A member’s view: Nicola Midgley

Briefings



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Chartered Tax Adviser, Irwin Mitchell LLP

This month’s member spotlight is on Nicola Midgley, Chartered Tax Adviser at Irwin Mitchell LLP and member of ATT and CIOT. Here she talks about her ATT journey.

How did you find out about a career in tax?

I did my school work experience at HMRC and later worked for HMRC after leaving education. I think it was there that I learned to love tax returns! From there, I decided the ATT qualification would be a great starting point in my tax career and I was able to join a private client tax team within a law firm that offered this training.

Why is the ATT qualification important?

It’s a great introduction into tax. It covers the main taxes with an option to choose a specialist paper which will often complement your practice area. The best thing about the exams for me were developing the skills to write to various audiences.

One question could be writing to a client and the next writing to a tax partner. You would therefore need to adapt your approach and language accordingly.

Why did you pursue a career in tax?

Initially, because I enjoyed working with numbers. Quite quickly, I realised that working in tax was less about the numbers and more about applying legislation and case law to practical situations. Also, helping clients with their tax problems is hugely satisfying.

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

There are too many people to mention but working in a law firm I get to work with a variety of hugely talented individuals. My line manager, Liz Beadsley, has been a great support throughout my career and has often pushed me out of my comfort zone.

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

Do it! The ATT provides a huge amount of knowledge that really complements the work tax professionals do. It requires a lot of hard work and therefore you will need to make sacrifices which are all worth it in the end. A tax apprenticeship is a great opportunity to study for the ATT, whilst gaining practical experience. It also provides training around soft skills and behaviours. My firm recently took on its first ATT tax apprentice. Having seen the course materials, whilst there is a lot of work to complete in two years, by the end point assessment you are in a great position to take the next step in your tax career.

What are your predictions for the tax industry in the future?

Digitalisation of the tax system will obviously play a huge part in how we work in the future. Digital assets are also becoming increasingly popular and we can therefore expect to see increased reporting and new legislation. In addition, environmental, social and governance (ESG) is now of vital importance for businesses. For tax advisors, as the tax net widens there is likely to be a need to support more taxpayers, some of which may be vulnerable or who have little knowledge of the tax system. Providing pro bono services may therefore become a part of the work we

do.

How would you describe yourself in three words.

Happy, thorough and adaptable.

What advice would you give to your future self?

It’s a cliché – but don’t sweat the small stuff.

Tell me something that others may not know about you.

I recently joined a committee within the ATT, having been involved with my local branch for the last few years. I have really enjoyed learning more about the important work both the ATT and CIOT are involved with.