Our financial advisors, Gregor and Billy, visited the Orkney College last spring to give a presentation to students on what it is like to work in the financial industry. I wasn't able to attend due to work commitments, however my PAT (personal academic tutor), Mandy, suggested that I get in touch as she felt a position might be suitable for me.

I’d never considered a career in finance and my degree was heavily focused around marketing and social media, until I had about the position and researched career paths and what the position involves. I kept an open mind when I was researching Gregor Howitt Wealth Management and St. James's Place Wealth Management and I found myself really wanting to work for them. I’m incredibly drawn to certain company cultures and I was actually quite inspired by the level of charitable work that Gregor is involved in.

So, the application was by email. It was just a CV with a covering letter, which itself I spent and lot of time on. I also got my family members to review it, it’s really important to get a fresh set of eyes on there. I present my CV more like a newsletter, I was very conscious to design something that would grab a potential employers attention, rather than just been another one in the pile.

For the formal interview, there was the initial question based interview; various scenarios and how you would deal with them, the usual kind of thing you would expect, but there was also a practical test. Which I now realise, is very similar to what I carry out on a daily basis except it wasn't trained in it. I thought I’d messed up here because I really didn't know what I was doing but luckily it was just, a sort of, to benchmark for training requirements rather than an actual compatibility test.

I think the important thing to take from that is that if you have a test don't be afraid by it, even if you don't know what you're doing. I researched a lot and a couple of hours a night, every night, for the two or three weeks running up to it. I began with learning as much as I could about the industry, scoured the website for talking points, looked at example interview questions online for similar roles, I prepared answers for potential questions and I ensured that I had some form of evidence to back up every response that I had.

With a very diverse work experience, I had to frame my core skills in such a way to demonstrate how they could be applied in the role, most importantly, I put myself in the mindset I was the best person for the job so I could go in confident. You need to be able to believe that you're the best candidate if you're going to be able to convince potential employer that you are.

I think you should absolutely go for it. Particularly within the financial services sector, the skills and knowledge required are so particular, it’s highly unlikely that potential candidates would’ve learnt them at college or university. So you probably against the same people in the same mindset. Instead, use your experiences to justify why you're a good candidate, remember to draw from personal experiences, volunteering, sports, activity groups. Make sure your personality shows through at interview as well. Show a genuine interest. Prepare a of couple questions that will spark a conversation, you can only do this through doing lots of research. It seems like a lot of work but it really does show an employer that you are committed to that position.

Yeah, the Careers and Employability team helped me with aligning my skills with the job description. From preparing the initial contact email, to carrying out mock interviews to help me to prepare and provided good feedback to take on board before I actually went into interview. I was able to go into the interview with a good idea of what to expect and practice in responding to answers. I have a tendency to stutter a little bit when I'm nervous and this practice meant I was more familiar with what I was going to say. It also helped a lot with recognising how to portray relevant skills I could not evidence with direct experience.