

Crisis management on a global scale

What is your professional education and career background?

I completed a bachelor of international studies at the University of Sydney and a bachelor of laws (hons) at the University of Technology Sydney. While studying I volunteered at the Aboriginal Legal Service and after graduating I worked as a paralegal at the NSW Crown Solicitors Office. In 2013 I joined AusAID (recently integrated into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) and am currently placed in the Afghanistan Growth, Governance & Humanitarian Section. I am now studying a masters of public and international law at Melbourne Law School.

What do you enjoy most about your current role?

The many programs and the changing nature of the environment we work in means my work is always varied, interesting and challenging. I enjoy being surrounded by people driven by a passion to make a difference.

Describe a typical day?

A typical day for me primarily involves research, analysis and policy development for Australia's aid program in Afghanistan. I contribute to humanitarian crises responses as they arise and prepare ministerial correspondence, along with communicating with NGOs, partner governments and staff at post. I also draft funding agreements for our initiatives.

Why did you decide to study a graduate program?

I wanted to build a career in development and international law. My work provides some fantastic opportunities but I also knew I needed to support this with a Masters.

What deciding factors led you to apply for the Melbourne Law Masters program?

When looking at potential courses, I researched several universities both domestically and internationally. In the end, the choice was actually quite easy. The ability to study intensively meant I could fit study around living and working in Canberra. The masters gives you access to leading experts in the field who are able to draw on an incredible array of experiences. Lastly, I wanted a university that offered me a wide range of specialist subjects and student experiences.

What have been the highlights studying in the Melbourne Law Masters program?

The quality of the teaching has been incredible and the experience has been fantastic. I have also received great support from the Masters student centre. Despite living in Canberra I still feel part of the university community.

There is a wide variety of career opportunities, including an eight-week internship next year with the British Centre for International and Comparative Law. The teaching staff are leading practitioners in their field and are able to draw on legal experience to validate what they are teaching and often provide a unique first hand insight to what you are learning. I also found when it came to the research assignments, lecturers were extremely valuable in helping me shape a question that suited what I was academically interested in but also relevant to my work.

How did you find the work, study and life balance?

I've easily been able to manage work and study. The nature of the course design means I can select subjects around work priorities. I also find that blocking out five days is easier and more beneficial to my learning than taking a few hours out per week. I have made the most of the curricular and extracurricular resources offered and this definitely motivates my studies.



AMANDA POTTER IS WORKING IN A GRADUATE POSITION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE AND ADVISES TO FOLLOW YOUR PASSION WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR CAREER PATH.

How will your studies help you in your current role and in the future?

My studies have given me a greater understanding of the connections between my work and global governance. The knowledge I have gained will be essential to the wide variety of roles I will work on in the future.

What advice would you give to recent law graduates just starting out?

For me, it was more beneficial to chase work I found genuinely interesting and not to undertake work because I thought it was what a law graduate was supposed to do or purely because I thought it would help my career.

To apply for the 2014 Melbourne Law Masters program visit, www.law.unimelb.edu.au/masters. ■

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For more information and to view the 2014 program visit www.law.unimelb.edu.au/masters

Questions? Contact the Melbourne Law Masters team at law-masters@unimelb.edu.au