



Student Case Study – Amy Matteo, EYCO

“My placement has allowed me to expand my knowledge and build confidence. This is an invaluable skill to have which has helped me greatly.”

Amy Matteo - BSc (Hons) Real Estate Surveying

Can you tell us about the placement opportunity you were involved in?

I was lucky enough to secure my placement with EYCO, where my main role was working alongside the Development Team. I assisted with site acquisitions for a major international brand, whilst gaining an understanding of the corporate environment and the landscape of the property development sector. EYCO's Development Team has been established for over twenty years they have helped acquire/dispose of around five million sq. ft of space with a value of around four billion. They have created for themselves an admirable, leading reputation within the food store market having acquired much of Tesco's Scottish estate. The company has been built on the foundation of its strong retailer connections, taking pride in its long-lasting relationships. They often find that a lot of business comes from clients who have used the services for ten or more years. With the retail market constantly adapting, EYCO ensures they are always at the leading edge to continue the high level of advice that their clients require.



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Can you tell us more about what your role entailed?

I was largely involved in assisting with acquisitions for a major international brand that specialises in coffee shop drive-thrus. However, I also participated in disposals, rent reviews, portfolio strategies, ratings, and lease renewals. Other opportunities that I was able to get involved with include preparation of property particulars, inspection and measurements, preparation of heads of terms, as well as having access to new and old building specifications, architectural layout plans and agreements for leases.

What key skills did your placement teach you?

Throughout my placement, I have been able to build on my interpersonal skills, working with individuals at all different levels from Managing Directors to Graduate Surveyors. In addition to working on my time management, planning, and organisational skills, my self-reliance has improved. Working in such a busy environment, you cannot wait around to be told what to do next. Therefore, you need to use your initiative.

What were your highlights and key successes of your time on placement?

Some highlights include assisting the preparations for EYCO's "young" surveyor networking nights. Although this was a social aspect of the placement, being able to meet and mingle with graduates who I will most likely be working with in the future was a great benefit. An example of a key success would be identifying actionable sites for the client. Being involved from the beginning of the acquisition process was extremely beneficial as I saw the ins and outs of all different stages. I was mainly involved with was looking for potential sites for a new drive-thru store. There was a site I found that met the client's requirements and the proprietor was open to discussions about moving forward with a deal. It was extremely rewarding as it helped me realise I was both capable and successful in my role of supporting the team.



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“Relationships are key in this field of work and maintaining them seems to be a common word of advice I have received from individuals who have been in the industry for years.”

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Did you face any challenges during your time on placement?

I never faced many challenges during my placement, however in the beginning I did make the occasional mistake. This was just getting used to the job, what was required from me, and the level of standard the team were expecting. Nonetheless, all you can do is learn from your mistakes and move forward which was the attitude I adopted.

How do you feel that your studies at Edinburgh Napier University prepare you for this placement?

The modules that we covered in first and second year helped prepare me for my placement as it allowed me to understand the basis of the world of work I was entering. It helped to know what people were talking about (even if it is only a small bit of knowledge).



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Do you think your experience from the placement affected your future career plans or last year of university?

I think it has helped solidify what pathway I wish to focus on once I have graduated from university and have secured a graduate role.

Would you recommend doing a placement to others?

Being able to combine both theoretical and practical experience has been immensely beneficial, and I couldn't recommend sourcing a placement enough. I think you're able to get a real sense of what will be expected from you once you have left university and it allows you to build confidence and those important relationships which I view as being essential to have in this industry.

What advice would you give to someone considering doing a placement at university?

Don't be afraid to use the people you already know to source a placement. If you don't have connections reach out to people, and start to expand your network. I have learned there is no shame in sending a LinkedIn request straight after meeting someone.