is a good knowledge of Excel, but one of the best attributes is a willingness to learn and the ability to pick up new skills.

University students could apply for our graduate programmes, or look for vacancies in Bank Branches, IT, Finance, Helpdesks etc. Once you are employed, you can work out which route you like best and pursue it.

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