



30% Club
GROWTH THROUGH DIVERSITY

30% CLUB IRELAND



Cyber Security Specialist



HR Specialist



Sustainability Consultant



Investment Analyst



Contents

- Welcome 3
- Head of Corporate Banking Ireland 4
- Investment Consultant..... 9
- Senior Inflation Trader 14
- Analyst, Transfer Agency 17
- Managing Director Private Clients 21
- Associate Accountant/IFS Apprentice..... 25
- Pricing Actuary 28
- Associate Sustainability Advisor 32
- Learning & Development Consultant..... 35
- Business Manager 39
- Associate Director 43
- Head of Vendor Relationship Management 47
- Regulatory & Exam Management Senior Analyst..... 52
- Asset Manager 56
- Learning & Development Lead 59
- Senior Product Manager - Digital..... 64
- Senior Investment Analyst 72
- Head of HR 76
- Workforce Org Design & Strategy Development..... 80

Welcome

The Financial Services Industry is an important part of the Irish and Global Economy. It is a thriving area for talent and offers exciting opportunities for students to consider. Jobs and Careers within the Industry are far less ordinary than you might think – as an Industry our jobs range from Customer Service Advisors to Mobile App developers, Investment Analysts to Sustainability Experts, Accountants, Engineers, IT Specialists, Regulatory Experts, HR, Marketing, Legal and so many other jobs in between.

As an Industry we pride ourselves on investing in talent and personal development and many of us joined the industry through a number of channels – via apprentice programmes, straight from Secondary School, as College Graduates, as Career Changers from other industries – what we all have in common is the great potential to learn on the job and be trained for future careers.

As part of the Ireland for Finance Programme, we want to do our part to help encourage International interest in Ireland as a base for talent. So, we want to help you consider our Industry as a great place to build your future. Many of our jobs you mightn't be aware of, some of them are still emerging but we have asked some of our members to describe what they do and how they got there to give you a flavour of what life looks like. Through these role profiles we hope you will see the many opportunities that you might never have considered.

Our aim within the 30% Club is to have a minimum of 30% of all senior roles in every industry held equally be men and women – to achieve that we need a balanced talent pipeline, and pipeline starts at the entry point. We hope that these profiles will help young men and women consider the industry in equal measures – firstly as a job and ultimately as a career that offers opportunities, potential for personal growth and great places to work.

If you'd like to learn more watch out for us at careers fairs, talk to the recruitment teams across our many constituent members or invite us to your schools for careers talks. Check out our information on careersportal.ie, where you will find great information on routes into the Industry and discover that a career in financial services is a career less ordinary.

We look forward to you joining us

30% Club Financial Services Group



Head of Corporate Banking Ireland
Barclays Bank Ireland
Brian



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I did business organisation and economics in school for my final exams which gave me a starter understanding of the area of business. I enjoyed these subjects a lot and decided to do a business degree (commerce) in UCD to continue my learning in this area. I still didn't really know what I wanted to do so following that I trained to be an accountant which further expanded my knowledge and experience in the field of business. At the time my main focus was on just getting broad business experience and a financial qualification to give me a strong base or platform to build a career on across a large amount of areas. I choose not to go down a specialist route which has served me well given my interests. I then travelled around the world for a year which gave me think to think about what I wanted from a career. I came back and did finance for a year but then got into banking in 2006 and have been there ever since. The key point was moving from finance to banking which involved taking a step back career wise to ultimately move forward. Some people don't like doing this but when you're young and have a long career ahead of you it's not an issue and it's more important to be doing something you enjoy.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My dad was a really big influence on my career in particular when I was in secondary school. He worked in Bank of Ireland for 40 years and gave me great guidance on career choices all along. For those that don't have someone to guide them at home I would certainly recommend finding someone in your broader family or school to chat through as it's really helpful. My dad's key thing was to focus on something that opens you up to many career options which is what business subjects/degrees and an accountancy qualification does. He also ensured I focused on areas that I enjoyed. I wasn't very good at science which was mainly because I didn't enjoy it so that wasn't for me for example! As I've continued my career I have had lots of people along the way who have given me great guidance and support – instilling things like the importance of being confident in yourself and your ability, be good to people, be open/honest and transparent in you work and life, work as a team and have fun along the way. Not getting too caught up in the medium or long term is important – just continue to get experience and see where your career path leads is more important.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

I am very lucky to have a job that allows me to have balance between work and family life. This has never been more important than in recent years when I've had 3 children. Working for a company or in a job that allows you balance is really important to ensure you are happy. When you're happy you work much better and tend to then have a better career. My job also gives me a platform to provide a good life for my family and although it has been hard work along the way that level of security is really important to me. As I become more senior, I am also given opportunities to support our community more by sharing my

knowledge and I have worked with a number of charities in recent years to try and give something back also which is really important and fulfilling.

How did you go about getting your current job?

My current job became an opportunity when the last person in that role left to get a bigger job. I spoke to people in the bank who would be making the decisions and positioned myself to get that role. I went through lots of interviews and had to do a lot of work to be prepared for that. The key part though is the importance of building your network and getting to know people all along your career journey as you will always need people to try and help you along the way.

Describe a typical day?

Every day is a little bit different which is why I love my job. I get to meet different people/customers every day and spend my day interacting with either team mates or other people across the business. I also get to work on large deals which I find very rewarding too. There are around 40 people in the team and I really enjoy the teamwork that comes with that. I love sport which is mainly due to the team aspect if it and work is very similar. If you like dealing with people banking is a great career. Being able to build rapport with customers is crucial and we do get to socialise with them at events occasionally which is also fun.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

My job is to manage a team of around 40 people who support customers/large companies in Ireland with their banking needs – so if they need a loan, manage foreign exchange or need to move their money around the world my team helps them in that regard. We also spend a lot of time with our clients building the relationship and trust with them. I also need to make sure any risks are managed, as that is really important in banking.

What are the main challenges?

The most challenging aspect is managing all of the different tasks that need to be completed as part of my role. Once you move into a senior management position in any company, there is a lot of responsibility that rests on your shoulders. With experience you get used to that and it doesn't cause me an issue, but it certainly keeps me busy! I think the word "perspective" is a great word to have in your head as you go through a career. There have been many occasions in my career where things have become a challenge or things have gone wrong but having perspective and always doing your best is the key here. My experience has shown that no matter how bad you think things are at a point in time, by working hard and showing integrity you can make sure they work out in the end. There's no point getting stressed or worried – you can only do your best.

What do you really like about your job?

The best things about my job:

- Working with great people every day who are fun to be around
- Working on some of the biggest deals in the Irish and Global market
- Meeting new people every week and learning about their businesses
- Seeing how technology is changing the world around us
- Having a chance to progress in the company through hard work
- Being able to work flexibly, and ensure a good balance between work and family life

Is there anything you don't like?

Not really. We have to do some administration-type work that isn't the most exciting thing but is really important to supporting our clients.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

I think my main skills I bring are:

Collaboration – I work well with people and love being part of a team that succeeds.

I have built up a lot of experience and knowledge over my career, which I can use to help others and make sure we do well as a team

I have always believed that valuing people and treating them well is really important to any business, and believe this attitude is important in any workplace.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I did business Organisation and Economics for my leaving cert which helped me understand business and work out it was something I wanted to do more of. This gave me a good base. There is nothing I would have changed as I'm a firm believer in just getting lots of experience and you never know when or how it'll benefit you in your career – but if you keep learning new things it has to be positive.

What is your education to date?

My education to date:

- Leaving Cert where I did two business subjects that helped give me a base knowledge.
- UCD Commerce – a very good broad business degree and college was a fun time too
- KPMG Accountancy qualification – a broad business qualification and great training in KPMG also.
- Qualified Financial Advisor – helped me understand some banking products
- Prince 2 Project Mgt qualification – helped me manage projects better at a time it was important to me.
- Certified Bank Director with Institute of Bankers in Ireland – helped me get experience to operate at a board level in a bank or elsewhere.
- Multiple education courses in places I have worked which allowed me to continue to learn new things on a yearly basis.

- I would also add that the year I spent travelling educated me on a lot on the softer skills that are crucial to success in a job, so formal education is really important but other life education along the way helps shape you too.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

All education I have done has shaped the person/professional I am today, but I think the degree in business, the accountancy qualification and my Certified Bank Director qualification have been the most important to benefit my career and knowledge.

In saying that I also travelled around the world for a year with friends after I was in KPMG and I would feel that travel equally helped shape me to be successful today. The interpersonal and personal development skills enhanced on that trip were really important so it's important not just to focus on academic learnings. In the end of the day the right type of person is what people want and a lot of that is down to their character, values and ethics as much as their knowledge and qualifications.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I always look to do some level of new training every year and this year I will do training through Barclays to keep me moving forward.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

I have had a number of promotions over the years and these have all been very rewarding and made me proud. They give me recognition and reward for my hard work which makes it all worthwhile. I also take a lot of pleasure when I see colleagues who I have worked with get promotions and advance their careers. Barclays also encouraged me and other senior leaders to sit on a few charity boards over the years, and the work I have done with them has been very rewarding too.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I think I have some good qualities that have certainly helped me but are also probably helpful for any career. All can be worked on too.

Work ethic – I have always worked hard which is really important in business.

Team player – whether it's in sport or work I love being part of a team and having success as a team.

Strong values and ethics – I think it's really important to do things in the right way and consider other people which is really important.

Eager to learn and take on new challenges

Loyalty – which I believe is an important trait, and helps build trust.

Get on well with people

Have strong perspective so I don't stress too much or worry when things aren't perfect – I just try and find solutions.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

My dream job is still to play soccer for Man United but I may be past that now at 42 and with bad knees!
I love my current job at Barclays and would just like to continue to progress in our organisation.
My dream job is a role that allows me do all the things I enjoy while also having the right amount of time for my family and for myself which is really important. Luckily, I have that at Barclays.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

I would recommend a career in banking mainly because of the variety it offers. People have a view of banking as the bank teller taking cash in a branch but there is so much more to offer. We have people like me that deal with customers, do large deals, travel and work as teams. But we also have people that trade shares, that manage risk/finance, that work with charities, that manage the largest mergers in the world, that work in green finance, that come up with all the new products and innovation, that look after the wealth of high net worth individuals and many other areas. So it's worth looking at further to find an area of the very broad sector of banking to find something that suits your interests most.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Being able to work as a team and be collaborative
Strong values and ethics
Enjoy dealing with people

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Any work in Financial Services or even beyond would position people well for a career in banking. In the end of the day it's all about attitude. If you come into a career with the right attitude and a willingness to learn and work hard you will be a success at anything.

What is your pet hate at work?

I find it difficult working with people who aren't team players – but luckily, I don't have that issue in my current organisation. I don't like some admin work, but we all have to do it!

Investment Consultant
Mercer
Orla



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

The first time I really considered career when making any decision was in choosing my degree. I really enjoyed Maths in school and so I thought I might like to pursue an actuarial career. I (wrongly) thought that if I did an actuarial-specific degree, I would be limiting myself to this career path and I didn't feel I was in a position to make that decision at age 18. So I did a BSc in Financial Maths and Economics in NUI Galway. While I enjoyed the course and loved living in Galway, the course only offered a handful of exemptions from actuarial exams so when I did decide to pursue a career as an actuary, I was left with a longer and more difficult journey than would otherwise have been the case. I initially went into a traditional actuarial role in Mercer with some general pensions consultancy also. While I got great experience in various teams and have always worked with lovely, hard-working, driven people, I've only really started to enjoy my job since moving to Investment.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

I always knew I'd prefer a "Monday to Friday" type job with regular hours where you can plan ahead more easily and have two consecutive days off each week. Since I've had kids, it works well to be off at weekends. I feel I've got job security in my current role and I like that there's a clear progression path, with ample opportunities to progress for those who wish to avail of them.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I was already working in Mercer when my current job was advertised. I was working in a very technical role at the time. While I didn't dislike it, working on Excel the majority of the time was not for me. I find Investments a more vibrant area, it's dynamic and I enjoy dealing with clients on a more frequent basis than in a traditional actuarial role.

Describe a typical day?

Every day starts the same...I look at two things: 1. Bloomberg's "5 things you need to know to start your day" and 2. my "to-do" list in Excel. Everything in my to-do list is colour-coded, depending on how urgent it is. I have a plan for every day but I rarely complete the tasks I had intended to as you'll get an "urgent" email / call / Teams message from a colleague or client that interrupts your plan and it goes from there! I find prioritising is a major part of every day, with the most "urgent" task on my list changing as the day goes on.

My day-to-day work entails preparing meeting papers for upcoming client meetings, progressing actions from previous client meetings and responding to emails. People management consumes a chunk of my

time – with a growing client base and a few people moving internally within Mercer, hiring is also a feature of my role.

I find my days busy and I have to be flexible and willing to adapt when unexpected issues arise during the day. While sometimes, I do crave 2 uninterrupted hours to focus on a particular task, I really enjoy regularly interacting with colleagues and clients alike.

If I have a client meeting on a particular day, I'll set aside some time to prep for that.

Deadlines are a key feature of every day. You need lots of energy to stay on top of everything, monitor deadlines and ensure tasks are progressing well.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

My primary role is as investment consultant to a range of clients, predominantly trustees of defined benefit and defined contribution pension schemes. Responsibilities include managing these clients on a day-to-day basis, providing proactive advice and recommendations on a range of investment-related issues. Additionally, I meet with clients to review current investment arrangements, discuss market and industry developments and potential strategy changes to consider / implement. I would also be involved in overseeing the implementation of any investment changes agreed. It's also important to liaise with colleagues across other departments to ensure a consistent approach is taken across the board.

I also have a people management role. This entails having responsibility for more junior colleagues' training and development.

Finally, I also have revenue targets, both on behalf of myself but also those who report into me.

What are the main challenges?

Staying in control of my to-do list is the main challenge...You need to be very organised in this job. You need to plan ahead, know what meetings are coming up, make sure those who work with you on a particular client are aware of the upcoming meeting and what's required for it.

Keeping up-to-speed can be challenging – what's moving markets, any developments with investment managers or funds. Sustainability continues to gather momentum and it can be challenging to stay up-to-date with regulatory developments in that area.

The job can be tiring. I find it takes a lot of energy and proactivity to keep on top of all the tasks that are ongoing with all my clients...to keep projects moving. At times, it can feel like you're being pulled in different directions and it's really important not to drop a ball.

Having said that, I'm very lucky to work in a team of highly-motivated, hard-working and conscientious people. We work well together as a team, helping each other out as and when necessary. There's always someone ready and willing to help if you have a problem or if you simply need to bounce an idea off someone.

What do you really like about your job?

I love people management and I love building a rapport with my busiest clients who I'm in frequent contact with. The ability to build strong relationships with clients is important in this job and it's something I enjoy.

Is there anything you don't like?

Definitely drafting meeting minutes. I don't think anyone enjoys that.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

My background in other areas of Mercer is definitely beneficial in understanding the "bigger picture" for clients. On a practical level, it also means I know people in other departments better than I otherwise would. Having a good rapport with colleagues both within your own department but also more broadly across Mercer makes life much easier at work.

Genuine desire to achieve the best outcomes for clients and colleagues alike. As clichéd as it might sound, I find helping clients and members of my team is the most satisfying aspect of my job. If you want what's best for your clients then you're half-way there to doing a good job.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I chose Biology, Chemistry, Applied Maths and Accounting for my Leaving Cert. All largely irrelevant! With the benefit of hindsight, I wish I'd done Economics but it can be difficult to know at age 18 what job you'll end up in and what subjects would be beneficial.

What is your education to date?

I have a BSc in Financial Maths and Economics from NUIG, I'm a QFA and an actuary.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

Probably not! I've done more than my fair share of exams!

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

My job is very client-centric. For me, the most rewarding days are those where you've put a lot of work into a meeting, there's a good discussion about, say, investment strategy and some constructive decisions are made. It can be particularly rewarding to help those clients who don't work in investments day-to-day and so require more guidance. It's very rewarding to be involved in a successful project that extends over a few months...I can think of a few projects that caused me to lose sleep but were well worth it in the end when the job was done and done well and, most importantly, the client is happy.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I'm organised and know how to prioritise. My working day is full of deadlines with lots of tasks on the go simultaneously so you need a fool proof method for staying on top of your workload. There are never enough hours in the day so being able to prioritise is very important. You need to know what's most important. And you need to know the difference between jobs you "have" to do and jobs you'd ideally like to get done but sometimes simply can't. It can be helpful to categorise tasks as one of "Do it, Delegate it, Defer it, Dump it"!

I like to think I'm diligent. I want to do the best I can for both my clients and for those who report into me. I don't cut corners.

I'm able to put myself in someone else's shoes. It's important to think of things from the client's perspective. Each client has their own unique set of objectives, their own risk appetite and clients' investment expertise can vary greatly too. It's important to step back and think about things from their point so view. The same principle applies when dealing with colleagues.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

My dream job would be to work in a theme park such as Legoland or Disneyland. I love rollercoasters. Sadly, I don't see my career heading in that direction...

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

In terms of education, people on my team are generally either actuaries or hold the CFA qualification. While I'm an actuary, I would advise anyone setting out on this career path to head down the CFA route. It's (arguably) more relevant and, while the exams are very challenging, there are "only" three of them, so even if you're finding it tough, at least the end is always in sight!

Having a genuine interest in markets and the world around us is a big benefit.

As a consultant, you need to enjoy dealing with people. The key skills required are strong communication skills – both with clients and colleagues alike. Team work. I'm lucky to work on a great team in Mercer, with a strong team spirit – I'm surrounded by very professional people who are obliging and keen to help each other out.

In terms of advice, don't under-estimate the skills you're developing while still a student – regardless of what career you choose, communication skills are really important. Any presentation you do in school or college is fantastic experience. Any part-time or summer job you have is so helpful in developing really important life-skills that will stand to you in any career e.g. the ability to work well as part of a team, meeting deadlines, prioritising etc.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Having the right balance between being diligent and being pragmatic

Good communication skills

Proactivity – keeping on top of projects and keeping them moving / progressing...sometimes I feel I spend nearly as much time managing my workload as I do actually working!

What is your pet hate at work?

People saying "I'll have that for you by Wednesday" ...Wednesday comes and goes but the task isn't done...

Senior Inflation Trader
Bank of Ireland
Semin



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

Growing up in Istanbul, I always wanted to know why rents were advertised in US Dollars and why economic crises were happening so often. I was interested in economics and financial markets from a young age because it was affecting my life on a daily basis. For example, when I had to pay a few million Liras every time I was buying a commuter bus ticket in an economy suffering from hyperinflation. A major career milestone was when my former macroeconomics professor mentioned a specialised master's programme in Italy, while I was already working as a portfolio manager in Istanbul. It was a difficult decision at the time but winning a scholarship for my master's degree and relocating to Italy changed my career path. Working in an international environment in Italy, in Ireland and in Turkey allowed me to build a multinational network.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My grandmother has always been a strong role model for me. She had to raise her two sons by herself, after my grandfather, who was a pilot in the military, died in a plane crash at a young age. She always encouraged me to pursue opportunities and carve my own path.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

Yes, I do my own research, generate trade ideas ahead of the market and have the opportunity to be in contact with policy makers, academics, thought leaders and of course our clients.

How did you go about getting your current job?

My current job was a leap of faith as I switched to the sell side after 18 years on the buy side. It is a challenge to set up a new business line from scratch, but also a learning opportunity. But of course, the first challenge was to convince my new boss and my new company to hire me and provide me with resources to set up inflation trading. Luckily our visions were similar, and I convinced them. I'm happy that we beat our targets three years in a row now.

Describe a typical day?

I'm in the office at 7:30 while the Asian market is still open, work throughout European trading hours and the US morning session and leave around 18:30. Every day is different, depending on the market price

action, data releases, political events and our client meetings. The themes we follow change from macroeconomics to geopolitics to commodities and lately even epidemiology!

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

I'm a senior trader contributing to the profit targets of the global markets group at Bank of Ireland. I share our views on the financial markets at industry events and the media and also support the hedging activities of our client base.

What are the main challenges?

The financial markets always move on to the next theme once the current outlook is priced in, so one always needs to be ahead of the market, keep an eye on potential risks and anticipate how the market would react to them. I guess this explains the long hours on the desk.

What do you really like about your job?

I like it that my job is always challenging and never boring. Throughout the economic cycle, change is constant within financial markets. Interacting with our clients, hearing what it is that they are mostly focused on, allows us to tailor our solutions and be relevant. Currently as economies are recovering from the pandemic, we are hearing more on how to hedge inflation risks, if house prices are reflecting asset price bubbles and on ESG investing. We have the opportunity to offer guidance and use our expertise to support our customers.

Is there anything you don't like?

I don't have the best work-life balance at my current job, but since the pandemic I'm working from home as well as the office and trying to introduce more flexibility around my working hours.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

I have a strong work ethic and follow my core values. I also learned to be resilient over the years. Setbacks do happen, one has to recover from them and not take it personal.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I enjoyed studying macroeconomics and political science. Still enjoy reading about both, on and off work. But it is not a prerequisite to have a background in economics and finance. Many people in Investments have different backgrounds from physics to engineering, history and arts. We welcome diversity and believe different points of view contribute to a better decision making as a team.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

I highly recommend students to do internships and gain work experience. Working as an intern allowed me to join different teams in different countries and supported my career.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

Yes, I believe in continuous learning and seeking new challenges. There are always industry events, projects, trainings as well as online education opportunities.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

I am mentoring junior traders since the beginning of the lockdowns. It's been a tough period for new joiners to build their trading skills while working from home. Sharing my views, exchanging ideas and looking at things from a different perspective has been a rewarding experience. I'm planning to continue taking part in mentoring projects.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

Seeing challenges as learning opportunities, using them to improve your thought process and actions, helps. I also believe in the importance of authenticity, honesty and transparency communicating with colleagues and clients.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

For people thinking about joining investment banking and asset management industries, do not get put off by the masculine, ego driven representation of it in the media. That representation is far from reality. Trading and investing in financial markets can be stressful and challenging at times but so are most jobs. Be resilient, informed, believe in yourself and don't be afraid to take risks.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Being curious, resilient and a good team player.

What is your pet hate at work?

Receiving mail sent to Mr Semin Soher Power. People can make some effort and check the gender of the mail recipient, instead of automatically assuming it's a man, when they see a name they don't recognize.

Analyst, Transfer Agency
Northern Trust
Jack



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

Firstly, I feel as though secondary school helped me to gain insights into different subjects which enabled me to get a sense of what areas I enjoyed the most and how I could use this to make more informed decisions for college choices which would inevitably shape my future. Secondly, before and during college I worked many labour intensive jobs which had long hours, not much human interaction and they weren't great pay. This motivated me to succeed in my education and work hard to give me more choices for my future and enable me to seek jobs with ample opportunities and a pleasant work environment like Northern Trust.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

Personally, I didn't seek much guidance in my career choices. I always made sure to follow my interests when making choices for myself as opposed to leaving outside influences impact me. I always felt nobody knew myself better than me and once I worked hard, wasn't afraid to try things and took each day as it comes id end up with a very fulfilling career.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

Yes, I always loved having a routine mid-week. The job has ideal hours of 09:00am – 17:15pm Monday to Friday giving me plenty of free time in the evening for leisure activities such as the gym and sport and with weekends off it enable me plenty of time for socialising, relaxing and spending time with family. Furthermore, the opportunities available within Northern Trust to progress within the company and develop me as a professional keeps me motivated which I feel is very important to a successful career and feeling fulfilled and happy within myself.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I was approached through the University of Limerick by Northern Trust to do an interview for their co-op programme. I was successful in my interview and was offered a chance to do my co-op with them which I gladly accepted. I really enjoyed my co-op and was then offered a chance to come back to Northern Trust upon completion of my final year of college.

Describe a typical day?

A typical day consists of a high paced professional environment. From the minute you log on until the minute you log off it's a high paced professional environment which is challenging and therefore extremely rewarding. Everyone pulls together working as a team helping each other out and learning from each other to achieve a shared goal.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

I am an analyst on the Dealing Team within the Transfer Agency. I deal with clients and investors on a daily basis placing trades on their desired days for their desired amount. I would also handle any queries they might have and assist them in any way I can.

What are the main challenges?

Dealing with some of the most successful and sophisticated clients in the world pushes me to ensure my work is to an extremely high standard. Knowing how costly my mistakes are encourages me to strive for perfection and achieve my full potential.

Also, being part of a team means nobody gets left behind and everyone pulls together. Working hard to ensure I don't let my team down keeps me alert and up to speed.

What do you really like about your job?

I love the fact I am working for a large successful organisation like Northern Trust. With the big name comes big opportunities which I find exciting.

Is there anything you don't like?

Deadlines can be pressurising but it does ensure the work is kept up to date and to a high standard which benefits both my performance levels and that of Northern Trust.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Personally, I feel my two main skills are being able to work as part of a team and my productivity. Being able to adapt into my team and fulfil the role they needed me to was vitally important to both the success of the team and my own career. I enjoy working with others and am always willing to go the extra mile for the team.

Secondly, my willingness to work hard enables me to produce high levels of productivity which is extremely important for a high paced environment like Northern Trust.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

In school my 3 choice subjects were economics, business studies and construction. These were what I felt I had the most interest in so I went with these and by doing these I got to discover which I was best at, which I liked most and gain insights into what line of work I would most like to enter into after my education. I knew I liked and was good at working with my hands which is why I chose construction. I chose business and economics because I was interested in those areas and they were broad with ample career paths. These allowed me to see which areas I had the most interest in for a career so that I could select a college course that would enable these opportunities. After doing these subjects I discovered the thing that most appealed to me was working with others in a professional environment which is why I chose Business Studies in UL as there was plenty of careers I could pursue by doing this course, that I felt I would enjoy.

What is your education to date?

Secondary Schools = Castletroy College and Limerick Tutorial College
College Course = Business Studies at University of Limerick

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

The main aspect of my degree that I felt was beneficial was working with new people on projects to meet a deadline. It developed many skills I have that benefit me when working with a team within my job to achieve high levels of results.
I also found my HR modules very handy in getting an understanding into what motivates others and learning about different ways I can get the best out of both my productivity as well as others.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

On the Northern Trust partner portal there are ample courses added to your own personal plan which I complete whenever I have free time enabling me to be the best at my job as I can be. It gives me a better understanding as to what my role entails as well as a better understanding of the role of Northern Trust and other partners.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

Firstly, during my co-op I assumed the role of team leader for our co-op group project. I enjoyed the added pressure and responsibility and it was very rewarding to have guided the team to a successful completion of the project.
Secondly, although its only a small achievement I found it extremely rewarding being given my first fund to look after as I feel it was my first accomplishment in my full time job after college and hopefully the first step in a long and successful career.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

The two qualities I feel most help me are my determination and my ability to get on well with others. Due to the serious nature of the work involved, mistakes can be costly. When getting started there is many new things to learn and it may be quite tedious at times. But being determined to keep motivated so that I can ensure I haven't missed anything and I am doing the best I can at my role ensures I perform at a higher level.
Secondly, my ability to get on with other ensures a pleasant work environment creating a platform for better results.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

A job that I am happy in and makes me extremely comfortable financially is the dream.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

If you have a good attitude, a willingness to work hard and can work with others then I believe you could achieve high results in this job.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Communication Skills
Team Work
Willingness to learn

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

I wouldn't know what jobs are similar but if you think you've an interest go for it. You miss 100% of the shots you don't take and experience with Northern Trust will always benefit you and your career.

What is your pet hate at work?

If you forget your access badge the hassle of getting a temporary one for the day.

Managing Director Private Clients

Davy

Richard



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I had an interest in technology from a young age which I pursued in college, studying Business Information Management & then computer networking. That gave me a great grounding in computers and the use of data in business. During college I worked parttime as an IT administrator, so emerged with a good mix of theory and practice.

I took a year out to go travelling in Australia, but I got restless after a while and ended up working as a consultant for a large bank in Sydney on a pretty foundational data project. It was a great opportunity to apply my skills, and I also learnt a lot about just throwing yourself into the situation and the value of teamwork.

Around that time a friend from college was involved in Baltimore Technologies, a new internet startup in Ireland. I left Australia and joined them in 1999, initially as a consultant but pretty soon moved into sales and then into developing new commercial ventures for the company. It was a really entrepreneurial company and during the 5 years I was with Baltimore it grew from about 100 employees to FTSE 100 and Nasdaq listed, but unfortunately then it was pretty much wiped out. It was a truly remarkable journey and taught me a lot about the process of selling, commercial operations, business planning and again about teamwork, hard work and diligence.

After Baltimore I took some time out and completed an MBA. That process helped me make a decision to change careers and I joined the Private Clients division of Davy.

Davy has also been a really interesting journey. It's a pretty entrepreneurial organisation and I've been fortunate to get involved in developing different business ventures. When I started Davy was an investment business, but drawing on my commercial experience from Baltimore, myself a brilliant colleague Sandra Rockett, started developing personal business plans for clients. Fast forward 10 years and Davy are now the No.1 provider of financial planning services in Ireland. That development changed the core business that Davy is in and has delivered 10 years of growth and created a significant number of jobs.

My current role involves the development of the strategic direction, ongoing business planning & the delivery of commercial targets for Private Clients. I also lead one of advice teams and I lead the technology change & innovation program.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My Dad always provided a clear sense of direction and purpose, but never pressured me to do anything. I'd love to emulate that with my children.

My wife sees through my blind spots and has been the most sensible counsel. She doesn't always agree with me, which is important too!

Stephen, who was a Director in Davy, mentored and sponsored my early career in Davy. He took an active interest in me and my development and gave me loads of latitude to run with ideas.

The teams the I lead are full of talented people who challenge and teach me new stuff every day. I hope they get the same in return.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

Absolutely. I really enjoy what I do and I also wanted to progress. I knew this would cost hours, so I set terms that would work and that I was comfortable with.

How did you go about getting your current job?

Sat beside a Davy Exec a rugby match. He invited me for an interview and the rest is history.

Describe a typical day?

Back to back meetings, most of which have decision points. It can feel sometimes like I'm not making much headway, but when you stand back, each of those decisions is a step on the broader plan.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

Development of the strategic direction, ongoing business planning and delivery of business goals. Lead an advice team serving one of key segments. Lead technology change & innovation program.

What are the main challenges?

Change. We're almost 100 years old, but we need to be really innovative in our approach to people, platform, proposition and customers, whilst ensuring that what we do remains highly personal and valued by our customers.

What do you really like about your job?

Impact - I get to make decisions that drive change.

Is there anything you don't like?

I'm sure there are, but nothing springs to mind.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Inquisitive and desire to have an impact
Strong work ethic
Ability to understand & simplify complex problems and figure out what needs to be done
Strategy and execution
Recruit and lead high performing teams

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

None particularly. I was really interested in technology, which wasn't available in school.

What is your education to date?

BA in Business Information Management, MBA, Microsoft and Novell networking qualifications, QFA

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

Business Information Management, studying business data, was pretty groundbreaking in 1995. The MBA was a brilliant all rounder and also gave me great perspective on my strengths and real areas of interest.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

Currently working with a Business Psychologist, Johanna Fullerton on Leadership Development.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

Changing the core business of Davy and delivering 10 years of growth that has created a significant number of jobs.
Really enjoying the journey

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

Inquisitive and desire to have an impact.
Strong work ethic.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I'm busy doing what I'm doing – the team have a lot more that we want to achieve

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

The role is really a portfolio of jobs, so you'd need to be able to vary your skills depending on the situation, be it operational management, people leadership to strategy formulation, etc.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Inquisitive and desire to have an impact.
Strong work ethic.

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Any experience with markets or general finance experience, accounting qualification and experience, providing advice to customers

What is your pet hate at work?

Negativity. Finding reasons to not do things.

Associate Accountant/IFS Apprentice

Northern Trust

Abbie



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

Originally I had planned to undertake a career in life sciences, however that didn't quite work out for me even though the sciences were my favourite subjects in school, so I took a leap of faith and decided to apply for a job in the finance sector and I'm very glad I did as I feel I've progressed very well so far

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

Yes, I work 8am to 4:15pm daily, with the exception of staying on a bit later when work is busier, however even staying on later is still allowing plenty of time in the evenings.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I heard about the opportunity from a family member and decided to apply online. The process moved very quickly, and I had an interview weeks after I applied. I was interviewed by a panel of two partners in Northern Trust. The interview went very smoothly there was no pressure at all. I got a call from HR two weeks after my interview to offer me the position.

Describe a typical day?

A typical day in fund accounting is very busy, with preparation tasks split into four pods, each prep assuming one role. Our work is driven by deadlines so you can see on the allocation what time each task has to be completed by. It's important for us to be able to meet deadlines as delays can affect others down the line. As well as daily workloads, we also complete monthly tasks and reporting that's due at various points throughout the month based on deadlines.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

The main objective in fund accounting is to calculate Net Asset Values (NAVs) of a fund, so the main tasks and responsibilities are all driven by the production of NAVs. We are each allocated a number of tasks from fee calculations, booking trades and tax configurations to name a few, we would be required to pay extreme attention to detail in order to ensure our work is as accurate as possible, minimising risk and keeping our clients happy.

What are the main challenges?

The main challenges I feel would be the deadlines. Other teams rely on us completing our tasks on time in order to get our NAV's to the clients on time, so it's important to manage our times and ensure we have sufficient training in order to complete our tasks to a high standard.

What do you really like about your job?

My favourite part of the job is the problem-solving nature of it all. My job is very numbers based which sometimes can lead to tricky equations to be worked out but is very satisfying once completed.

Is there anything you don't like?

I wouldn't say there's anything I don't like, however things can get extremely busy at times which can sometimes be daunting, but there's always someone there willing to give a hand.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

I feel like for this job it's important to be good at problem solving and a good concept of working with numbers. Also, it's important to have good communication skills and to work well within a team.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

As well as core subjects, I took Biology, Chemistry & Geography, none of which were even remotely related to the career path I've chosen. I never studied business or economics, although I had always had an interest in maths but never thought I'd end up working in the finance sector.

What is your education to date?

My education to date is the Leaving Cert, I did a year of Forensic & Pharmaceutical Science before deciding it wasn't for me, and am now one year into a International Financial Services course with the NCI in Dublin.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

I don't feel like my subject choices at school were very relevant to my job right now. Maths would be the most relevant subject to me current role. My current course with NCI is all very relevant to my job, it helps to better understand the theory behind the tasks completed on a daily basis.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

For now, I'm planning on finishing the course with NCI and hopefully progressing my career with NT

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

Personal qualities I feel I possess that help me with my career would be hard working, I like to see things through start to finish, I'm ambitious & driven career wise, I work very well with other people which I feel is very important in my role as we're a very big team, and also I'd like to think I'm very organised and timely.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I'd like to progress my career in the direction its going for the moment, I'd like to expand my knowledge in fund accounting to the best of my abilities, and hopefully in the future move across and experience other departments across the company and further increase my understanding of the financial sector.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

Someone considering this job I feel should work well under pressure as we can get very busy at times and you'll have a lot of tasks to complete. I think it's very beneficial to be social and outgoing as we all work very closely together as a team and its very helpful to have good relationships with your team when you need a helping hand in completing tasks.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Reliability, honesty and diligence.

Pricing Actuary
New Ireland Assurance
Aisling



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

For me Maths was always my favourite subject in school and so I was always going to do some sort of degree that involved Maths. I settled on a common entry Maths course in UCC (Maths Science) knowing it gave me a couple of options after first year, Financial Maths and Actuarial Science being one of them. I quickly learnt that the combination of Maths, Statistics and Finance was the right fit for me.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

Both of my parents have careers in the technology industry and have both worked hard from a young age, so I think I get my work ethic from them. In terms of working in New Ireland – it was a sister of an old friend that convinced my New Ireland Assurance was an amazing place to work. Since joining New Ireland as a graduate from college I've had amazing mentors and inspiring people around me who have definitely shaped my career to date. In the last few years I have been working mainly on protection products and spent over a year working as the Protection Product Owner in New Ireland – these opportunities have definitely shaped my career to date.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

Absolutely – while becoming an actuary isn't an easy route, the actuarial community in Ireland is small and there's a great sense of community within the profession. There are a huge amount of opportunities for actuaries in Ireland with actuaries working across various different industries and in a wide range of roles. Since the pandemic, along with lots of other industries the work/life balance has improved even more, with more options to move outside the capital and work from home.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I joined New Ireland Assurance straight from college as part of the Bank of Ireland graduate program. I attended the Bank of Ireland assessment centre which involved, a group activity with the other applicants, an individual presentation and an interview. I heard the following day that I was successful and had been offered the job – 6 years later I'm still here!

Describe a typical day?

Every day in my job is completely different – which is what I like most about it. In general it's a combination of project work and day to day pricing of schemes and individual cases. Project work would involve looking at new product launches or product features and assessing the pricing and profitability impacts and bringing this analysis to senior management to make key decisions. The projects I work on

vary greatly. In the last year I've worked on projects ranging from launching customer supports to help support customers through COVID, to working with technology colleagues to build a new application system for our protection customers. Day to day work would depend on what schemes and quotes come into the team on any given day that require me to review the pricing.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

The majority of my work is project based meaning my tasks and responsibilities vary depending on the project I'm working on. Mainly my role is ensuring the pricing of the products we sell is competitive and that our pricing ensures the company meets its profitability and sales targets each year.

What are the main challenges?

The most challenging part of my job is communicating complex numbers and concepts to senior management in order for them to make informed decisions. It can be difficult to surface the information that you want senior management to know and see in a way that's easy to understand. Good communication skills are just as essential in my job as technical skills.

What do you really like about your job?

What I like most about my job is the variety and the different types of projects that I get the opportunity to get involved in. Since working in New Ireland I've worked across Protection, Pensions, Investments and Savings and have had the opportunity to work on product initiatives, customer initiatives, pricing and on boarding new technologies. Working in product and pricing gives me the opportunity to combine technical skills with commercial awareness.

Is there anything you don't like?

Working in an ambitious company like New Ireland means there is always a large backlog of projects that we want to get through and I'm often juggling multiple projects at the same time. Sometimes I don't get to spend as much time or effort on a particular project as I want to.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

The main skills needed for my job are time/project management, communication, problem solving skills and technical actuarial skills.
Working in a Commercial department requires people to think outside the box to solve problems and help come up with innovative solutions and ideas.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

Maths is the subject most applicable for a career as an Actuary. Some other subjects that would also be applicable would be Business Studies, Accounting, Economics and Applied Maths.

What is your education to date?

I completed my Leaving Cert in 2011 and graduated from UCC in 2015 with a BSc. Financial Maths and Actuarial Science. When I joined New Ireland in 2015 I began studying to become an Actuary which involves studying and sitting exams with the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries in the UK. In 2019 I completed my exams and became a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries in Ireland.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

In my final year of college I took a module called "Consultancy" instead of doing a final year project. The module was based on simulating a real life scenario of working for a client that had a particular problem they wanted to be solved and running the project. This involved scoping the project, developing the solution and presenting the results back to the client. This was definitely a great way to get some exposure to how actuaries work in the real world.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I have completed the Actuarial exams since I finished my degree. With increasing use of data within different industries I would like to gain some more training in how Data Analytics could be used in the Life Assurance industry.
Some colleagues have also completed the QFA exams.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

For me gaining my Actuarial qualification was a huge achievement that I was extremely proud of. Now that I am working as a fully qualified actuary I find being able to lead and complete projects very rewarding. Taking a problem and working thorough it from start to finish and seeing your proposal implemented by the company is something I take great pride in.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I would love to say I'm organised but I think it's more like organised chaos! I like to think I'm quite ambitious and intuitive which really helps in my role.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I would love to progress my career within pricing and to upskill in the data analytics space so that I can bring more data analytics techniques to how we price.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

I would say that the technical expertise is important but soft skills are also really important. Volunteer yourself to do presentations in school or college so that you can improve your presentation and communication skills. Join committees and clubs so that you can get used to working with other people and learn how to work in a team.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Approachable
Team Player
Intuitive

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

A lot of graduates that join New Ireland would have done an internship with a life assurance company during the summer or in their third year of college. If this isn't an option, any part time job that shows you can work as a team is great experience. Getting involved on committees and clubs is also really beneficial.

What is your pet hate at work?

Doing things a certain way because that's the way it's always been done.

Associate Sustainability Advisor
Davy Horizons
Amy



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I have always had an interest in sustainability, while studying I worked as a researcher for two years, this research was focused around environmental current affairs. I then worked in a reinsurance company for three years, this role began as an administrator and I was then promoted to office manager. I joined Davy in 2017, as an associate on the Corporate Access and Events team in Capital Markets division. This was a fantastic opportunity on a busy team where my role involved delivering events and organising roadshows. When the opportunity arose to join Davy Horizons sustainability consulting team, I was keen to further my passion for sustainability and take the next step into working in the area I had always loved.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My parents were hugely supportive of my decision to study abroad and they encouraged me to study what I enjoyed.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

I'm lucky to be part of a supportive team that encourages work/life balance, it is so important to remember to keep active and see friends and family even during busy times.

Describe a typical day?

On a typical day, we begin the day with a team meeting where every team member discusses our tasks for the day and project deadlines. The team meeting is a safe space where we can share our ideas and hear each other's unique viewpoints. Projects involve a lot of team collaboration, each team member has unique ideas and skillsets which combined can create effective strategies for completing projects.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

My main tasks vary from day to day, but they tend to include - collaborating with my team members on client's projects, client engagement, providing workshops to educate client supply chains on sustainability. I am responsible for running events on the team and with this also fuels my creative side! Working with the marketing department to design and promote Davy Horizons events, insights and white papers. I am also the chairman of the ICRS Ireland Hub. The ICRS is the Institute of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability which is the professional body for Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability. The aim of

this hub is to provide education, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) accreditation, events and networking to our members.

What do you really like about your job?

I love that my role is both logical and creative, which is quite unique. Another part of my role which I love is hosting webinars, I did an internal webinar recently on sustainable fashion and we had the founder and designer Aoife McNamara on, and it was really inspiring! You can see a clip of this at the link below; https://www.linkedin.com/posts/davy_aoife-mcnamara-on-sustainability-in-fashion-activity-6791668845942755328-zAC6

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I loved Geography in school, and this is why I decided to study it in University.

What is your education to date?

I attended Crescent College Comprehensive in Limerick and I studied Geography at Canterbury Christ Church in the UK.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

Definitely my undergraduate degree, it gave me the chance to explore a wide range of topics, such as socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental issues which was a good starting point for my role.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

Yes, I am planning to take the CFA Certificate in ESG Investing, wish me luck!

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

My role aligns with my personal values and I feel lucky to be working in something I really believe in. It is very satisfying to see the impact you can have while working with a company to help them be more socially and environmentally responsible. It is particularly satisfying informing and educating staff members on sustainability and seeing them also get on board to pave the way for positive change.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I think having compassion is important for in my role, as the end goal is to positively impact the planet, people's quality of life, and future generations and to add value not cost. It is important for students when

deciding which career path to take to consider a job that is emotionally rewarding. This may be difficult to distinguish at first, but my advice is to decide what motivates you and find a way to feed your motivation.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

My goal is to keep educating myself on this sector and hopefully progress in this field.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

A career in sustainability and ESG is a meaningful career that is here to stay. Covid-19 has accelerated the shift to a more sustainable world meaning a wave of new 'green' roles are available. Another attractive side to this sector is that it needs diversity to thrive, diversity in all forms, genders, ages, cultures and skillsets. I think it's important to work in a sector where diversity is celebrated and appreciated.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

1. Good communication skills
2. Willingness to learn
3. Adapt as the sector develops over time and the ability to work well in a team. But it is not a 'one size fits all' kind of job, the financial industry needs a variety of roles and people with different skillsets to make it work, not just one type of personality.

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Make sure to develop your interpersonal skills just as much as your technical skills, one great way to do this is to network. Joining a sustainability association is a good way to network with professionals in this field. The workshops and events can help build your understanding of CSR and sustainability. The ICRS Ireland hub is free for students to join and provides free workshops, events and networking opportunities. You can join by clicking this link - <https://icrs.info/membership>
An internship is a fantastic opportunity to give you a real taster for this position, as well as large organisations, you could also try interning at a start-up, or non-profit.
If you are in a position where you can volunteer, that is a great way to show your dedication to sustainability. From conservation campaigns such as tree planting, recycling programs and beach clean campaigns are a great way to get involved and also help the planet while you are at it!

17. What is your pet hate at work?

At the moment, my 'pet hate' is the negative side of working from home such as missing in person meetings, missing socialising with colleagues and I miss having a daily routine of traveling into work and getting a change of scenery.

Learning & Development Consultant
Northern Trust
Áine



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

In school, I studied English, Irish, Maths, German, Physics, Biology, and Music. I didn't know what I wanted to do after school. I decided to follow in my mother's footsteps by becoming a primary school teacher. I studied Education and Irish at Mary Immaculate College and worked as a teacher for six years. At this point I wanted to try something different. I enjoyed the planning, designing and resource-making aspects of teaching and I wanted to explore the possibilities of working in that area. I decided to take a career break to do a Masters in Technical Communication and E-Learning. When I finished the Masters, I got my current job at Northern Trust, working as a Learning and Development Consultant.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My mother's experience as a teacher would definitely have influenced my decision to become a teacher, however my brother has had a very varied career path with lots of twists and turns, which would have inspired my decision to have a career change. I also had a friend who had done the MA before me and I talked to him about the modules and his line of work after the MA.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

My job allows for a good work life balance. I work a 36 hour 5 day week and I usually work set times, but, if needs be, my hours can be flexible, i.e. if I need to go somewhere soon after work, I can start early and finish early. I have a satisfactory number of holidays in order to enjoy family time and leisure activities. The job is also secure and provides plenty of opportunities for progression.

How did you go about getting your current job?

The role was advertised online and I applied online with a cover letter and CV. I had a phone interview with HR and then I was invited to the office for interview with my manager and two other colleagues. Only one of my interviewers was based on site in Limerick, therefore the other two attended via video calls from America and India. I received a call shortly after the interview from HR to offer me the job.

Describe a typical day?

Every day is different. I usually start the day by scanning my emails and giving quick responses where necessary. As we are working remotely, I check in with my colleagues on Teams chat and catch up on any news. I usually have a to-do list of tasks to get through. Examples of tasks are developing a video script, developing a high-level design document for an instructor-led course, reviewing a course, curating resources for a particular topic, or editing a course based on feedback. Depending on how time-consuming

the tasks are, I would work on a few tasks a week and would also have meetings with different teams to check in about current projects. We would also have reoccurring fortnightly or monthly meetings with our immediate team, extended team, and business unit.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

I work as part of the professional development team in the Talent Management department. We develop, curate and promote professional development learning experiences for the employees of Northern Trust. I design and develop e-learning courses and instructor-led courses, and curate resources and tools for topics such as career development, mentoring, critical thinking and emotional intelligence.

What are the main challenges?

Priorities changing quickly based on organizational needs is a challenge. An extreme example of this is when all partners quickly changed to working remotely in the first quarter of 2020. This meant that we suddenly had to develop a Working Remotely Learning Centre and change all face-to-face courses to virtual instructor-led courses.

What do you really like about your job?

I love the creative element of the job and figuring out how to convey information in the clearest way possible. I enjoy brainstorming solutions with colleagues. We are constantly innovating which means I am constantly learning and applying new skills. For example, we recently developed videos to help employees navigate our Northern Trust University site – an internal hub of e-learning courses. I got to record and do the voiceover for these videos. Through this project, I learned how to screen record and edit videos, and went on to develop videos for other teams who needed them.

Is there anything you don't like?

Currently it can be lonely working from home 5 days a week. Technology can't always replicate an in-person dialogue I with a colleague..

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

- Technical writing skills
- A good knowledge of educational methodologies
- The ability to use software tools relevant to my role
- The ability to design and develop learning materials.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I studied English, Irish, Maths, German, Physics, Biology, and Music in school. I really didn't know what I wanted to do when I left school. I enjoyed a wide range of subjects so I kept my options open by selecting

a mix of languages and sciences. English is the subject that relates closely to my current role, which is strange because it was far from my favourite or strongest subject in school.

What is your education to date?

After doing the leaving cert, I studied for a degree in Education and Irish in Mary Immaculate College. I also did a Masters in Technical Communication and e-Learning in University of Limerick.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

The masters has naturally proven to be the most important for my job, but the degree and background in education has definitely helped me in understanding the learner and producing effective learning materials.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I have only been working in this field for less than two years but in that time I have attended virtual e-learning conferences and engaged with on-the-job training. I do intend to continue to upskill in this field in order to keep my skills current.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

The career change has been the most rewarding event so far. It was a daunting step to leave my permanent job to study in quite a different field but I am thrilled when I think of how it has paid off.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I am a sociable individual which enables me to work effectively with different teams of diverse people. I am committed to producing high-quality work and I am capable of multi-tasking and juggling multiple projects at once.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

As this is still a relatively new position for me, I still feel I need to do a lot of growing in place at present. The options beyond that are endless. I could manage learning projects, or lead a team within talent management. Of course there is always the option of taking my skills to another area within, or outside of, the organisation.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

You need to be happy both working with people and alone on tasks. You need to enjoy trying to convey complex information in the simplest and most effective way possible. You have to enjoy researching and learning about new topics and working with subject matter experts in different fields. I would recommend

the masters in UL as it more than prepares you for work in this area. You can do the masters with any degree and background. I came from teaching but my fellow students came from backgrounds in science, the arts, and business.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Concise and precise writing skills
Ability to pivot between tasks
Ability to work with a variety of people

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Teaching and creating classroom resources would provide a good background for this position. Experience with HR might also be worthwhile for my particular position as I deal with professional development, career development, onboarding, and internal mobility. However, I am constantly learning on the job so I believe you can approach this type of work from any direction if you think it would suit you.

What is your pet hate at work?

Spam mail or being included in emails that are not totally relevant to me.

**Business Manager
Bank of Ireland
Madonna**



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

At school I studied Accountancy and Business studies and developed a keen interest for business. Following on from this I completed my degree in Business Studies and specialised in finance. From this I decided that I wanted to obtain a professional qualification which naturally led me to doing my Accountancy exams.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My mother most influenced my career direction, she supported and encouraged me in my decisions. She was a strong advocate for education and knew that this would help me get on the career ladder.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

My job allows me to have a good work life balance, it's a 9-5 day job with good terms of employment. There is good flexibility for working around personal commitments. There are many opportunities across Finance and lots that allow you to progress to senior decision making roles or in sectors that you have a personal interest in. Job security has remained strong even in recession times.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I applied for the role having gained experience in Corporate Finance role. I completed my professional Accountancy Exams with BDO and worked in a number of areas within the practice. I applied, successfully completed my interview and secured my first job in Banking.

Describe a typical day?

I manage on behalf of the Bank the lending requests from various businesses. Providing finance to SME's for various projects to help grow their businesses. Projects such as business acquisition, capital investment in equipment and premises, property acquisition, etc. This can be very rewarding when you see business grow and become more successfully with your help.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

I manage a portfolio of high value customers on behalf of the bank. I actively work to recruit new to bank

customers. I manage companies with bank lending exposure up on £10-16m, providing a full suite of bank products to a wide variety of customers in a number of sectors.

I am responsible for the total customer relationship, including service and lending to both business and personal – I ensure that the day to day banking needs are met, to include electronic banking, managing foreign exchange risk and minimising associated risks to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of good customer service.

What are the main challenges?

Biggest challenge is meeting customer needs in an efficient and effective manner.

What do you really like about your job?

I love the variety my job presents. I love to meet different customers and hear how they started in business and what their future ambitions are and how I can help them get there.

Is there anything you don't like?

Sometimes the paperwork can be time consuming, but necessary to do the job.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Good business and commercial acumen
Decisive, with good listening skills, objectivity, independence and an ability to quickly articulate business strategy
Good interpersonal skills, ability to develop relationships and to work across different teams / divisions.
Have an understanding of financials, transaction structuring and negotiation skills with knowledge of legal/security requirements.
Proven ability to promote the Bank and seek out opportunities to cross-sell group products.
Good internal and external network.
Resilient with an ability to work to deadlines and a proven team player.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

Degree in Business Studies with Diploma in Industrial Studies and MSc Accounting and Finance at University of Ulster. Which led me to getting a training contract at BDO to complete my professional accountancy exams. There are a number of avenues that you can chose from when going into Business and Finance as well as work and study options. Having a professional qualification not only provides you with a good knowledge of business it helps with career opportunities.

What is your education to date?

Professional Qualification
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ILM Diploma in Leadership and Management
MSc Accounting and Finance
BA (Hons) Business Studies with Diploma in Industrial Studies

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

Financial and accounting have been the most beneficial to me in my job.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

Plan to possibly look at project management.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

Passing my Professional Accountancy Exams
My job at BOI and dealing with the customers that I manage

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

It's important to be a team player. Be resilient and determined and have strong self-motivating capabilities for both yourself and those around you.
An innovative thinker as well as an ability to cope under pressure.
Managing priorities and workload.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I would love to own my own business and help and support other businesses to grow and become more successful.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

If you enjoy business and are interested in how businesses operate working as a Business Bank manager provides variety – 'No two days are the same'. Work to achieve the subject qualifications and as much experiences along the way. You need to work hard and be determined!

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Excellent communication, negotiation, influencing and business development skills
Energy and enthusiasm, a self-starter

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Working in an Accountancy Practice, working in a family business, sales or office based roles

What is your pet hate at work?

Mandatory chores!

Associate Director
Barclays Bank Ireland
Michael



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

The main career decision to date would have to be choosing Barclays as part of my internship programme while studying Commerce in UCD. I had a choice of four offers and it's great to now look back and see that I have decided to stay so it must have been a good choice!

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

Family influence has given me that drive from an early age, which is the main influence in my career. I have been lucky enough to benefit from many mentors' counsel over the years, which has proved invaluable.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

My job allows for great flexibility so that I have a degree of control over my time. I am able to manage my work-life balance effectively as a result. My role has increased in responsibility since joining in 2016, which is very rewarding.

How did you go about getting your current job?

My current role was a progression from the initial aforementioned internship. It included many rounds of interviews and I have been promoted within Barclays in that time too. It is great when you have the opportunity to develop and further your career in a place you enjoy!

Describe a typical day?

A typical day is hard to describe, given that there are many facets to my role. However, it usually included several call and video calls with clients and colleagues alike. I really enjoy the people and problem solving element to my day-to-day work life, which provides me with high levels of job satisfaction. There are inevitably some high pressured days in banking but I enjoy the fast-paced nature of the banking world!

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

The opportunity to manage my own portfolio of clients and a product on a European basis are two of my main responsibilities. This can be quite exciting and building an income stream from scratch has been a great experience.

What are the main challenges?

Everyone will probably say time to try and fit everything in and I'd have to agree!
Prioritisation is key in every walk of life and that helps me stay engaged and interested while at work.

What do you really like about your job?

I love the ability to talk to clients and colleagues all around the world (and I get paid to do something I love)!
I have been the local lead on launching a new product in the bank, which very few people get to do in such a mature industry.

Is there anything you don't like?

There's always parts of any job that can get on your nerves but it's important to remember the positives and not to focus on the negatives.
I'm very grateful that the positives far outweigh any negatives at work!

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Communication and interpersonal skills are key to any job in the current market especially when we're all on-screen all day!
They are the cornerstones to success – if you have them, you have so many options.
In my particular industry, analytical skills are really useful to be able to take a high-level view and establish what areas to focus on.
I'm a firm believer in that so many skills are transferable and we have far more skills than we might initially think.
Give it a shot – what's the worst that can happen?

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

For my Leaving Cert, my eight subjects were English, Irish, Maths, German, French, Business, Physics and Applied Maths.
Looking back now I think I had a really broad list of subjects and this theme resonates today. I can get quite impatient and bored quite quickly so I really enjoy the different aspects of subjects. This is linked to the ability to get involved in different things at work, which keep things interesting.

What is your education to date?

St Kilian's Deutsche Schule Dublin – Leaving Cert
UCD Lochlann Quinn School of Business – Bachelor of Commerce
Chartered Accountants Ireland – Associate Chartered Accountant

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

The ability to speak European languages before I started Irish in school has paid off now with the connectivity across Europe.
There are areas in subjects in school that still come back to me to this day so the investment in your education is not to be underestimated.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I qualified as a Chartered Accountant last year so I am looking forward to the next educational step in my career.
I completed a couple of online course late last year in areas of personal interest including watches and art history.
It's important to have a genuine desire to learn and spend the time to do so. Otherwise, it can be quite a slog.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

I have already mentioned building the income stream and product from the ground up, which has been really rewarding.
The exposure I have been granted in my role as well as the opportunities to represent the Irish business across a number of European countries was truly exciting. Spending a few days in London and Paris helped!

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I am a really organised person outside of work and that plays a role at work too. It allows me to know what I need to do and when I need to do it. This is linked with my earlier point around prioritisation.
I have always been very ambitious in all aspects of my life and that has aided my progression at Barclays to date. Hopefully this will continue into the future.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I was one of those people that regularly changed their aspirations when I was younger and was always supported by my parents no matter how fleeting these ideas were.
A few of these were to be an architect, a TV presenter or work in fashion! I'm a huge tennis fan too so I'd love to work with one of the governing bodies of the sport one day.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

You don't know until you try it!
It's hard to imagine what any job will be like until you're in it so don't let that put you off.
It is so important to take the time to consider if the job is right for you too and do not underestimate this.
We all spend many hours each day at work so choose wisely.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Communication skills
People skills
Resilience

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

I work in a client focused role and as such any job where you're dealing with people will have transferable skills.

What is your pet hate at work?

People who don't exchange pleasantries on email – it's nice to be nice!

**Head of Vendor Relationship Management
Fidelity International
Dawn**



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I actually knew very little about this industry when I was applying for jobs at the time. Once I joined the industry however, I found that I liked the variety of the work involved, opportunities to transfer to other teams and learn new skills and also the various interactions with so many people from clients, external third parties and colleagues from so many teams in different countries.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My parents would have influenced me growing up, they both came hard working families and would have left school at a young age to help support their families. They have been in the hairdressing business for over 35 years and I have learned a lot from them with respect to looking after your team, helping them grow, keeping them motivated because a happy team make a productive team! I also learned a lot from my dad with regards to dealing with certain situations, I took interest in it because I could be in those situations myself some day and it would be good to know how to respond whether that's influencing, negotiating, delivering bad news to stakeholders, having a fair and balanced approach across the team and the business etc.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

I often say to people that I am very lucky to be working in the industry as there are so many benefits including health insurance, training opportunities, paid holidays etc but also so many opportunities to learn and develop your own skills. There are so many departments within our organisation which means more scope to move around and join an area that is completely new yet you can still apply your existing skills to that area. The company has also supported a balanced work/life routine for so long now and (once we get back to the office) there will be more flexibility around working from home which reduces the time spent on a commute.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I was actively looking and my agency set me up with an interview. I had heard of Fidelity International and was excited about the predicted growth of the Dublin office at the time in 2017. My interviews were a mix of video conference and face to face and I successfully secured my current role.

Describe a typical day?

My day can vary all the time and that's what I like about the role. Most of our regular meetings are monthly so time is spent preparing reports for those monthly meetings. These meetings will involve briefing stakeholders about the status of all of our third party relationships and highlight any initiatives that are taking place, highlighting any new services that we onboard, review risks and gaps on our processes and review solutions with the business. I will attend many calls on various projects that are happening where stakeholders will need representation from Vendor Management. I could have team meetings, individual 121 meetings with team members, etc. We could have an issue with a third party whereby most of the time could be taken up trying to resolve the issue and manage our stakeholders expectations in which case the issue needs to be prioritised and my planned calendar will be disrupted - thankfully this type of instance is rare!

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

My team and I are responsible for the oversight of our third party suppliers. These suppliers are large custodian banks and third party administrators whom we outsource to and also suppliers that provide operational services to us.

We are responsible for ensuring that the oversight routines set out by our 2nd line teams are embedded across our processes when overseeing our third party suppliers. An example of the type of oversight that we conduct would be to ensure service levels are maintained. We rate our suppliers on a Green, Amber, Red rating each month so we need to focus on keeping them in the Green rating and that there is no disruption to the business. If there is a decline in service then this has a knock on impact to our business teams and in turn an impact to our own clients so it is important to ensure that the suppliers are maintaining a high level of servicing to meet our needs. Outside of the servicing element we want to work with our suppliers in terms of leveraging their expertise and we often hold 'thought leadership' sessions with them so we can learn from them in terms of market trends, client needs, what our competitors are doing etc.

What are the main challenges?

Some suppliers may not always accommodate our requests for various reasons. The reason could be that we might be asking for a bespoke development on their system for example, we would expect the supplier to work with us on an alternative solution if they cannot meet our initial request. This involves influencing and negotiating with the supplier to ensure that both parties are happy to accommodate an alternative solution. Sometimes those conversations can be challenging if a solution cannot be reached. The regulatory requirements around overseeing our suppliers are always changing and there is an increased focus on oversight. This can also be challenging as we will need to continuously monitor our processes to ensure that we have that increased level of oversight on our suppliers.

What do you really like about your job?

I like the fact that there is variety in terms of our tasks but also we interact with many different people day to day, no day is ever the same.

Is there anything you don't like?

There is a certain amount of administrative tasks that need to be done so that we can evidence that we are doing our jobs correctly. These tasks can be logging evidence on the system, writing up meeting minutes, following up with stakeholders on actions. I think every job has a part that's not fun but has to be done!

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Prior to my current role I worked in a number of different operational teams and this has given me the background and understanding of the industry and how the administration of funds works. We outsource administration services to some of our suppliers and having this background enables me to understand and question our suppliers on their processes, discuss the details of issues that arise, compare their processes against what I would know from my prior experience. In terms of personal qualities, if you have a positive attitude, a willingness to learn and a desire to contribute to the teams success or the company's success these are great attributes to bring to any job.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

Right up until the end of my school years I didn't know what I wanted to do in terms of career. I enjoyed biology and thought that the skincare industry would be an avenue I would pursue. I concluded that by doing a secretarial course instead that it would lead to more options in terms of various industries that I could work in and move around. In my view at the time, the beauty industry would lead to working either on a cruise ship or in a salon and I feared that there were no other options for me to use if the salon didn't work out. I did the secretarial course and my first job from there was working in Deutsche Bank. After a couple of years at Deutsche, I still wondered about the course in beauty so I left financial services briefly to try the beauty course but the financial services industry won out in the end where I returned and stayed. I'm glad I did the course all the same as I might have been thinking about it if I didn't try it out.

What is your education to date?

Secondary school education followed by a one year secretarial course. I was very keen to start working from a young age, so a college degree was not for me at the time. I have since completed courses in strategic management and leadership over the years and some of those courses have been available through Fidelity.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

I didn't know what our industry was all about until I looked into it shortly after leaving school so I couldn't call out any subjects that I participated in were chosen for this industry in mind.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

Yes, I think it is important to upskill and ensure that you stay current to what is happening in the market and in the regulatory environment. I may look into a course on Cloud oversight or Cyber Risk so that I can be informed on such topics when they concern our suppliers and our business.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

I enjoy being involved in projects and initiatives outside of my current role because of the variety but also because I want to contribute towards the success story of our company. I am currently part of a working group looking at sustainability across our supplier portfolio and separately, I am also co-lead of our Gender Balance network in Ireland. I think everyone feels good when they can help others and know that they have contributed in some way to help the group or the individual reach their end goal. I would like to be recognised as someone who is positive, gets involved and who cares about the direction and the success of the company.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I consider myself to be very calm, diplomatic, balanced and fair. I will ask the questions so I can assess the facts and then provide my opinion. We could have instances where blame can be put on the supplier too quickly and we need to ensure that we have that balanced view to ensure that the full story is understood on both sides so that we can understand where the process failed and we can quickly come to a solution.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I really enjoy working at Fidelity so I would love to see myself progress further within the company, there is still a lot more that we can achieve as a team and as a company. However, if we are talking about dream job or where would I be if I won the lotto...I could look into creating skincare products possibly 😊

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

I would say that for applying for any job, do not be put off by what you read in the job spec. A job spec is a guide and not a checklist where you need to tick every box. An interview is a two way process and you are interviewing the company too to see if it's a right fit for you just as much as the company is interviewing you to see if you are a good fit. Use the interview as an opportunity for a conversation to find out more about the role and the company and really sell yourself at the same time. Interviews are daunting but you will never know where the opportunity could have landed if you don't go for the interview and have that conversation.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Communication skills
Positive attitude
Motivation - a desire to deliver solutions/results no matter how big or small

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Work experience with any of the teams at Fidelity would be a great start to establish whether it is something you would like to pursue later.

What is your pet hate at work?

I wouldn't say pet hate but there are many days where there are a lot of back to back meetings and I find that I am not getting much of my own work done. I find sometimes you can be invited to a call 'just in case' when you might not need to be on the call. I've made myself block out my calendar for 'free time' so people don't put in meetings, I can also get work done and I can also give my mind a rest as it can be draining be 'switched on' all of the time when you are on too many calls.

Regulatory & Exam Management Senior Analyst
Citibank Europe
Fabi



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I started my financial career as a Customer Service Advisor but after 2 years I opted for a lateral move. I was not afraid that it was not a promotion, that would not be getting any pay rise but I was certain that I would learn other skills. I have also applied for external courses not required for my role at the time again knowing it would benefit me in the future.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

I have always looked up to Women who are mothers and also career driven. I have mentors (male and female) at Citi who provide me with great guidance.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

I do feel secure in my job and I agree that Citi does provide great internal move opportunities as it has happened for me. With my current role I have been able to purchase my dream home this year. I have not started a family yet but when I do I will need to look for the next step in my career so that I can keep with the lifestyle I am happy with, driving a decent car around while providing for my family.

How did you go about getting your current job?

It was an internal move, I was looking for the next level in my career within Compliance and my current job was hiring. I approached one of the team members who was happy to have a 10 min conversation about the role and it was very beneficial to understand more about the team I hoping to join. As I was highly interested, I proceeded with the application. HR contacted me within a week informing me about the interview. After 2 sets of interview HR phoned me with an offer which I was happy with and I signed the contract.

Describe a typical day?

I ensure that all Regulatory Interactions are logged in our internal system and that Regulatory deadlines are accurately captured.
I ensure that stakeholders responsible to provide the responses are on target and no deadlines are missed.
I would feel under pressure when an item is due and we have yet to receive the response from the Accountable executive.
I am the Green Team co chair and the Roots Latam Lead therefore I have other BAU responsibilities.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

I must ensure that all regulatory interactions are logged in the internal system within 5 business days and that no regulatory deadline is missed.

What are the main challenges?

Systems with technical issues would delay my day to day role
Constant email flow from regulators would keep me very busy as everything must be logged within 5 business days

What do you really like about your job?

I admire the people I work with. The respect we have for one another. The willingness to help one another despite seniority. I enjoy working with Regulators and the Executive Team at Citi.

Is there anything you don't like?

I do not like working with Excel.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Compliance / Risk / AML knowledge, I know how to use Outlook, setting up meetings, diarising items which require attention. I am diligent and pay great attention to detail. Power Point and Excel skills. As I moved internally I already knew how to use certain Citi systems which made my transition smooth.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I attend school in Brazil. Maths, History and Geography would have influenced my career path – I always wanted to move to another country and speak other languages – I was always fascinated about learning about other cultures. I am fluent in English, Portuguese is my mother thong and am an intermediary level when it comes to Spanish.

What is your education to date?

I attend school in Brazil and moved to Ireland when I was 18 in 2005 to work as an au pair in Kildare. As I did not speak English, I was attending English classes in Dublin in the evenings.
I have a Diploma in Marketing, Advertising, Sales Management and PR from Dublin Busines School
I have obtained the Accredited Product Advisor title when I attended the Institute of Bankers passing 4 of 6 exams to become a Qualified Financial Advisor – DBS
I am a member of the Association of Compliance Officers in Ireland

I am currently studying to become an international Certified Anti Money Laundering Specialist – ACAMS

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

Since having my first job in Banking I was always drawn to Regulations, Fraud, AML therefore applying for the QFA exams was the first step I took as I was working in the Mortgages and Sales department for an Irish Bank.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

Yes , once I pass the CAMS exam as I am a member of the Association of Compliance Officers in Ireland I intend to apply for the Compliance Diploma course they offer.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

As a member of the Green Team and the Roots Latam Lead at Citi – I feel very much proud of myself for organising events throughout the year bringing awareness to employees whether its environmental awareness or cultural awareness. I also participate in fundraising events we organise for our Charity Partner.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I am a very social person. I always support my colleagues from other Affinity Networks by attending events they organise, by sharing it with my networks. I am also ambitious and like to take the lead in certain projects I am involved in. I am organised as I must ensure that all regulatory interactions are captured in the internal system therefore, I cannot miss any email received as well as I understanding what is required.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I actually like working for a bank. I always wanted to have an office job. The more experience I gain in my current role I see myself progressing to a more senior role within my team where I will lead Regulatory Exams.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

Diligent. Resilient.
Flexible.
AML / Risk / Compliance skills.
Regulation intertest.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Enthusiasm.
Integrity.
Dependable.

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Computer literate, Office experience, setting up meetings via outlook , booking rooms, conference calls, drafting emails, Excel, Power Point.

What is your pet hate at work?

When someone does not hold the door and when they do not clean after themselves in the kitchen.

Asset Manager
Aviva
Jenny



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

Having completed Property Economics in DIT and finishing during the recession, my class from college were lucky that a number of us got jobs in CBRE managing NAMA valuations, it was great experience reviewing valuations for a number of asset classes and dealing with various legal issues.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

My parents have given me a great advice throughout my career so far. My college friends have been incredibly supportive also, having worked with a number of them over the years its great to great career advice from them in the areas they have worked in.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

Aviva offers a great work/ life balance. They understand the importance of family life and wellbeing of their employees. Within Aviva there is a number of communities and wellbeing events also that you can benefit from.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I was working in the agency side of the business carrying out commercial lettings on behalf of landlords, I spotted my current job on LinkedIn and it really appealed to me as I always had an interest in working for Aviva. My experience is predominantly in retail, so this aligned with Aviva's fund having a number of retail assets. I had an interest in moving to the client side also. Given it was during a pandemic having applied online everything was done virtually from initial discussions to interviews, the interview process consisted of two interviews with the second being a presentation. My direct line manager called to say I was successful, and this was followed up with an offer letter from HR.

Describe a typical day?

A typical day for me can be very diverse which is why I love my role, usually there is a number of meetings in the diary with property managers to discuss any arrears and how we plan to deal with this, we also have a number of team meetings to discuss any issues with the properties. We are hands on with communicating with our tenants, so this is daily also.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

My role as Asset Manager is hands on managing of approx. 12 of our 48 assets nationwide, this includes liaising with tenants, property managers, solicitors, seeking to add value to the properties via developing sites, regearing existing tenants' leases and other value add opportunities. Re-letting any vacant units and reporting to the head of the fund Suzie Nolan is also a large part of the role as then Suzie analyses the liquidity of how the fund is performing and relays this to the brokers who represents pension holders.

What are the main challenges?

At present managing properties when there has been a number of store closures due to Covid 19 has been challenging, our tenants turnover has naturally been impacted so we are closely liaising with them to assist where possible but also having our investors interest and keep rent collections as high as possible.

What do you really like about your job?

I like the diverse nature of the role, its very exciting as no two days are the same. We regularly get out to inspect properties also which is great.

Is there anything you don't like?

Being part of a big company means there is lots of processes, but you get used to them quickly!

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Being an Asset Manager, you must be a good communicator, determined and motivated so that you are keeping on top of everything.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

For my leaving cert the subject that has mostly helped me in my role is business studies as it was a good foundation for learning about all aspects of how a business runs.

What is your education to date?

I attended Newtown School in Waterford for my secondary education, from there I did my degree in DIT to study Property Economics (Valuations Surveying). In order to become a Chartered Surveyor, I completed my APC which is a two-year practical training with an oral exam at the end.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

Becoming Chartered has greatly helped me in my career.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I am always open to upskilling; I regularly attend webinars so that I am up to date on current matters.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

In my previous role I set up a retail division in the company which was rewarding.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I am ambitious to progress in my career which has helped me advance.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I am keen to progress my career in Aviva.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

Work experience is always a great way to figure out what aspect of property you are most interested in, a number of companies offer a summer internship which are helpful and often lead to a job after college!

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Persistence, patients, and drive.

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

As above a summer intern is good or placement as part of third year as you learn so much and make great contacts.

What is your pet hate at work?

I am lucky to say I have no pet hates.

Learning & Development Lead
Fidelity International
Kathryn



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

When I was at university I did quite a lot of voluntary work including working at Niteline, which is a 24-hour support line for students. I enjoyed the training that we did and found it work interesting, which led me to thinking I wanted to be a psychotherapist or community worker. After university I did a year's part time course in counselling while also working as an Employment Advisor for disabled people which meant I had a caseload of clients that I worked one on one with to help them get back into employment. While it was rewarding when people found a job, I realised that the one to one working with people wasn't what I enjoyed, I wanted the energy that team working brings and also more variety in the work. At this time, I was around 23 and I just felt too young to be a Therapist, I felt I needed more life experience! But I was still interested in working with people, so I started looking at jobs in Human Resources. It would have been difficult to move into a typical HR role so I looked at recruitment instead as it was more transferable. I ended up getting an in-house recruitment role where I was hiring people to work for an Energy company, and I've stayed in Human Resources ever since.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

I don't feel I've had a lot of advice in my career to date, I wonder if maybe I should have sought it out more!

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

Lots of my friends don't work in corporate jobs and when I was younger I used to wonder if maybe I should have chosen something more glamorous or more obviously beneficial like a charity but over time I realised that I was really lucky to work for a corporate company. Firstly, you get a lot of benefits such as healthcare, bonuses, plush office environment, wellbeing initiatives, generous pension schemes and more which means your working environment is nice and you don't have to worry about money so much. But the thing it took me a while to realise is that if you can make a difference working at a large corporate the difference you can make to the larger world is actually huge, when big companies start focusing on things like Diversity and Sustainability this can influence things at a global level. Working for an international company I also get to work with people all over the world and in the past I used to travel to some of our other offices in Europe and India which was fantastic as your colleagues would take you out to dinner and show you the sights. One time I got to visit the Taj Mahal.

How did you go about getting your current job?

I was working in the Energy Sector for another organisation and recruitment agency contacted me about a role working at Fidelity International. At the time I had never considered working in Financial Services so I had to do quite a bit of research to work out how the role would be different from my current role and how I could address that in an interview. I attended four interviews, with my potential manager, her manager and also with people I would be working with. There was also a personality questionnaire and an aptitude test. It sounds daunting but everyone was really nice and friendly, it also made me realise that working in Financial Services wasn't going to be all that different from working in the Energy sector! There were more similarities than differences.

Describe a typical day?

On a typical day I would meet with some or all of the Learning and Development team and we would discuss our schedule of upcoming projects and learning deliveries. We would be discussing the design of training, who it should be delivered to, the technology or systems we use to deliver it, the organisation and logistics of how to actually make it happen and finally how we will communicate and promote it to fellow employees at the organisation.

Often, I will also run a workshop on a topic such as Time Management, Resilience or Collaboration. This would usually be a 90-minute session using Zoom with about 15 people dialling in from different locations across the organisation. I would be presenting slides that explain concepts relating to the topics, as well as hosting group discussions and small 'break out' sessions to help people understand the topic and practice learning new skills.

There's usually an element of marketing to my day, this might be writing an email to colleagues to advertise a new course and get them to sign up or it could be writing a blog on our company networking page to get people thinking about a particular topic or creating content for a website to promote learning to help people perform their roles better.

Normally, I have a few meetings, these could be one on one meetings with people who are looking to design and deliver training for their teams or large part of the organisation. This would involve trying to understand what it is they want to achieve, I ask things like: 'what will people do differently as a result of attending this training?' Often people don't know!

Other times there will be project meetings, these will be for bigger items such as the implementation of new system that supports learning or putting in place a new approach to train salespeople. In these sorts of meetings, I am usually working with a project plan in excel, making sure we are on track with tasks, chasing up people or putting together documents to support the project such as guidelines or briefing documents.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

I see the purpose of my role as helping employees at the organisation to learn and grow so that they are getting the most out of their careers, this goes hand in hand with ensuring that employees have the skills to do the work that the company needs to be operate and more importantly to be successful.

What are the main challenges?

Sometimes I give presentations to senior people or very large groups of people across the globe. This certainly feels daunting as I want to come across as credible; that I'm doing a great job for the organisation and deserve to be there. I like the challenge of it, making sure that I am an example of what I am trying to help others achieve - being clear and crisp in communication and engaging others when you speak.

What do you really like about your job?

Before I worked for an Investment company, I thought that investing was something that only wealthy people did, I didn't realise that it's possible for everyone. When I first started in the role, I had a project where I had to help non experts in the organisation learn more about investment and I ended up learning so much for myself! It's a great feeling being able to understand the basics of investment and know that you have the confidence to manage your own money for your future.

Yes definitely, my role allows me to help others to learn and develop and that is really rewarding, when people tell you that you helped them realise something that is going to help them in their life or career it's really satisfying.

One of things I most enjoy about my current role is getting to work with people all over the world, it was brilliant when I got to travel and see people in person in some of our offices in India, Germany, Luxembourg for example.

Is there anything you don't like?

There are some less fun aspects to my role. I find some of the administration around organising training sessions or sending out communications dull. You have to contact lots of different people; you think you have it all organised and then someone can't attend or the room isn't available or something else happens. It can feel like you are taking a long time to get a very small thing done.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

To work in HR or Learning I do think you need to be interested in the world of work, what it means to people, what motivates people to behave how they do and make the choices that they make.

Learning is becoming increasingly digital, so as well as a focus on how to engage people in face to face classrooms you need to have an interest in technology and how it can be utilised to help people make the most out of learning.

To work in Learning and Development I think you need to have a range of skills, including project management and organisation, creativity and design skills, the ability to make the complex simple and confidence in presenting and facilitating. All of this is learnable! I certainly did not start off with this skill set, I developed over the different roles that I had.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I don't think the subjects that I studied at school or university have turned out to be especially relevant or helpful for my career. Although the process of studying an arts subject did help. For example, the reviewing, planning, analysis that goes into writing essays, and the ability to be able to communicate

your point concisely and persuasively in a class presentation, essay or exam. These skills I use on a daily basis, so it has been more about the skill learned than the subject itself.

While I've forgotten most of the maths I learned at school, I have found that percentages, ratios, the presentation of data, and the interpretation of graphs has featured in all roles that I've had.

What is your education to date?

I'm originally from the UK so did my GCSE's, equivalent to junior cert, in all the usual subjects then chose humanities subjects for my A Levels.

Joint honours degree in English and Philosophy

Postgraduate certificate in Talent and Career Management

Various shorter certificates and qualifications in assessment and testing (for example how to design and run an assessment centre for recruitment and development of employees).

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I'm planning to undertake a coaching qualification

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

I think sometimes people think jobs in learning and development are all about delivering training courses but this is usually only one aspect of the role. A big focus of the role is project management, event organisation and designing and selecting relevant learning content. A key skill that is required is the ability to review and synthesize materials and content and to be able to condense these into easily understandable "chunks" to help people learn something new or change the way they do things.

A passion for learning is obviously important, as is the belief that people aren't "fixed" - that can learn and grow. I don't think a particular educational background is required, people move into learning from all different education and career backgrounds.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Planning and organisational skills. The ability to listen carefully and ask the right questions. Energy!

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Public speaking and delivering training courses, coaching activities, designing training content such as videos, materials. Organising events. Writing communications such as newsletters and adverts.

What is your pet hate at work?

It annoys me when our team have organised a great opportunity for people, like a training course or event and people don't turn up at the last minute. I think it shows a lack of appreciation for other's time.

Senior Product Manager - Digital

AIB

Lara



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I finished up in college in 2011, when the recession continued to be a hot topic. It wasn't the best timing to be a new graduate entering the employment market, let alone a graduate physiotherapist looking to work in the HSE. After months of full time voluntary work in Temple Street, I made the decision to look for more secure job that could help me pool some funds together and go travelling in the not so distant future. Choosing to move away from my chosen field of study was a hard one at the time, but as I was quickly learning, opportunities did exist in different industries, some of which really sparked my interest. When I landed a role on the Graduate Programme in AIB, I was apprehensive to say the least, but suddenly realised that many of the skills I learnt in college applied in a business sense also. Senior management recognised my experience and background as somewhat unique and that allowed me to stand out from the crowd.

Initially I viewed my role in Finance as a short term filler while I figured out a vision for my career. As part of the Graduate Programme, we were advised to complete exams with the Institute of Bankers, and it was only when I realised how invested in that study I became, that I began to question whether this role was in fact more suited to me than I had ever envisaged.

I passed my exams, and as I grew to learn and grow in AIB, my enthusiasm and motivation to achieve in this field was a sudden curve ball to this career path I thought I had initially wanted. (Before settling in fully, AIB offered me the opportunity to take a short career break once I had completed the Graduate Programme. I took 4 months to see the world and it allowed me get rid of the travel bug before settling into what felt like a more serious career decision at the time.)

I always had a great interest in business while in school, but working in that environment became so much more enjoyable than I expected. Between challenging projects, strategy workshops and working with such a wide breadth of stakeholders, I made the decision that there was so much I wanted to learn about Finance and how the industry worked.

On coming to that decision to make the most of my time in AIB, it quickly opened lots of new doors for me within the organisation.

I made a commitment to myself early on that I would continue to challenge myself and always make sure I'm learning something new. When I feel overly comfortable in a position, I've always made it my own priority to seek out a new position – that's the beauty of working in a large organisation.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

I've been so lucky to have had such fantastic guidance while shaping my career to date.

My parents have offered unwavering support over the years, particularly when I chose to change up the direction of my career.

Having originally studied as a Physiotherapist, moving to a career in Finance was quite the turn that not too many people expected. But in saying that, I've always been encouraged by family to do something that I enjoy.

Friends have always reminded me to be open minded, and have given so much of their time to offer up information on their own professions so I can get a better sense of what other career options are out there.

My husband continues to motivate me, and always encourages me to push myself to achieve that next goal, whatever that may be. When I get bogged down by things, he reminds me of the bigger picture which is always refreshing.

It's hard to believe I've worked in AIB for almost ten years now, but during that time I've been so lucky to have some of the best managers and mentors I could ask for. Despite us all moving to work in different areas across the Bank over time, I know I can turn to them if ever unsure of where to go next. They've identified job roles for me in the past, ones I'd never have thought of going for. They've helped me recognise where my strengths lie and have worked with me over the years to shape a career in product management for which I have strong a passion.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

At the start of my career in Finance, I had many hobbies – from social hockey to playing in a concert band. As I began to advance in my role and take on more responsibility, I found it difficult to carve out the time, but that's always been a challenge for me. A healthy work – life balance is something that is always encouraged, and what I've come to learn over the years is that it is entirely up to the individual to make it happen. Although my hobbies and interests have changed over the years, I've made sure to take time in the evenings to switch off.

Thankfully, the security of what I do afforded us the opportunity to buy a house in the last year. Needless to say, DIY has become a new hobby, between gardening and interior design.

In just a few months' time I'll be taking maternity leave as we get ready to welcome our first baby. Having the reassurance that my job will support me through this milestone is something which I value greatly, especially as I see friends in a similar position who are struggling to work through some of the challenges presented by maternity leave.

How did you go about getting your current job?

It was simple google search! I few friends of mine had begun working with AIB's call team and I was hoping to follow suit. I sent my CV to careers@aib.ie and was brought through their Graduate selection process. This included an aptitude test, along with an interview. I put a huge amount of work in preparing for the interview, and really wanted to demonstrate how much I had researched AIB and what it would mean to join an organisation like it.

Receiving the call to say I was selected was a big day – I still remember exactly where I was at the time, and who I ran to to share the big news.

My progression within AIB has been as a result of a number of internal interviews. The application process can feel tedious at times but putting in that extra effort to completing the submission and update the CV always prove worthwhile. I try to review my CV at least twice a year, just to remind myself of what I've achieved and where I want to go.

During my time in AIB, I've been promoted every two years to a new role. This progression has kept me motivated over the years and I enjoy reaching for that next goal. Shaping a career path can at times prove difficult, but understanding the various opportunities presented by an organisation like AIB can bring a new slant to the job.

Describe a typical day?

It's interesting to consider whether a 'typical' day looked different pre and post Covid. Working remotely took some time to get used to in the first few months, but now over a year in, the 'typical day' is much the same thanks to the remote working capabilities. I don't miss the commutes but would love a face – face coffee with work friends which is hard to replicate over Zoom.

In my current role, I'm working on AIB's Digital Team. I've always had an interest in all things digital, and it's exciting to work in an environment that is ever evolving.

The day begins with a large coffee! I try to login at about 8.30am and catch up on emails from the day before. When 9am hits, it can often mean meetings. At times, back to back meetings become tiring, but where possible I block at some time to make sure I don't fall too far behind on the 'to do list'.

Every meeting should have a clear set purpose, and we're getting better at that on the team. At some meetings I do the presenting, while at others different stakeholders may be the chair. No matter the session, making sure we achieve specific objectives from each meetings is key. Workshops are always an enjoyable part of the week, where we get together and get creative. I really enjoy being part of more collaborative exercises which often energise me for the rest of the day.

After some lunch, it can either be back to meetings or time to get some work done! I'm working on a large project at the minute, which has pressing deadlines and lots of spinning plates.

There's nothing better than when a project you're working on hits a big delivery milestone. Taking the time to acknowledge such achievements is so important. It's always good to take the time to reflect and soak in the lessons we've learned, not just when stuff goes well, but equally as important when things go wrong.

I aim to log off by 5pm, but if I'm honest with myself I often find that hard. In reality, it's closer to 6 / 7pm when my husband gets back from work. Although I may work late some evenings, I do try take back these hours and leave a little earlier on a Friday, when I have something nice planned. That balance and flexibility to the workday really helps during the longer weeks!

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

My latest appointment sees me positioned as the Head of Risk, Governance and Support on AIB's Digital Service Management Team.

Our team has two sides to it. One aspect looks after the day to day management of our online channels. We have lots of different channels in AIB, which help our customers in managing their day to day banking needs. Our Mobile Banking App is as an example of one of our channels - ensuring it's up and running, and does what it says on the tin is central to our role! We look after our channels from a risk perspective which is so important. That means making sure it's operating correctly, and we avoid any big issues on our channels where possible. If something does go wrong, we bring together all the different teams and reflect

on why this may have happened, or how we could improve the services we provided to our customers going forward.

Separate to that, we're also running a big regulatory project which could take at least a year to complete. This project is all based around ensuring our online channels are in line with the EU and Irish directives relating to data management. We need to make sure we're fully transparent with our customers when it comes to any data which we may collect. With different workstreams, and milestones mapped out between now and 2022, we're kept busy with this project!

What are the main challenges?

Although it's a positive when working in the digital sector, the ever evolving landscape can be challenging at times to keep up with. Working in AIB, trying to bring together old systems and new systems creates its own problems.

On top of that, we cover different brands and jurisdictions. Understanding that you'll never be an expert in all the various products we have out there can be frustrating at times. But trusting your colleagues is what's important there. In my role now, I see myself often as a 'Jack of all Trades', which could be interpreted as a 'Master of None'. But there are so many subject matter experts out there too, that when we combine all the skillsets we can achieve almost anything.

All of the above means for a busy day – probably the biggest challenge of all. Time management is testing, and the importance of good prioritisation is something which our team has to put at the fore of our working day.

What do you really like about your job?

First and foremost – it's the people (without sounding too corny about it!).

I'm surrounded by a great team, and it makes any job more enjoyable. I strongly believe you can tackle almost anything in the day job with the right people who have an open and honest outlook.

Before AIB, I worked in smaller companies, and always thought the concept of working in a big organisation would be quite daunting. With so many thousands of people, how would you know where to go, or who might be able to help etc? Now I see it as the very opposite. Meeting new people is something that I really enjoy. And as new projects arise, or changes and restructures take place on different teams, you often get the opportunity to learn about somebody new. The diversity amongst the team makes each day interesting.

Flexibility has more recently become a nice perk, and the annual leave is always something I cherish! Each employee was recently granted an extra days holiday to 'digitally disconnect' – definitely something I welcomed, but more so it was AIB's acknowledgement of the importance of switching off.

Is there anything you don't like?

It's safe to say we still undertake a number of 'tick box' exercises. What can feel like pointless tasks which don't seem to benefit anyone, either the customer or the business. We do our best to challenge some of these tasks, but at times there can be a mentality that it's easier to just get them done. It's always a nice win when you can shut down these types of tasks, and I always encourage people to stand back and question everything they do. But in saying that, there are moments of the week where you can feel like

time was wasted on something that is now just saved in a folder on the off chance someone might need to refer to it in years from now. In those instances, I can't help but think that surely we could have spent our time better!

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

I work in Technology, but bring to the job my business and commercial acumen. My strong ability to translate tech heavy principles into easily understood outputs is core to my role. In terms of specific skills, they'd include things like strategic thinking, data / risk analysis, problem solving, project management and user research. Applying a customer centric mindset to all that we do is key to my job. Having excellent communication skills is also central to the success of my role. Throughout the day, I'll need to draw on my good influencing and negotiation skills in order to gain consensus with different stakeholders across the bank. My leadership style is something which I'm always striving to improve, while considering what type of leader I want to be. What can seem like the more straightforward attributes, like time management, prioritisation and a good eye for detail are also so important as part of the day to day job.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

While in school I did a real mix of subjects, from Music to Accounting. I really enjoyed the problem solving side of Maths and Chemistry, but my real passion was for languages. German was definitely my favourite subject. Although my German is now pretty rusty, I like to think my ear for languages has helped shape my ability to translate some of the more technical language into meaningful business terminology. My wide range of subjects in school showed early on that I liked to have a good mix topics to keep me engaged. I went into Physio with having never studied Biology, and I remember other students at the time thinking I was crazy, but all in all there was no great downfall to that. I had to work a little harder in my first year, but I quickly got up to speed. It felt somewhat similar walking into Finance with no strong business background. I really think that being adaptable is so important to whatever career path you're thinking of pursuing. No matter the subject, if you're a rounded individual you'll find that you've learned certain attributes which you can apply to any job.

What is your education to date?

I went to school in Loreto Beaufort in Rathfarnham where I completed my Leaving Cert in 2007. I was thrilled to get accepted to UCD, where I was awarded a BSc in Physiotherapy. The Physio course is all about gaining practical experience, and I spent much of my college years working in the Mater Hospital, St Vincents and the National Rehab in Dun Laoghaire. Not travelling too far, I then went from Clonskeagh to start on the Graduate Programme in AIB Ballsbridge. (During my colleges exams in the RDS, I used to look across the road at Bankcentre and wonder what it was all about!)

Since joining AIB, I've completed the QFA exams with the Institute of Bankers which was split over a two year timeframe. In the past year, I then completed that Diploma in Digital Transformation with the Institute of Bankers also. Their awarding body is UCD also, so back with my roots!

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

That practical experience in the hospitals has definitely help shape my communication style. The communication skills I learnt during my education are so important to what I do today. In college, a lot of what we did outside of the hospitals was group work. We were tasked with problem statements and asked to present back as a team. I like to think my strong presentation skills now, are largely backed by the feedback and guidance I received from my lecturers at the time. The QFAs of course gave me that more specific financial knowledge which has helped me in understanding the regulatory environment in which we operate. Most recently with the Diploma, I've now established a great network of peers across the industry. I think this is so important for what I do. Having that understanding of what is going on in the wider market is always of interest. Often people talk about our 'competitors' and can be nervous of learning and sharing from one another. The Diploma showed me the importance of a strong network and how that can help me in improving the ways in which I approach the day job. We don't need to get down to the nitty gritty of what one another is doing, but having the support of others working for different organisations and knowing they face similar challenges is definitely reassuring.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

After completing my BSc in Physiotherapy, and then changing my career path, I worried a lot about doing the 'right' course this time around. In hindsight I probably was overthinking things! Within my first few years in AIB, I finished my exams to become a Qualified Financial Advisor (QFA). This was a big achievement, and felt like a real milestone in establishing my career on the business side. I took a few years off studying to find a course that suited where I wanted to go, and recently completed a Diploma in Digital Transformation (Financial Services) awarded by UCD. I was delighted to receive a first class honours in this course, as it almost proved to myself that this is an area in which I thrive. This Diploma is a stepping stone to a wider Masters in Financial Services which I'm hoping to complete over the coming three years. AIB have supported all my post graduate education to date – definitely another perk to the job!

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

A few years ago, I received an Employee Achievement Award which was definitely a highlight – it was marked by a fancy dinner in AIB's Bankcentre with some great key note speakers. In 2019, I was invited to take part in the INSEADs Inter Alpha Programme which was a fantastic opportunity. Again, it was an opportunity to create a strong network, but this time with different Banks across Europe. I was thrilled to be selected to represent AIB at this programme. Better yet, I got to travel over to Copenhagen for week. During the day, we had multiple lectures, but in the evenings we headed out on different tours, out to beautiful restaurants and great pubs to get a proper feel of the city. I love to travel, so any opportunity to jump on a plane has always been a standout for me - I've attended workshops in Amsterdam and London which proved to be really interesting.

Before the lockdown kicked in, we had a great night out at the Spider Awards which looks to recognise digital leaders across the industry. This was a black tie event, so a great excuse to get dressed up with colleagues. Our Voice ID solution for customers came in as a winner under 'Best Use of Disruptive Technology'.

Fancy dinners and travel are one thing, but the most rewarding days are those spent doing voluntary work. AIB affords us two days a year to roll up our sleeves and help out local charities across Ireland. I've had the pleasure of working out in the FoodCloud warehouse, and have even set out on the road collecting the food supplies from farms and grocery shops across the country. I also organised an event with Habitat for Humanity, where we pulled together a team of volunteers to renovate a derelict house in Dublin city centre. This house was then granted to a very worth family who had struggled for year to find a home - we were invited to the house warming ceremony which was a really memorable day for us all.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

I'm someone who is always motivated to achieve results, and think this has really helped me get where I am today. Having that drive and determination has brought about so many great opportunities for me. I'm quite a social person too, which has helped me in growing that strong network of colleagues without which I'd really struggle to keep energised at the desk! I'd like to also think I'm empathetic, which definitely comes through in my customer first approach to problem solving.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

In just a few words, I'd like to be on the Exec Committee of a charity one day – leading out on their Digital Team to help them use technology to be the best that they can be.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

Be open minded – a career in Finance doesn't sound the most riveting at times. But if I told you that I worked in one of Ireland's leading technology companies would that change your view? You don't need to be the most tech savy individual, but once you have a passion for all things digital, and want to create customer first solutions, considering a job in this field could definitely be something for you.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

If you're someone who can bring these three characteristics to the job, you'll definitely enjoy the job while inspiring others:

- Show good emotional intelligence (e.g. self / social awareness)
- Be curious – always ask why!
- Think outside the box – are there different ways to solve a problem?

What is your pet hate at work?

Nothing frustrates me more than when people aren't willing to work together on achieving a common goal. There's a term called 'silo'd behaviour' that is referenced quite often, but that idea of people not wanting to collaborate is difficult for me to get past. When you look at what great results can be achieved for our customers when we come together to deliver, being a team player is more important than ever.

Senior Investment Analyst
Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (NTMA)
Madhuvratha



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I was drawn to Financial services when I was in high school, especially when the 2008 financial crisis hit, as it was proof of what an interesting field it would be to work in. My interest led me to choosing Accounting and Finance as my major in my Bachelor's in Commerce course in the University of Mumbai, India. I actively followed the capital markets throughout my college years and, eventually, found myself particularly interested in M&A and decided that I wanted to pursue a career in Corporate Finance. During my final year in college, I secured a role with JP Morgan & Chase in Mumbai in Corporate and Investment Banking as an Accounting and Reference Data Specialist. After over two years into this role, I joined Citibank as an Investment Banking Analyst, taking my first step into Corporate Finance. I completed the CFA program in 2019. As I was always interested in doing an MBA, I decided that the time was right to pursue that. Ireland seemed to be a great location as it has good business schools and had several PE and VC funds setting up base here at the time as a result of Brexit. I applied for the MBA in Trinity College Dublin and successfully got in and graduated in 2020. During the MBA program, I applied for my current role in the ISIF as I was keen to move to the buy side and working in a sovereign fund would provide me with a unique opportunity in my career. I successfully secured the role and have been working in the ISIF for over a year now.

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

As a young girl, I had a good amount of exposure to accounting and finance as my father is an Accountant and I learned a lot from him during my high school years, which sparked a further interest in me and lead me to choosing financial services as my career path. He also guided me throughout my career to make the right decisions at the right times. Additionally, my Financial Reporting & Analysis professor, during my undergraduate course, guided me through the various opportunities in Corporate Finance and how to go about developing the right skills for the jobs I was interested in.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

My job allows me time to maintain a good work life balance and a decent lifestyle. I try to set aside a couple hours every week for my hobbies, which mainly includes Indian Classical Music (Vocals and Violin). I also like to go on hikes once or twice a month. I mainly try to maintain my physical and mental well-being, which has been a very important factor since Covid-19 hit. I start my day with a run before work as it prepares me for the day and helps me stay active throughout. I make sure to take short 10-minute breaks every 2-3 hours during work. I end my evening with yoga and meditation post work.

How did you go about getting your current job?

During the MBA program, I came across my current role on LinkedIn. I was immediately interested as I was looking to move to the buy side and the role offered a great opportunity for learning due to ISIF's diverse portfolio that provides exposure to all major asset classes and their unique investment mandate focusing on both financial performance and economic impact. I applied for the role on the NTMA's careers website. I was shortlisted for the first-round interview, which was conducted by ISIF and HR representatives. Then, the second-round interview was conducted, again with both ISIF and HR representatives, after which I was offered the position.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

I work in the Irish Portfolio Monitoring team within the ISIF unit. In a nutshell, my job is to monitor the performance of a portfolio of Irish investments within the ISIF on both financial performance and economic impact grounds. My daily activities are a mix of analytical work and engagement with several investees in the Fund. I analyse reporting from the investees on a monthly/quarterly/annual basis, attend investor meetings and report my analysis to the rest of the team. As a part of my job, I also present an annual review report for each of the investments that I monitor. I also present a Quarterly Portfolio Monitoring report at the end of each quarter for all the Irish investments in the Fund.

What are the main challenges?

My main challenge in my current role in the ISIF was joining the team remotely. I was the first member in the ISIF to join in a work-from-home environment. It took a good bit of work and effort on my part to learn different tasks on the job virtually. A bigger challenge that I still face while working from home is developing strong working relationships with everyone on the team, especially those that I may not work with on a regular basis. I have always found it a lot easier to build rapport through in person interaction. However, it has been a year of working remotely for me and I am always learning ways to make it work.

What do you really like about your job?

My job offers me exposure to a highly diverse pool of assets. As managers of taxpayers' money, the team collectively holds a huge responsibility. The Fund is unique in its investment mandate; however, it is also highly agile in dealing with any new issues that may arise. A good example of this would be the setting up of the Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund, a €2bn fund to support medium and large enterprises in Ireland affected by Covid-19.

Finally, is a fantastic team with people from many different backgrounds, giving me the opportunity to learn something new every day.

Is there anything you don't like?

I would not say that there is really anything I don't like about my job. If had to mention something, I would say I am not very fond of operational tasks in any job, which is, fortunately, only a very tiny part of my job.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Through the CFA program, I developed financial analytical skills, including application of investment tools, valuation of various asset classes, quantitative analysis and portfolio management. As part of my previous work experience, I have also learned advanced financial modelling, and am well versed with several databases, including Bloomberg, Factset and Thomson Reuters Eikon.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

In high school, I chose Commerce and Accounting as my main subjects, which focused on the core basics of financial accounting, cost accounting, management accounting, auditing and quantitative methods for business. I certainly feel my subject choices at the early stage moulded me and gave me the strong foundation I needed for the career path I wished to take. I can very confidently say that almost everything I learned in the early stage was beneficial in progressing towards my goals.

What is your education to date?

As I previously mentioned, I completed high school with Commerce and Accounting as my main subjects in 2011. Following this, I graduated with a Bachelor's in Commerce with a major in Accounting and Finance from the University of Mumbai in 2014. Post this, I cleared all the three levels of the CFA program. Most recently, I graduated with an MBA from Trinity College Dublin in 2020.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

Looking back, every single step in the way has been crucial and important for my career. But if I had to point out the learnings most relevant to my current role, the CFA Program helped me broaden my professional expertise in the Financial Services industry and also strengthen my analytical skills and other crucial skills in the industry, including valuation of different asset classes. The CFA Level III exam focuses mainly on portfolio management. This has helped improve my knowledge and competency in the synthetics and evaluation of investment concepts in the context of portfolio management and wealth planning challenges. In my current role in the Portfolio Monitoring team, these learnings have especially been helpful and important.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

In my previous jobs, I had taken the opportunity to learn advanced financial modelling in Excel for valuation and to develop a good working knowledge of some of the key databases used to support several functions in Corporate Finance. In my current role, I plan to learn Data Analytics as it is a crucial function that has proven its importance in all businesses today and is highly useful as a tool to support decision making, which I believe will be helpful in my current and future roles.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

I feel very happy of how my career has been progressing and every small success has been important for the overall journey. However, if I had to choose one something that I was particularly happy or proud of, I would say I'm quite proud that I passed all the CFA exams while working a highly demanding job back in Mumbai that required me to put in very long hours in the office.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

Personally, I believe that I have always been very ambitious and dedicated towards my academic and professional goals. I tend to be very organised and systematic when it comes to managing time and tasks on hand. I never give up on anything without giving it the best shot I can. Finally, I also believe I am warm and cheerful to talk to, which has been very important over the past year in building work relationships remotely.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

My career is progressing exactly the way I would like it to. However, if I were to just talk about my dream job, I would like to teach at a business school alongside my main job in Corporate Finance.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

For anyone interested in this role, learning fundamental skills such as financial modelling and valuation would certainly be helpful. In terms of qualifications, I encourage them to pursue the CFA program because the curriculum covers all asset classes in significant detail. Additionally, one could also pursue ACA/ACCA, if their interests are stronger on the Accounting side. Finally, it is also extremely important to stay on top of current affairs and market events as it is a time-sensitive industry.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Reliability, attentiveness and agility.

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

For good work experience, one could join a PE/VC fund, a wealth management firm or an investment bank straight from university as an analyst. One could also join the corporate finance team of an accountancy firm as a trainee while studying for the ACA/ACCA.

Head of HR
New Ireland/Bank of Ireland
Oonagh



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I chose my BA (European Studies) because I was really interested in European History and politics and also loved French in school. I had no real career plan other than to do something in college that I was interested in, and I also got to spend my 3rd year in France on an Erasmus programme which was a dream come true. In work and life I try to play to my strengths – to do things that I am really interested in, that I can apply all my interests and passions to that I will find engaging and where I feel I can make a difference. I am an 'accidental' HR professional, but I truly love the breadth and variety of working in HR and being a creative problem solver!

Who are the people who most influenced your career direction?

Several of my family members are involved in Psychology / Psychotherapy / Counselling careers and I always found that really interesting – but I loved the side of Employment Law and Talent management that also came with HR so that helped me to choose my path. I have also had some fabulous mentors during my career, and several suggested I should become an executive and leadership coach so I achieved that qualification as well and am thrilled that I did.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

I am passionate about helping people to bring their whole selves to work, and having their real needs met. I am a mother of three daughters, and am a huge advocate for women returning to work from maternity leave, having seen the barriers that exist in the workplace. That has made me even more committed to progressing diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Working in HR has helped me to also have access to resources in work that I can apply outside work and help in community and volunteering organisations, as well as with my family. HR is not just about filling forms and checking boxes – it's about solving problems, helping people to maximise their potential and I find this hugely fulfilling. I have been very deliberate in choosing HR roles where I don't have to travel as my children have grown up – I did a lot of travel when I had babies and made a conscious choice to step back from that because I wanted a different balance and HR is a very portable career where you can do that.

How did you go about getting your current job?

My job found me! I have a great network going back through my career of people and connections I have made, and as the company was looking for a HR leader a recruiter approached me and here I am!

Describe a typical day?

My role is very varied, ranging from working with the Board and advising the executive leaders, to helping people leaders with resources, people challenges, recruitment and retention. I am very focused on Talent / Development / Inclusion and diversity and lastly in any HR role there is always routine work to be done in reviewing reports, updates and so on.
Timing wise it can be pressurised when the unexpected crops up! We try to plan in advance as much as possible, but you also have to expect the unexpected.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

Advising the Board and senior leaders on the people and culture strategy related to achieving business and commercial goals. Making sure that the organisation is set up for success with right people in right role, supporting people leaders with creating a great place to work and lastly supporting employees with issues and challenges they may face.

What are the main challenges?

Most exciting and challenging things that I do are in relation to creative problem solving – figuring out how to stay ahead of what is coming – sometimes no planning can prepare you such as the last 16 months, but taking and applying learning and experiences, and collaborating with colleagues is really energising !

What do you really like about your job?

Creating programmes to support people to reach their potential is really exciting. I've devised programmes to support grads, interns, people with disabilities, women returning from maternity leave. A lot of new HR technology is available now so you can do really cool things to understand colleagues and their preferences the way we try to understand our customers.

Is there anything you don't like?

Down in the weeds tasks – running reports over and over, or sometimes the nature of lastminute.com asks can be a real challenge!

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

Ability to form relationships, learn the business quickly and put myself in other peoples shoes.

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I did my HR degree after I had been working for a few years and think that was a really good decision as I picked up so much more than if I had done it before having any work experience. I qualified as an Executive and Leadership Coach about 18 months ago and I really recommend that as a skillset and toolkit for anyone in my line of work.

What is your education to date?

BA in European Studies, MA in European Studies, BA in HRM, Postgraduate Diploma in Organisation Design.

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

My postgrad in Org. Design has been great, and really relevant and useful. My HR degree has been useful, but also a lot of the management and leadership development I have done in work have really benefited me as well.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I'm always learning. I would really like to study something in relation to digital leadership & transformation next!

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

Championing inclusion and diversity and helping to make a real difference for colleagues is something I am very passionate about and proud of.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

Ability to develop relationships, bringing a social and fun element to work has helped me enormously throughout my career.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I really love working in HR and would like to continue to grow in focus around Talent, Diversity & Inclusion, Leadership and Coaching.
Of course, if I could do anything I wanted I would live in France somewhere between a vineyard and an art gallery.

What advice would you give to someone considering this job?

Think about your strengths – what is engaging and exciting for you and how can you pivot and continue learning throughout your career. Don't try to fit a particular mould. I fell into HR – it was never my plan but over 20 years later I still learn something new every day.

Education wise, I would say do something you love starting out – I loved French, wanted to live in France and so picked a degree that gave me maximum exposure to that! I only speak French on holidays now but I loved every second of my degree.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Tenacity, ability to develop relationships, ability to communicate really well.

What kinds of work experience would provide a good background for this position?

Anything in a customer or colleague type of role where you learn the value of really good connections

What is your pet hate at work?

Laziness

Workforce Org Design & Strategy Development

AIB

Sabrina



What were the main 'career decision' milestones in your life so far?

I initially wanted to do law or business in college and I did business in college and studied accountancy – On leaving college I worked as a finance manager where I studied at night time some professional exams. I then realised I wanted to move into more people focused or engagement type roles and I moved into operational/contract management type roles – for some big brands where I progressed quickly to manager running global teams for some big outsourcing brands.

Does your job allow you to have a lifestyle you are happy with?

I love working for AIB as I've got a good work life balance and lifestyle although with Covid it was a challenge but I've always worked hard and its not always perfect but I suppose having worked globally in a number of industries and also been in many situations it's the one organisation that has enabled me to cultivate and maintain authentic connections inside and outside of work: along with coaching studying and pursuing volunteer work, and other interests and where the people really do make the difference.

Describe a typical day?

I got an opportunity to move to a workforce organisational design role in our chief technology office which is leading the development of a strategy for new and existing workforce. In the CTO, we provide the wider AIB Group with the technology and data solutions that enables the AIB Group to back our customers so it's a really great area to work in.
It might sound cliché but no two days are the same.

What are the main tasks and responsibilities?

Some of the work I'm doing is in relation to our workforce strategies and how we can make an impact to the life's of our people it's a really great opportunity to bring a lot of diversity to define the future of our workforce. It involves a lot of influencing research design and gathering different perspectives as its an area that impacts everyone.

What are the main challenges?

Its not without its challenges in terms of the changes that are happening globally and in every industry but even more so in a regulated environment that comes with additional challenges but I'm up for it.

What do you really like about your job?

I've always strived to add value in whatever I do and my main objectives are always align to my personal values and I want to work for a company where that is embraced. Some of the work I'm doing is in relation to our workforce strategies and how we can make an impact to the life's of our people it's a really great opportunity to bring change and I am passionate about.

What particular skills do you bring to your workplace?

I think I have a diverse background in terms of the organisations I have worked for and my top skills are probably driving for results - influencing, negotiations and building win win outcomes which I think is important. I have a relentless curiosity and I'll always ask questions and figure it out – I like to call it curiosity but I'm sure its been called something else!

What subjects did you take in school and how have these influenced your career path?

I did business studies & German as additional subjects in school. I think I got a grounding in maths/accountancy that allowed me problem solve but as I said above I think is important to have an ability to learn and I always ask questions and figure it out. I think its more the mindset as opposed to the subjects you choose and I think that is most important. I hated algebra and always wanted things to be logical. I think if you work hard it will always work out.

What is your education to date?

I went to a Community School did my leaving cert & then Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (Bachelor of Business Studies) National College of Ireland Higher Diploma in Sales Marketing & Advertising & Social Media (BEFORE INSTAGRAM 😊!!) & Institute of Management & Leadership Advanced Diploma in Strategy & Innovation & Kingstown College – Executive Coaching Leadership & Team Coaching

What aspects of your education have proven most important for your job?

I did some volunteer work teaching adults to read that had left school and I think the most important thing was enabling them to ask questions and to just focus on the learning process. Its something that I've always tried to give back to others as I was lucky to have an education. I think coaching strategy and innovation was what I enjoyed most and I have managed to get a job doing all three. I also coach small businesses in my spare time which I love.

Have you undertaken, or do you plan to undertake any further training as part of your job?

I'm a life long learner and I have signed up to do a corporate coaching wellness diploma – with the impact of the pandemic on everyone I want to make sure it's a topic I can support in.

What have been the most rewarding events in your career so far?

Becoming a coach and seeing other people gain confidence to smash it – especially women returning to education.

What personal qualities do you have that helps you in your career?

My values are very important to me and I think understanding ones self is the biggest thing that can help – it allows a response not a reaction and when you are aware of your strengths they become your superpowers. I would say Authenticity. Gratitude. Learning agility. Influencing and Empathy.

What is your dream job or where do you see your career going?

I plan on cracking the glass ceiling and would want to be in a C level role in the next 5 years.

What are the three most important personal characteristics required for the job?

Perseverance, authenticity and a good sense of humour! Communication.
Learning agility. Influence. Empathy

What is your pet hate at work?

When people ask me to slow down – I think fast and express myself in the same way so its something I am working on as my passion tends to take over!!

