

About Elizabeth Linsley

Elizabeth Linsley is a Tax Assistant Manager working in Private Client, Landed Estates for Saffery Champness LLP, which is ranked as the UK's 12th largest firm of Chartered Accountants.

Elizabeth completed CTA in 2018 and won two prestigious medals:

The Spofforth Medal, awarded to a candidate with the highest mark in the Inheritance Tax, Trusts & Estates Advanced Technical paper.

The Avery Jones Medal, awarded to a candidate with the highest performance in the Application and Professional Skills paper.

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ELIZABETH LINSLEY CTA



Interview

What made you decide to study for the CTA?

“Tax boring?! Far from it!

The landscape is constantly changing which means my knowledge needs to be current and fresh. People outside the sector think it's full of maths but it's not. The CTA qualification opens up a world of different specialist areas and for me, I was lucky to specialise at Saffery Champness in Landed Estates.

Having completed university with a first class honors degree in Arabic Studies, I was looking for graduate jobs because I wanted to do further training.

My father trained as an accountant so he encouraged me to look at accountancy and from there I found out about tax. It was exactly the type of role I was looking for. I liked the sound of tax as it is constantly changing so you are always learning on the job. It also sounded really interesting.

I joined Saffery Champness in 2017 as a tax trainee and as part of my role was required to follow the ATT/CTA Pathway. Saffery Champness is the 12th largest firm of chartered accountants in the UK, with a turnover of over £70 million. The firm act for clients across a variety of speciality sectors including private wealth, landed estates and rural businesses, not-for-profit, entrepreneurs, sports and entertainment, international and more.

What does a typical working day consist of?

I work in a mixed tax advisory and compliance role in our Private Client division. Depending on the time of year I can be doing more compliance than advisory, or vice versa. As well as completing tax returns, I prepare reports and attend client meetings. I also spend time keeping abreast of new legislation and recent tax cases to stay up to date. Our clients are busy people and find dealing with tax issues time consuming and stressful. It is really satisfying when we can take that burden away from them, whether by simply preparing their annual tax return for them and ensuring compliance deadlines aren't missed, or by preparing a comprehensive and detailed succession planning report.

One of the specialisms of Saffery Champness LLP is Landed Estates, and I have been able to work in this field for the greater part of my time to date. It has given me the opportunity to work on interesting cases and with colleagues who are experts in their field.

How has achieving the CTA qualification helped your career?

Achieving the CTA qualification has helped me enormously. It has given me in depth technical knowledge about tax issues that I deal with on a daily basis. It also helped me with my writing skills, particularly the Application paper. I also studied Awareness (VAT/CT/Taxation of Unincorporated Businesses), Individuals and IHT, Trusts and Estates at Advisory and Individuals, Trusts and Estates at Application.

Undertaking the qualification while working has also helped developed my time management skills. My employer was very supportive; as well as supporting my training financially, they gave me study leave and ensured that I wasn't too overwhelmed with work to be able to study as well.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

I was so pleased to pass my final exams and winning two prizes in my final CTA exams (the Spofforth Medal and the Avery Jones Medal) was the cherry on the cake. As a prizewinner I was invited to a ceremony in London to receive my prize, which was so much fun. I was able to take my husband which was so lovely as he was endlessly supportive while I was studying so it was an opportunity for us both to celebrate and share the occasion.

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

My advice to anyone considering doing the CTA is to keep motivated. It is hard to juggle work and studying, and the exams are not easy, but if you are motivated and diligent it is possible and it feels amazing once you achieve it. As a tax adviser it will help your career enormously, as it gives you many skills and valuable in depth technical knowledge.

I now have so much more technical knowledge and my softer skills, such as report writing, have been improved. Doing the CTA has given me so much more confidence in my job.

