

Hi, I'm Ejaz, I'm an incoming 2nd year student studying economics and I was lucky enough to secure 6 spring week / insight programme offers at places such as Barclays, Fidelity International, Rothschild & Co, Coutts, BP and Aviva.

One of the main things about skills, the important skills that I acquired in my first year that helped me acquire my internships and spring week offers was drawing upon the group projects I had done during first year. A lot of the interview questions are revolved around teamwork, working under pressure and problem solving.

The group projects I had done during first year allowed me to draw upon a variety of examples allowed me to apply it across different types of questions. Whether that is "tell me about a time where you had a problem working with a team member", or "tell me about a proud achievement you had" or "problems working virtually." All of those things were encapsulated in the group project I had done in first year, especially the teamwork, communication and problem solving were probably one of the most important skills I had acquired during first year.

In terms of the specific modules that helped me obtain all of these offers, there wasn't any specific module, but the modules such as the Personal Development Module, Macroeconomics etc which had group projects allowed me to use these examples as mentioned before, using the STAR technique. Foundations of Finance gave me that extra boost when applying for finance related spring weeks, as I had sector specific knowledge to draw upon, but again, it is more of a bonus rather than a necessity.

In terms of how I prepared for the interview process or application process in general, every application process almost has the same format, it was more about the execution of these / how in-depth you went. Number 1, before even applying anywhere, was making sure I had my CV ready, as the same CV can be used to apply almost anywhere. Number 2 was researching the company, so looking at their values, industry reports, news and anything that is relevant to the application. Number 3 was using this research to put into a cover letter or motivational questions which focus on why did you choose the company. Number 4 is practising psychometric tests, using websites such as JobTestPrep, and you can find company specific tests, which allows you to be ahead of the game. Number 5 is recording myself answering virtual interview questions, as a lot of companies use things such as HireVue, where you have to answer questions virtually. It was almost the same process every time, allowing me to execute on that, and be as prepared as possible.

In terms of activities that I engaged in outside of my degree, that helped me boost my application or make it stand out was, during the pandemic, I worked in an ed-tech start-up. This showed that I had my own entrepreneurial interest, which a lot of companies like, and provides an alternative environment, compared to the standard examples a lot of applicants use. Another thing was using my sixth form experience, and work experience I had done previously at places like BDO. Case study competitions I had gotten involved in provided tangible evidence of me being proactive, as well as winning awards.

In terms of the current advice I'd give yourself is definitely practising a lot of psychometric tests. A lot of applicants are actually cut off at this stage, and being prepared for it is the

main thing. I already mentioned places such as JobTestPrep and Assessment Day allow you to prepare in advance and you can see these certain specific providers they have, which gives you the extra boost and getting past that stage, you're almost at the finishing line. Secondly, is filming yourself doing interview questions using the STAR technique, as it is a bit awkward initially to record yourself, answer questions or speak to the camera. But doing practice allows you to avoid the stress when you actually do it under timed pressure. Finally, making sure to complete all the steps of the application process on time, as quite a few applications I had gone all the way, down to the final stage and even passed, but because I had done it so late, all of the offers had been given out and they didn't see my application. So, once you apply, make sure every single stage is completed almost instantly and allows you to maximise your chances of success.

I hope that you helped you out a bit, feel free to message me on LinkedIn, my name is Ejaz Uddin. Hopefully that helped!