

# Max Risby



Investment Operations Specialist Apprentice at AJ Bell

- I studied Maths, Business & Economics A-Levels & achieved A\*A\*A (also did AS Further Maths which was the hardest thing I've ever done)
- I was never certain on what I wanted to do apart from saying simply 'Business' which was not a clear or well thought-of plan
- I applied to both University & Apprenticeships to keep my options open as much as possible



# Why did I choose an Apprenticeship?



- Gain job specific skills & knowledge
- Develop life skills working with others
- Direct exposure to industry professionals (colleagues, managers, directors etc)
- Gives you a direct experience of the career you want – clear way of seeing if you enjoy it or not. Earlier way of finding out if you want to switch career path
- Gives an insight into the different jobs/roles within your chosen field & business

Dive straight into a career where I get real exposure to work-life and what the job I want to do actually involves

Balance between working and studying

Start earning a salary straight away

Opportunities to develop very quickly within your career

Complete relevant professional exams and certifications for my future Career goals

Almost guaranteed a full-time job once you have completed

# The application process for Apprenticeships



1

General application & form submission

- General information on A-Level & studies
- May ask for a CV or application letter (may want to use your personal statement)
- May also ask some questions specific to the role or company you are applying for e.g why you would like to do the role or work at that company

2

Skills & Behaviour assessments

- Tests for competencies in English & Maths
- Situation based assessments
- Games which test memory or problem solving

3

Interviews

- In person
- Phone interview
- By Zoom
- Recorded interviews – recording your answers to predetermined questions by the computer (bit weird)

4

Assessment centres

- Independent & team activities
- May include interviews
- Meeting current apprentices and employers/ managers
- Fun games & weird activities

This is your chance to show your interest and motivation – research into the company to get to know things like what it does, its reputation, the culture etc. Important to also look at the job description and identify skills or tasks required which match to your abilities or knowledge from your studies.

Practice makes perfect & don't overthink it. These can vary a lot but if you complete a few you get a lot better. At the end of the day, it's aim is to test your behaviour and your strengths & weaknesses

Be yourself & show off – don't lie or pretend to be someone you think they want! Everyone is very friendly and are happy you're applying so they will help you out.

These are not as daunting as they sound and my experiences were actually very fun! Be prepared for potential questions and do research. If you have done this, there's no need to worry

# My apprenticeship & what I do



## Who are AJ Bell?

AJ Bell is one of the largest & fastest growing investment platforms within the UK. We offer products such as SIPP, ISAs and GIAs as well as stockbroking services to our customers with a key aim of helping people to invest. We are headquartered in Manchester with offices also in Bristol & London.



## Investment Operations Specialist Apprenticeship

- Level 4 Apprenticeship which can take between 12-24 months with opportunities to continue studying towards professional certifications & exams upon completion – I liked that this could be completed quickly and is more flexible compared to a degree apprenticeship
  - Designed to help people start their career within financial services
- Opportunity to work in different teams within AJ Bell's large variety of departments whilst also completing exams and working towards achieving a professional qualification.

As with all, my apprenticeship can be split into two main parts - my role and my apprenticeship work:

### My role:

I work within the institutional transfers team at AJ Bell.

Our work involves facilitating the transfer of our client's portfolios within their SIPP, ISAs or GIAs from their existing provider onto the AJ Bell Platform, overall increasing the company's assets under management & assets under administration.

In my team specifically, we work with institutional investors transferring into AJ Bell. These are experienced investors who invest through Wealth Management Firms and Independent Financial Advisers, I therefore work with these people rather than the client directly to facilitate the transfer process and offer custody solutions, ensuring this is a smooth and positive process

### My apprenticeship work:

- During my time I complete 3 exams
  - 1) Introduction to Financial Markets, Securities & Investments
  - 2) Financial Regulation
  - 3) An exam of my choice – options to study certain investment securities in detail or other key areas such as wealth management, capital markets or financial planning
- I complete 'Off the Job training' – this involves recording a minimum amount of hours of work that I have completed and things I have learnt from them, this can relate to things in my role or personal development outside of my role.
- Building up a portfolio – this involves completing different modules and projects on many different things through my apprenticeship, for example I have just completed a project on financial markets and how my firm & role fits into financial services. This also involves building up evidence of the skills & knowledge I have developed through my work which is used in my end-point assessment when completing my apprenticeship

# My experience as an Apprentice so

## far



- Very welcoming & friendly – employers love taking on apprentices, for example:
  - I had a 3 week induction to get to know the apprentices within my cohort & learn the business
  - You will have a mentor to help you through your course – I have a previous apprentice who completed his course & also a consultant who used to be the head of my whole floor who both help me with career advice & guidance during my course



- Lots of opportunities if you put yourself out there – I have spoken to managers, directors and other key members of AJ Bell, whilst also having attended sessions to learn about other areas of the business and other learning opportunities in financial services
- Regarded just as highly as the professionals around you but with even more guidance and managers want you to succeed – especially if you show motivation to learn & develop quickly



- Good social side to the job as well with chances to attend many events and other activities, for example the things I have been involved in so far include:
  - Free drinks at the end of work every payday
  - Christmas party & social event, TYE party, upcoming summer social party
  - Chances to get involved in some volunteering
  - Business sports teams – football 5 a side

# My advice



Have a look  
what's out there  
for both  
apprenticeships  
& university

Do not rule out an apprenticeship or university as both have a variety of good opportunities, spend some time looking into apprenticeships on offer as there are more opportunities than ever with the numbers continuing to grow

Apply early  
& to as  
many as you  
can

This keeps your options as open as possible and allows you to get the most experience in the application process to become a master. Don't get disheartened if you don't receive an offer from some as there are so many more chances. Some companies also take a long time to get back to you so be patient.

Get as much  
experience as  
you can to put on  
your CV &  
applications

This gives you a variety of good things to talk about during interviews and to catch an employer's attention. There are a number of different work experiences you can complete which already get you in the door with employers, for example I completed an online work experience programme with PwC in summer before Year 13. There are **also** lots of insight events and tasters you can **sign up to** attend to find more information on **career pathways**



### Useful websites:

Gov.uk  
Rate my apprenticeship  
Indeed  
UCAS  
Young professionals  
Amazing apprenticeships  
Specific company's website

### Accountancy:

- Deloitte
- PwC
- KPMG
- EY
- Mazars

### Investment:

- AJ Bell
- Standard Chartered
- Morgan Stanley
- JP Morgan
- Grant Thornton

# Thank you!

Please let me know if you have any questions 😊

If you ever want to contact me with any questions or advice my email is:  
mhrisby@gmail.com

### Actuarial/ pensions:

- Willis Tower Watson
- First Actuarial
- Barnett Waddingham

### Banking:

- HSBC
- Barclays
- Natwest
- Santander
- Lloyds

### Insurance:

- Aon
- Aviva
- Zurich
- Legal & General
- Marsh & McLennan