

# Anna Nikiel

## Operational Research Analyst HM Revenue & Customs

Anna graduated from the University of Wolverhampton in 2012 with a BSc (Hons) in Mathematics (with industrial placement)



### Why did you decide to study maths at the University of Wolverhampton?

I always enjoyed maths at school and wanted to take it further. The modules offered by the University of Wolverhampton looked interesting and seemed to cover a wide range of subjects, which I thought would be stretching and fascinating to study.

### Did the degree live up to your expectations?

Yes! I learned a lot, had the opportunity to ask questions during tutorials and put my knowledge into practice during my industrial placement. The course was enjoyable and the skills and qualifications I gained made it possible for me to follow my chosen career path.

### What did employers think about your degree from the University of Wolverhampton?

Employers liked the breadth of areas and topics covered in the course i.e. Pure/Applied Maths, Statistics and Operations Research (OR). I was quite surprised to learn that many maths graduates would not normally study OR modules. Being able to demonstrate knowledge of OR techniques helped me to stand out from the crowd. The study of OR and Statistics modules also made it easier for me to pick up projects requiring some expertise in these areas and my employer values that flexibility.

### What's a typical day at work like for you?

We follow the project-based working methods, so what I do during the day depends on the stage my project is at. During scoping, a lot of work is about learning what is required, why, how it is going to be used and whether it is achievable in required timescales. The planning stage is similar, but emphasis is placed more on availability of resources and interaction with other projects.

The maths comes to play during the 'implementation' stage; some examples of my previous projects involved building regression models, designing evaluation methodology or selecting target groups for intervention. The projects are very varied in duration and complexity. Normally, the project is concluded by a 'review' stage – when we gather customer feedback and document our work.

### What advice would you give to students thinking about studying a mathematics degree at the University of Wolverhampton?

Go for it – put the effort in, know what you want to get out of it and plan well in advance.