



Alumna Subject Graduated Place of Work Position
Joanna Swiatek
Psychology Bsc
2010
ETS plc
Business Psychologist



ETS plc, an HR consultancy specialising in Employee Engagement, Assessment, Development, Performance and Talent Management. It offers HR consultancy from business psychologists and helps some of the world's leading companies design and implement employee surveys. Joanna has recently been responsible for producing employee engagement reports to diagnose the key areas of strength and development for her clients and creating plans of action to improve their business metrics.

Why did you choose to study Psychology at Royal Holloway?

During the university application process I considered the top five universities in the UK and Royal Holloway was ranked as 4th or 5th at the time. I chose Psychology because I had always been interested in understanding human behaviour and people's motives for doing things. In secondary school I had worked a lot with special needs children and adults and this experience definitely prompted me to learn about how our brains develop and how human behaviour is shaped. I was fascinated by how knowledge about human behaviour can be applied to different fields such as education, justice or business.

I was impressed with how highly the Psychology course was rated; it received really high scores in research, teaching and student satisfaction. The lecturers seemed extremely passionate about sharing their knowledge and experience in managing people's behaviour at work. There was also easy access to London and it had all the university facilities in one place. The College was everything I was looking for.

What are your fondest memories of being a student at Royal Holloway?

I will always remember special times of being with my friends. It was so easy to meet them, whether it was by working together on a final year project, through

work as a Student Ambassador or as a Student Caller, planning nights out in the Students Union bar or on holidays after graduation. I'm still in touch with people who I met at Royal Holloway today and I truly hope they will stay my friends for a long time.

Were you involved in any clubs or societies? Do you have any anecdotes from your time here?

I was involved in the Polish and Catholic Societies. I really enjoyed organising various Polish events. One of them was St Andrews day during which, according to Polish tradition, one can predict their future from wax shapes that are created by pouring hot wax through a key hole into cold water. I was very keen to see a genuine interest of home and international students in learning about this tradition. Needless to say, the kitchen required a lot of cleaning afterwards!

What was life like at Royal Holloway?

When I compare days at Royal Holloway with life after graduation, life back then seems like a fairy tale to me now. I lived in halls of accommodation which were located within a five minute walk from lecture/seminar rooms, dining halls, libraries, cafes and the sport centre. I didn't have to spend time commuting between different campus sites and wherever I went, I always bumped into my friends. It was very easy to meet up with other students on a daily basis; everyone had time for you. Also walking by or

spending time in Founder's Building made the whole experience of living on campus very special.

Would you recommend us as a place to study?

Absolutely! I am always speaking very highly about Royal Holloway. I really enjoyed studying in a challenging environment which also had comfortable and familiar feel to it.

What is the most important thing that Royal Holloway has taught you?

Thanks to Royal Holloway being a very international university, I had a chance to meet students from all over the world and to work on various projects with them. Having such a diverse social and academic environment has taught me a lot about other cultures and increased my appreciation of the unique value different cultures can contribute.

In addition to that, I found that conducting a final year project helped a lot in understanding how to effectively manage group work, be a good team player and be able to work on my own at the same time. I also developed organisational and time management skills by working part-time during my full-time degree.

What has been your career path since graduating?

After graduation I completed a Masters in Organisational Psychology because it focused on

Great minds *go on to* great places



Royal Holloway
University of London



people with passion

“I would definitely make the same degree and career choice again; I really love what I’m doing.”



both academic research and business application. Towards the end of the course I applied for a one month contract with ETS plc, an HR consultancy, which was extended to a three month contract, which then turned into my permanent position as a Business Psychologist, which I am thoroughly enjoying.

What does your job involve and how do you use the skills your degree gave you?

My work varies a lot depending on the client’s needs and projects. In my recent projects I was responsible for producing Employee Engagement reports, which required using strong interpretive skills to diagnose the client’s key areas of strength and development and then presenting the data in a visual report format with my interpretation. I also use a statistical programme (SPSS) to run a number of statistical analyses to identify the client’s key drivers of engagement to further inform areas for action planning and link employee engagement with business metrics. Statistical and Research Method classes at College definitely gave me a comprehensive understanding of SPSS and statistical analysis and how to critically analyse quantitative data.

Presenting my recent projects on employee engagement to Masters students and lecturers at Experts in Occupational Psychology Forum was a great professional achievement for me, mostly

because it was the first time I had presented in front of an unknown audience.

What would you say to students who are thinking about a career like yours?

It is definitely important to build a good understanding of the principles of Occupational Psychology and I would recommend getting as much work experience as possible with various HR consultancies or HR departments. It is a great opportunity, not only to learn how the principles of Occupational Psychology are applied to organisational challenges, but also to allow you to develop professional networks. I thoroughly recommend attending conferences for business psychologists too. I would definitely make the same degree and career choice again; I really love what I’m doing.

I would strongly recommend working towards being a Chartered Occupational Psychologist. The process encourages Business Psychologists to develop breadth and depth of knowledge within the field, to be mindful of best practice and to keep up to date with current research.

Why is it important for you to remain involved in your College?

I am really grateful for the support I received from many lecturers and professors and the experience

at the College helped me develop confidence in my knowledge and skills so I could pursue my career so I feel I should give something back. I strongly believe that Royal Holloway is a good place to start a career as a Psychologist.

Whilst studying here I was involved too. I thoroughly enjoyed being a Student Caller. It was a great experience to talk to alumni and to hear about how they are progressing in their roles. At the time I was especially surprised to hear just how much alumni cared about their College and were genuinely interested in finding out what had changed since they left. I was fascinated by conversations I had with Psychology graduates who also went into Business Psychology - they were incredibly keen to give me some top tips for my career development too!

I would encourage other alumni to get involved as well, in whatever way they feel comfortable with. Some may prefer to financially support the Annual Fund and some may prefer to give their time and mentor current students. Every form of support will definitely be appreciated by students. I particularly appreciate the effort made to keep alumni in the loop and to update them with what is happening at the College. I think that the alumni magazine and the website are excellent sources of information about Royal Holloway as I like to be well informed and to keep in touch with my College.

For more Alumni Profiles visit: www.rhul.ac.uk/alumni/profiles/

