



Career paths

Bigger picture

For **Adele Hebditch**, senior manager at Moore Kingston Smith, the variety of work makes her job interesting and growing the business is her goal



What sparked your interest in finance as a career?

I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do after finishing my psychology degree at Lancaster University. I was working for a company in Carlisle when the auditors visited and it was from them that I learned that the ACA was an incredibly useful qualification – it would give me a good grounding in all things finance and open many doors. There weren't many opportunities in Cumbria so I decided to look at joining a graduate scheme in London. Working for a smaller-sized firm appealed to me and HW Fisher had a good reputation for training. It was actually the only firm I applied to, but after two days of small group presentations and an interview, I was offered the job and started in September 2013.

How challenging was the ACA study?

Holding a relevant degree wasn't a requirement for the ACA so I didn't feel I was at a disadvantage having studied psychology. I wasn't alone – one girl in my intake had an art degree. It was hard to balance the workload of my job with revision, which took up evenings and weekends, but I got first-time passes and qualified in 2016. The ACA has been a massive help for my career and I regularly use the technical knowledge and professional skills that I learned.

Why the move to corporate finance?

After three years of audit, the opportunity to move into corporate finance came up and it sounded very interesting. With HW Fisher being a small firm, the role was part audit, part corporate finance. I worked on buy-side due diligence and valuations, as well as being an audit

manager. I found clients tended to see audit as a bit of a process, whereas corporate finance clients were appreciative of our work. Following a further five years of doing both, I decided to focus on corporate finance. Moving to a bigger firm would offer me experience with larger, more complex transactions, so I joined Moore Kingston Smith in August 2021.

What does your current role involve?

I oversee a small team within transaction services. Typically, we work on buy-side financial due diligence, valuations, pre-lend reviews, vendor due diligence and act as reporting accountants on IPOs.

We have a team of 22 in corporate finance, including seven partners. I have worked with all of them at some point. Although the firm has sector expertise in media and marketing and IT-managed services, our experience spans most sectors. We are also part of the Moore Global network, with hundreds of offices in more than 100 countries, and I have had the opportunity to work with firms in Norway, Cyprus, South Africa and the US.

In addition, I'm a buddy to newer team members, a training manager for people going through the ACA and I'm involved in business development activities.

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What deals have stood out at Moore Kingston Smith?

When I first joined, I helped commercial vehicles accessories manufacturer Rhino Products acquire a competitor, Hubb Systems. I had managed deals before, but with a much smaller team and less junior support. This time I could take a step back, see the bigger picture and be more commercial, without having my head stuck in the detail. I felt I was adding value.

I led the buy-side due diligence on EACS, an IT-managed services firm, which was acquired by print and communications business Mode Solutions in June 2022. It was part of Mode's buy-and-build strategy and it is backed by Connection Capital. It was a large deal for our department, which also provided buy-side advisory support, due diligence on refinancing and tax advice. The timetable was tight and there were some technical complexities, but it was a great learning exercise.

What are your ambitions?

Obviously, I want to make it to partner one day, but for now I want to focus on continuing to grow our department within the London firm. When I joined, I was the first external appointment to the team. Since then, several others have followed.

I also want to encourage more women into corporate finance. It's no secret that, traditionally, the industry has been very male-dominated, but this is starting to change and I want to be a role model to young women hoping to join the sector. Moore Kingston Smith is very supportive of this, hosting networking events for women in the industry.