

Profile

Senior Corporate Tax
Manager, The MGroup
Partnership, UK

Elizabeth has completed
ATT, CTA and was
awarded DITT in June
2025.

Qualifications

ATT, CTA, DITT

Elizabeth Connolly



Interview

Tell us about your current role, career so far and how did you first start working in tax?

I started working in tax in 1999, when I joined KPMG in Reading as a corporation tax trainee; I had previously trained as a Physics teacher but tax appealed to me because of the intellectual stimulation and the fact that there was always something new to learn. I studied ATT and CTA (then ATII).

After I qualified, I moved to Tax Computer Systems, where I spent 4 years as a tax software developer, working on Alphatax CT software, both the UK and Irish products, and creating the corporation tax e-filing functionality.

I returned to practice, moving to Grant Thornton in Oxford where, alongside CT advisory and compliance work, I was a specialist in R&D tax relief. From there I moved to HMRC, where I spent 10.5 years in a variety of compliance, technical and management/policy roles. Covid hit just as I moved to Crowe in Reading, to join the firm's National Tax Technical team, which I headed up on the retirement of my predecessor. I then took a career break, which was unexpectedly disrupted by health issues. I will shortly be returning to practice, as a Corporate Tax Senior Manager with an Oxfordshire firm, the MGroup Partnership.

What area of tax do you work in and how did the tax technology qualification help you in your day-to-day job?

I will be working in corporate tax in my next job and look forward to applying what I've learnt to my new role.

What motivated you to undertake this qualification?

I've never lost my interest in tax technology and tax software, kindled when I worked as a tax software developer in the Alphatax team. During my career break I was asked to work on a report on tax software, being written by Bill Dodwell and former OTS colleagues of his under the auspices of the Institute for Fiscal Studies' Tax Law Review Committee. Working on this report and having time available and a desire to keep up my involvement in the tax world while I recovered my health, were what motivated me to take it at this stage.

What are your observations on the syllabus, learning experience, assessment questions and touchpoint comms?

I found the Tolley's learning platform very good in terms of functionality, and the assessment platform worked well, too. It was good to have total flexibility about when and how much I studied.

I found the module materials did vary in terms of their quality and comprehensiveness. The ones I liked best had “test what you have learned” questions after each section, webinars that really added to your understanding of the topics rather than just reading out the slide content, and provided detailed, relevant real-world examples of the application of the material being studied.

The assessment questions were fair and could be answered from the materials provided. I found the PDFs of materials helpful for consolidating my learning and for looking up the exact detail I needed to answer the assessment questions correctly.

What stood out in terms of learning and skills you have developed as a result of studying the DITT?

A wider understanding of some of the trends affecting tax technology in the wider sense, especially blockchain and its applications and the journey towards Tax Administration 3.0.

How did you manage studying and working at the same time?

I was on a career break and recovering from ill health, so it was good to be able to do this qualification very flexibly around my energy levels.

Do you have any guidance on how best to approach the learning material?

There is a lot of material to get through. Take it a section at a time to avoid being overwhelmed.

Which module did you enjoy the most and what were the most relevant to your current role?

I enjoyed the ones on blockchain and on Tax Administration 3.0 the most. Probably most relevant to my forthcoming role were the ones about early steps to automation, such as RPA and OCR.

How do you think this programme will benefit the profession?

Technology has been a key part of tax work for many years, and it continues to grow, but previously everyone has just picked up what they needed to know as they have gone along. Having a cohort of people who have wider understanding and greater knowledge of the possibilities of tax technology can only help us make the most of it in our profession.

Would you recommend this programme to others?

Yes.

What kept you motivated throughout the programme?

I am generally quite goal-oriented, so it was good to have something to aim for during a very unstructured time. Once I discovered there was a distinction grade it added to my focus as I was keen to achieve this (and succeeded). Also, studying the DITT in parallel with writing a report on tax software meant there was a lot of overlap in terms of topics covered, so I was motivated to find out more about those.

Any words of wisdom to future candidates thinking of studying the DITT?

It's very achievable but do not think you can just whizz through the material and pass the modules. As with most things in life you will get the most out of it if you put in the effort to fully understand the materials and the topics covered.

