

About Ellie Reed

Ellie Reed is a Manager working in Corporate Tax for PwC, which is ranked as the UK's largest professional services firm.

She holds the ICAEW's Chartered Accountant qualification (ACA) and completed the CIOT'S CTA in May 2018.

Ellie also won the CIOT's prestigious Institute Medal. This is awarded to the examination candidate with the best overall performance attempting the Awareness paper and two Advanced Technical papers (all at the same sitting).

Ellie studied for, and completed, these exams over a six-month period.

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ELLIE REED

CTA



Interview

What made you decide to study for the CTA?

At university I studied biology, but I didn't want a career in that field. Having researched various graduate career options, I decided I wanted to work in accounting and tax. The description of a career in tax as involving puzzle solving and drawing on a broad range of skills appealed to me, and five years into my career in tax I feel that this is an accurate summary.

My degree was a good grounding, providing a lot of transferable skills such as research, data analysis, interpretation, report writing and the discipline to study independently.

What did you specialise in?

In 2013 I joined PwC, one of the “Big Four” UK accounting companies. After obtaining the ICAEW's ACA qualification as part of PwC's graduate programme,

I chose to study for the Chartered Tax Adviser (CTA) qualification from the CIOT as well. I chose the Taxation of Owner-Managed Businesses and Taxation of Major Corporates papers as they aligned best with my day to day work, in which I specialise in international tax, large corporations and tax risk and governance.

What benefits does your CTA qualification bring to your employer?

Tax laws are ever changing and although the legislation has evolved since I did my exams, I can still draw on my improved research and interpretation skills and I know better where to look for answers. Rather than relying on senior managers to guide me I apply and interpret the rules myself.

Holding the CTA means my employer can charge more for my time and give me more complex work, with greater responsibility.

What does your day-to-day role involve?

Day-to-day my job is extremely varied. For example, I may accompany the audit team if the audit client is particularly large or complex and a tax specialist is needed. Or I could be helping clients who are buying, selling or changing their business to understand and comply with the applicable UK tax rules.

Companies who experience rapid growth may also find that they have different tax rules to consider (which may only apply to groups above a certain size), so I deal with a lot of enquiries, compile reports and help with tax compliance. It would be difficult to describe a typical day and as a lot of my work is project based I usually couldn't tell you what I'll be working on in three months' time!

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

My advice to anyone considering doing the CTA is not to underestimate the difficulty of the course or the time involved. Tax is very specialised so be sure you want to work in tax before investing your time and effort into the course. However, if a career in tax is for you then the CTA is extremely beneficial.

It offers a quick way to improve technical knowledge and skills and facilitates access to more interesting and wellpaid work. Given recent increased scrutiny of tax in the media and the abundance of new tax legislation that has been enacted in response, there is a growing need for tax professionals and more demand than supply.

I continue to find my career in tax very engaging and rewarding. My long-term ambition is to keep on doing what I am doing now, but progress to a more senior level.

What was your perception of taxation before your CTA training began and how has this changed?

The public perception is that tax is boring, but in fact it is complex, nuanced and constantly evolving.

The more involved and knowledgeable you become, the more interesting it gets.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

Qualifying as a CTA and winning the Institute Medal is a big highlight in my career so far. Doing the CTA qualification helped me to develop my technical knowledge, a better ability to work independently from source materials (tax legislation and HMRC guidance) and greater confidence. I wanted to progress quickly, so I chose to sit all three written papers in the same exam sitting, completing the entire qualification in six months. I was fortunate to get full support from PwC, which included study leave and tutoring at a local college, but I also had to do the day job.

