A member’s view: Aira Shiraz

Briefings



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This month we shine the spotlight on Aira Shiraz, ATT member, and ask her how she came to work in the world of tax.

How did you find out about a career in tax?

Very often you will hear people working in tax telling you how they ended up there by chance. This was not the case for me. I’ve always been interested in how businesses operate and was fortunate enough to have parents in tax and accounting. Growing up, I had the opportunity to become familiar with accounting and tax terminology. I was intrigued by how tax works and wanted to specialise in something of practical value. I became ATT qualified at the age of 18 after starting this journey at 16 and will sit my last two CTA papers in May.

Why is the ATT qualification important?

Particularly when starting out your tax career, the ATT qualification helps you to become a well-rounded tax advisor with a thorough understanding of the major taxes. In my opinion, it is of immense importance in the tax industry as it signifies a solid level of knowledge and expertise in tax law, regulation and tax practice. The broad curriculum – and the exams that ensure your knowledge is being applied – both set a high standard for tax professionals. This the first step in establishing a career in tax.

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

My parents have been a huge influence in my career. I always felt supported in achieving my goals and they inspired me to have a strong work ethic and aim high in life. Having attended Birmingham's top grammar school and growing up in a supportive environment, I began to think about where I wanted to be in the next couple of years. That small seed of an idea motivated me to accomplish something for my future.

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

Be prepared to work hard and stay focused on your goals. The course is demanding, but once you get that certificate the feeling is extremely rewarding and is absolutely worth the effort. Create a well-planned out study timetable and make sure you challenge yourself, especially in the revision phase. Regardless of your age, attaining this qualification is certainly possible with consistency and organisation.

What are your predictions for tax advisers and the tax industry?

Tax is becoming more digitalised; however, I believe that MTD is just the first step in the industry shifting to be more technology oriented. Nevertheless, clients will always prefer talking to someone, and maintaining a strong client relationship will remain a major part of this profession. Most compliance-based jobs will be automated, but consulting and advisory roles will remain high in demand. I am excited about the future of tax consultancy as it will raise the standard of the profession even higher.

Describe yourself in three words.

Creative, determined and pragmatic.

What advice would you give to your future self?

Never stop learning and growing, stay true to my values, and strive for excellence in every endeavour. It’s not always easy at work, but those challenges are what help you grow and learn. Stay positive and motivated, especially since CTA can be quite demanding!

Tell me something that others may not know about you.

Arts and crafts have always been a passion and I recently discovered crocheting, in particular amigurumi. These projects require a good deal of time and patience, and creating something from scratch gives me a sense of accomplishment.