

2008 ANAO Graduate Profiles

Simone

Assurance Audit Graduate 2008

As part of the ANAO's objective to provide Parliament with independent assurance about public sector financial management and reporting, I work as part of a team to conduct financial statement audits of various public sector entities. As part of these audits, our team examines various Commonwealth documents and information that the average Australian would never be able to access. For this reason, I was required to undertake a comprehensive security clearance.



During my graduate year I undertook a 2 month rotation into the Human Resources section where I reviewed the ANAO's workplace diversity program, policies and procedures. With minimal supervision and dependence, I was able to consult widely with a range of key stakeholders, research, collect and analyse data, generate recommendations, and produce a report, presentation, and revised Bullying and Harassment Policy and Workplace Diversity Program.

I enjoy the unique challenges that being an auditor at the ANAO present. The ANAO provide all Assurance audit staff with the opportunity to complete their CA or CPA, and the work that we do complements your further study very well. There is a great work/ life balance at the ANAO, where flex time, five weeks annual leave (plus Christmas shut down), a performance bonus scheme and study leave are all part of your employment conditions.

Mary

Assurance Audit Graduate 2008

Working at the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) has been anything but a typical 9 to 5 job, which is what I have loved about it.

During my graduate year in 2008, I was exposed to a lot of different and interesting work, which I thoroughly enjoyed. This included auditing (obviously) – on and off site, a lot of training relevant to my work and a short rotation in the Professional Services Branch (PSB) at the ANAO.

Although I had never had any auditing experience prior to commencing my employment at the ANAO, because of the level of support and training I received from my colleagues and seniors, I was able to quickly learn the basic concepts of auditing and apply that knowledge to my audit work. On my audit team, I was given appropriate roles and responsibilities like any other team member, while still being appropriately mentored and supervised throughout my work. The myths about graduates being strapped to a photocopier and/or a coffee machine certainly did not ring true for me at the ANAO.

The training that we as graduates received also helped immensely in learning more about auditing, the Australian Public Service and other topics relevant to our work. This training was interspersed with our audit work, which I found really helpful because it allowed me to apply my training to the audit work I was undertaking.

I undertook a 4-week rotation in PSB late in my graduate year, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The work I did in PSB allowed me to develop further technical knowledge on legislation surrounding accounting and auditing, and build on my writing skills and strategic thinking.

One thing that I found through working as a graduate at the ANAO is that the office really knows how to integrate the graduates into the organisation. My co-



workers and supervisors were always extremely patient in explaining auditing concepts and issues to me, while still expecting a certain level of performance from me. Even as a fresh-faced graduate, a high level of expectation was placed on me, which really helped in feeling responsibility and ownership for my work. Overall, I found my experience as an ANAO graduate to be a positive one, and an excellent first step in my career.

Nick

Assurance Audit Graduate 2008

From my first day as a financial statement graduate at the ANAO, I was treated as an integral member of my audit team. There is a genuine focus on learning and development at ANAO which includes formal audit, accounting and soft skills training and less formal on the job training. My audit team explained every task I did and the broader significance it had on the audit.



My first year at the ANAO gave me a great overview of the financial statement preparation process in the Commonwealth and some real auditing skills that I can apply to any audit client I work on. Although we mainly work on large government departments, there were also opportunities to work on medium and small sized government agencies, which was a great way to take on more responsibility.

I also had an opportunity to rotate for a few months to another part of the ANAO. I went to work with ANAO's internal accountants in our Corporate Management Branch. It was a great opportunity to do some hands on accounting work and deepened my understanding of the processes I had been looking at from an audit perspective. I also learnt a lot about the history and internal workings of the ANAO and was exposed to other working styles.

I have found the people here really easy to get along with and I have made lots of friends. At the end of the day, it's the people that make it worth coming to work!



Emma

Performance Audit Graduate 2008

When I started as a graduate performance auditor in 2008 it did not take long for me to realise that the ANAO's graduate program is gold class. It offers so much opportunity. Graduate performance analysts gain unique insights into the workings of the public service - which provides an incredible foundation for your career. For example, unlike other

agencies where you only gain knowledge of a particular program, the ANAO requires that you study the workings of a selected program for a length of time before moving onto the next – and that's not counting what you learn from other colleagues who are covering programs all across many agencies. The first audit I worked on analysed the administration of Commonwealth Government grants for government schools. When the report was tabled in Parliament, I could proudly say that four months into my first job out from uni I had helped the ANAO improve Commonwealth public administration.

ANAO graduates are important members of small audit teams. This means their work is challenging and their opinions are valued. Plus, they are given rare opportunities to be closely mentored by their audit manager and attend meetings with top level management both within the ANAO and in other government agencies.

As an organisation, the ANAO is full of friendly people. For starters, the graduate program provides an instantaneous friendship group and because the office is relatively small there is a feeling of community. In addition, grads are part of a larger network of graduates called the Social Network of Graduates which hosts, amongst other things, socials, dancing classes, sports events and trivia nights.

I look back on my graduate year with a huge smile. I could not have hoped for a better start to my career and my life here in Canberra.

Darren

Performance Audit Graduate 2008

For me, the best thing about working at the ANAO is researching and understanding issues that affect our lives as Australians. Whether the issue is in environment, education, health, taxation, defence, border security or anything else the government is involved in, our job is to take an in depth look at ways we



can help make it better. It is not uncommon for topics we cover to be in the media and I find it fascinating to have access to a deeper understanding of why things are the way they are and how it affects large and small sections of Australian society.

Because we work in small teams, graduates can make a real contribution from very early on. In my graduate year I worked on an audit looking at the environmental sustainability of Australian Government agencies, researching, analysing and then writing two chapters of the audit report and helping my team do the same. Because of the co-operative office culture, I often found myself helping out on other audits and broadening my knowledge of sometimes curious, and always interesting, aspects of what the Australian Government actually does.

Because the ANAO is a smaller organisation it is easier to talk to and get to know everyone around the office, from the other graduates right up to the Auditor General himself. A few times this year the graduates have organised a BBQ lunch for ourselves, and the end of month office drinks provide a relaxed and informal setting to get to know people. I particularly enjoyed the ski trip this year to Perisher and my team for the golf day rejoiced in coming second and are looking forward to giving first place a red hot go next year.

Overall, being a graduate at the ANAO has given me a great introduction to the public service and set me up with the skills and experience for an interesting and meaningful career.

Jennifer

Performance Audit Graduate 2008

I applied for the ANAO graduate program while completing university in Canada. As a Political Science major, I was interested in all aspects of government. The ANAO attracted me because of its role in holding the government to account and in improving public administration. (Okay, the five weeks annual leave may have also caught my eye!)



My experiences as a graduate were varied and interesting. I worked on two performance audits involving four government departments. From my first week at the ANAO, I was participating in meetings with senior public servants. My audit fieldwork included travel to Sydney and Brisbane as well as a weeklong trip to Bangkok, Thailand, where I interviewed staff and reviewed a government program at the Australian embassy.

I also spent three months on secondment at Parliament House with the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience, which involved conducting a public inquiry and writing a government report. I also attended the Swearing-in of the first female Governor-General, various parliamentary proceedings and a bicameralism conference.

I have met some great people at the ANAO, and the skills and experiences I have gained here will be of great use to me in my career.