

## About Zivile Parr

Zivile Parr is a UK Tax Adviser in the in-house tax team of Herbert Smith Freehills LLP. She completed her CTA in November 2007.

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# ZIVILE PARR

## CTA



## Interview

### How did you find out about a career in tax?

After I got my Economics degree, I was predominantly thinking about working in accountancy. I remember the day in the summer of 2004, when I spotted an advert in a local paper for positions in accountancy and tax at a private practice based in Harold Wood, Essex. That was probably the first time I heard of a career in tax. I thought I was taking a chance by applying for both positions, with a focus on the accountancy trainee role.

To my surprise, I was called in for an interview. I was totally over the moon when I got a job offer for the tax role. Although I did not get my preferred role, I was happy that I would be working with numbers and that my degree in Economics would not go to waste.

### What academic qualifications do you have?

At Vilnius University I studied for a Bachelor's Degree in Economics.

### What made you decide to study for the ATT/CTA?

When I was offered my first job in tax, I was also offered assistance with studying for the ATT/CTA qualifications by my employer. I wanted to start studying straight away, but I was advised to gain some tax-related work experience first.

### What skills have you developed since starting the CTA?

When I started studying for my CTA exams, my confidence in my ability to advise my clients on tax-related matters grew significantly. It also enabled me to see the broader picture, e.g. when a particular transaction may require consideration of more than one type of tax. Preparing for the CTA exams involves a lot of writing; therefore, studying also improved my writing skills.

### What does your day-to-day role involve?

My day-to-day role involves:

- Preparing and filing tax returns for the firm's partners, consultants and some spouses
- Calculating partners' tax liabilities on their personal and partnership income
- Preparing a composite tax return for around 200 overseas partners
- Preparing a partnership tax return for one of Herbert Smith Freehills entities
- Dealing with partners' tax payments
- Tax advisory work.

### What do you enjoy about your job?

I enjoy working in personal tax because tax legislation changes all the time and many of my clients have complex tax affairs, so there is no time to get bored! For me personally, the most rewarding part of my job is getting all the "Thank you" messages from my clients.

### What do people outside the sector not realise about a career in tax?

When people ask me about what I do, and I tell them that I work in tax, many tend to say that it must be boring. They are so wrong! I guess unless you work in tax, it is hard to appreciate what this job actually entails and what it takes to become good at it. I think it deserves as much credit as the top jobs in accountancy.

### How has achieving the CTA helped your career and provided you with opportunities?

Achieving CTA qualification led to a promotion from a tax assistant to a tax senior at my previous firm. I felt that all my hard work had been recognised by my employer. Becoming CTA qualified also paved the way for exploring other job opportunities. I was offered a role in the in-house tax team of Herbert Smith Freehills LLP, where I still find myself over 12 years later.

### What benefits does your CTA qualification bring to your employer?

The greatest benefits that my CTA qualification have brought to my employer is my tax technical knowledge and my ability to spot issues that our clients rely on us, as their tax advisers, to identify and advise on.

### How did you find life as a CTA student?

I will not lie – life as a CTA student was tough.

Fortunately, I did not have family commitments at the time. I remember wondering how other students, who had young families, were finding the time to study and to also do a full-time job.

My previous employer provided excellent study support, whereby I was allowed to attend all mid-week courses without having to use my annual leave. I still ended up using some of my annual leave for studying, but that was my decision.

I remember I was making use of every opportunity to study, e.g. on a train to/back from work (getting a seat on some days was definitely a bonus!). Sadly, I did not really have much social life in the few months leading up to my exams. It was a sacrifice, but I knew it was going to be worth it in the end.

### What advice would you give to someone thinking of doing the CTA qualification?

Studying for the CTA exams is hard work and requires a lot of commitment. Passing the CTA exams does really feel like a major achievement.

I would recommend that a gap between getting the ATT or accounting qualification and starting to study for the CTA qualification is kept to a minimum. The longer the gap, the harder it will be to get yourself back into the mood of studying. This was my motto, and it did work for me.

### Where do you see yourself in five years?

I would like to see myself going up the career ladder within the next 5 years.

### Do you get involved in any CIOT volunteer activities?

Not yet, but watch this space!

