

Robbie Crow

Robbie's story.....



Robbie giving keynote address at the launch of an international event, attended by HRH Princess Anne.

Robbie graduated from University of Stirling in June 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours (first class) in Marketing. He has travelled all over the world sailing, is a proficient public speaker and presenter and enjoys playing in pipe bands. He is an achiever who doesn't like the words "cant do".

Before leaving University Robbie held and continues to hold, volunteer roles with various charities, including a Company Director with Ocean Youth Trust Scotland (retired February 2016) and Chairman of MACS - Microphthalmia, Anophthalmia & Coloboma Support.

Although Robbie first got in touch with Professional Careers in October 2013 it wasn't until towards the end of 2014, that Robbie, along with others from our database of disabled graduates, (with the necessary knowledge and transferable skills), was sent information about a Marketing post being advertised by GCIL Equality Academy. After an intensive interview process, Robbie was offered a full time, salaried post as Marketing Trainee, starting January 2015. He was 23 years old.

Working within GCIL Equality Academy Robbie became aware of the Social Model of Disability and attended training sessions including Disability Etiquette and Disability Diversity courses. Supported by the Professional Careers Programme, Robbie made an application through DWP Access to Work programme for reasonable adjustments to his working environment. He was assessed and granted funding for a range of equipment, including Prodigy Duo 2 in 1 electronic magnifier,

SuperNova reader magnifier with training, and travel to and from work. In his current role he has also been awarded a grant for 24" monitors, a Hybrid laptop, JAWS, a Computer arm and a docking station.

In the same year as joining the academy, a traineeship with increased salary and wider opportunities arose as part of GCIL's partnership with Scottish Government and NHSScotland. Robbie was encouraged to apply. He was delighted to be offered a placement in NHS Western Isles as Marketing and Sales trainee, starting December 2015.

After only a few months in his new post Robbie was offered his ideal job with Jubilee Sailing Trust and GCIL Equality Academy and his placement are delighted. The in work experience and training invested in Robbie, his self-belief and ambition helped springboard him to a professional position within a matter of months.

Of his traineeship Robbie said....

"Before working at the Equality Academy I had worked in the sail training industry – which is akin to outdoor education but on large yachts. I had moved away from that industry because I realised I was never going to get a job 'on board' due to the governmental health & safety requirements imposed upon the industry. I was feeling generally low about my visual impairment because of the barriers in place.

"When I came to the Academy I didn't know a whole lot about the issues that disabled people faced, except from my own, and I didn't – in my opinion – think about my impairment in the 'right' way. Working at the Academy taught me about the social model of disability, among other things, and gave me a greater understanding of the issues that disabled people as a whole face.

"Now I'm back in the sail training industry as I have managed to combine the skills that the Academy taught me with my passion for youth development, social inclusion and the sea. I now work for the Jubilee Sailing Trust as an Engagement Officer. The JST operates the only two fully accessible ships in the world, Lord Nelson and Tenacious, and it's my job to raise the organisation's international profile. I'm working for the only sail trainers in the world who empower disabled people through the

use of Tall Ships and I'm loving it! Not only do I get to take people to sea but I also get to break down perceived barriers of ability and I get to bring disabled and non-disabled people together to partake in the adventure of a lifetime!

"I have no doubt that I wouldn't have got this job without the Academy's Professional Careers Programme. I'd recommend it to any disabled graduate."