COLLAS CRILL

Vacation Scheme: A student's perspective

DECEMBER 2023

In August 2023 we ran our annual Vacation Scheme in Guernsey - aimed at A-Level students, the scheme is a fantastic opportunity to gain work experience and shadow industry professionals.

The students had an action-packed week with us: an introduction to our practice areas, Knowledge Management and BD&M, presentations from some of our key clients, accompanying the property team on a conveyancing site visit, virtual meetings with our colleagues in our Jersey and Caribbean offices, joining some of our Next Gen lawyers for coffees with clients, and also taking part in a beach clean at Vazon - all in all a fully immersive experience of life at Collas Crill.

Isabelle Walker took part in the inaugural Vacation Scheme and is now a trainee with the firm. Here she tells us more about how the Vacation Scheme helped her on her law career journey...

Welcome to Collas Crill...again! Tell us why you did the Vacation Scheme?

I decided to participate in the Vacation Scheme as I had recently graduated from university, and the end of summer panic about a job had kicked in! I thought it was a really good idea for me to do, considering I was still very unsure about my career options. I also think that it's always worthwhile taking part in such opportunities to get insights into different career options as they arise. It is so much more than just providing an opportunity to 'bulk up' your CV.

Why is it beneficial to take part?

The Vacation Scheme is a very good thing to do as it provided me with an insight into the reality of working life at a law firm. It's also very important for potential future employers to see that you are keen and interested in what they do as a business. The Vacation Scheme is a very good foot in the door - especially for law - and is a great way to meet people that you otherwise might not have the opportunity to meet. Also when you are a student a full time job seems very far in the future, but it comes around really quickly. It's a great idea to take these opportunities as it helps your own application when you inevitably need to start applying for jobs.

Did you enjoy it?

I thoroughly enjoyed the whole week. Collas Crill packed it full of such a wide variety of the range of areas that they offer and I can honestly say I enjoyed learning about every single one. I specifically enjoyed the talks the partners gave on their practice areas, and then completing the practice area-related tasks. The task was really

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interesting as I never knew how different laws could be between different jurisdictions, especially ones as close as Guernsey and Jersey.

I also enjoyed going to Court and getting an in-depth tour from Charlie Brewin, a then trainee solicitor (now Associate) at the firm. The tour, and sitting in on the Conveyancing Court, gave me a head start when I joined the firm as I have made numerous trips up to Court for a variety of different things.

Would you recommend the Vacation Scheme?

I would definitely recommend taking part in the Vacation Scheme. Personally, it really solidified my aspiration to work in the legal profession. It provided me with ample opportunities to meet and speak with multiple Collas Crill employees at varying levels of their career from trainee to partner. The experience was invaluable, and has helped me in feeling so happy and settled with my job now.

In relation to getting the job offer, Ben Havard and Emma Taylor, who organised the Vacation Scheme, were very keen and helpful when meeting with me about an interview and talking through my options. Having done the Vacation Scheme proved very useful for the interview. Additionally, when I joined, many of my now colleagues remembered me from the Vacation Scheme which made me feel really welcome and not nervous at all to throw myself into the work.

What was your key takeaway?

A really big lesson I learned from the experience was that working a 9-5 in an office was not all as bad as I had always imagined. Having just finished university, I was definitely used to the luxury of a very flexible schedule, so being in an office all day was pretty daunting. However, after the week, I knew that Collas Crill was a working environment of which I'd love to be a part. Everyone I met was so approachable and seemed to genuinely love what they do, and that definitely had an impact on my decision to pursue a career in law, and more specifically with Collas Crill.

How does it compare now working at Collas Crill?

Having mentioned previously about the family law research task, this is something which I have done numerous times now working within the firm - albeit researching different things. It is a very typical task a partner or associate may ask a paralegal to do for them. During the Vacation Scheme I joined Cerisse Fisher, group partner and Marco Nel, associate, for a catch up with a client over coffee. Meeting with clients is very typical of what you get to do as a paralegal or trainee, and I thought including that as part of the week was really helpful.

Did you also take part in the Collas Crill Moot when you were at school?

I did take part in the Moot when I was in sixth form at The Ladies' College. So when I learned about the Vacation Scheme, the Moot definitely helped as 'Collas Crill' was a familiar name to me. The Moot

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initially piqued my interest of a career in law - the cases were interesting and fun, and being able to take part in it was a really unique experience.

On the topic of Moot, I have now experienced it 'full circle' having helped coach the students and clerk at some of the moots as a member of the Collas Crill team. The Moot is also an incredibly good thing to get involved in while you have the opportunity. You never know, like me you might be working at Collas Crill a mere five years later...

To see how Isabelle and her fellow Vacation Schemers got on click here.

If you are interested in taking part in the 2025 Vacation Scheme click here.



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