

# the edit

Explore | Decide | Implement | Thrive



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

Mr John Smith  
20 High Street  
Chaddesden  
Derby  
DE21 6YZ

Dear John

**Congratulations on securing your place at Queen's University**

It is with great pleasure that we are able to offer you a place at Queen's University Belfast (BA), after receiving the necessary Level 3 qualification.

We hope that you will enjoy your time with us, as we are a Russell Group university consistently ranked highly on University league tables. Owing to our excellent facilities and an exemplary teaching team, to help in your studies.

All of our students gain many experiences and skills during their time at Queen's. You are able to enjoy numerous programmes tailored for you, such as:

Our Fresher's Week is full of exciting events, and we invite you to join in. We work in conjunction with Queen's Student Union, to offer a range of activities. In particular, our Fresher's Fair is displayed for two days, and a range of skills clubs to sign up for. There are also booths about planning your future employment opportunities.

We wish you the very best in your studies, and hope you enjoy your time at Queen's.

Yours Sincerely,

*A. Lewis*



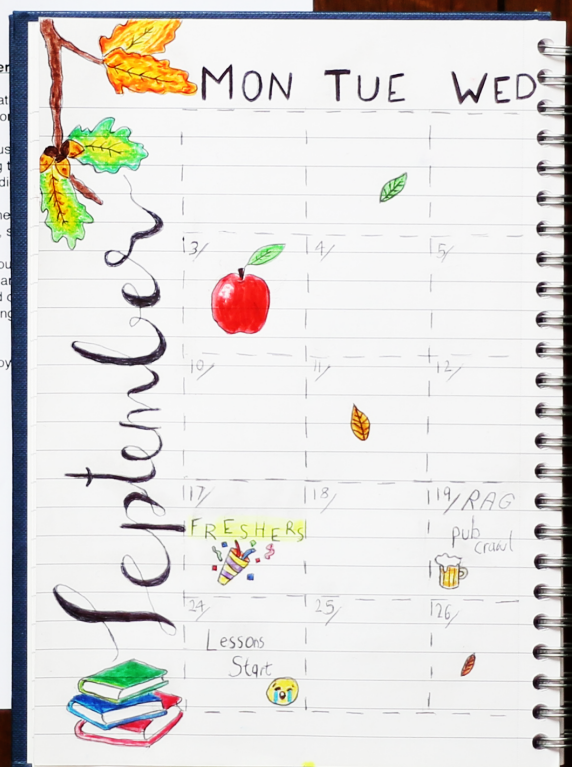
BRUSSELS STUDY TOUR

Queen's University  
University Road  
Belfast  
BT7 1NN  
Northern Ireland

16<sup>th</sup> August 2018



Fresher's Fair



# Don't Get Boxed In

Hello and welcome to a new year and a new issue of *The Edit*, Queen's essential careers magazine, written by and for students of the faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS). Our team is made up of current 2nd and 3rd year students, covering a wide range of degree paths - from Music, History and English, to Languages, Politics and Law.

We have **all the same questions about careers that you do**, and together we're going to find answers, so you can find confidence in preparing for the world of post-graduation employment.

Throughout the next four issues, we will be sharing employability tips, advice and success stories from former AHSS students who have made it, whilst keeping you up-to-date with employment opportunities and events across campus.

Here at *The Edit*, we are keen to explore the endless career possibilities available to AHSS graduates, breaking the stigma of AHSS students needing a PGCE to find a job. So, in this issue we are focusing on the theme "**Don't get boxed in**".

We've packed this edition with tips on how to **get the most out of your first weeks**, **an exclusive interview** with author, and former Queen's English Student, Bernie McGill and plenty more.

So, dive in a soak up what this issue has to offer!

*Amy Murray*

## The First Weeks: A Survival Guide

As late August turns to early Autumn, the reality of a new academic year beckons. But if this happens to be your first year at university, it can seem extremely daunting - with living away from home, preparing for classes and trying to find lecture halls. If the first few sentences of this article haven't scared you off, I plan to show you how to take advantage of your first semester and make sure you don't have to experience the stresses and struggles that many before you have.

One of the biggest errors I made in my first year; I got complacent. I still hadn't gotten over the euphoria of being accepted to Queen's and had forgot that I now needed to prove myself in a university setting. I found myself quickly behind on reading assignments and constantly having to catch up. It is important to remember that whenever you enter university, what happens before that point almost doesn't matter. Everyone starts on zero in your first semester.

But Uni is not all about the work. If your head is stuck in a book all day, you'll miss out on the university experience. Lucky for you, there is plenty on offer - particularly at the freshers fair where you can find information on of Queen's clubs and societies. The range is diverse - from sports clubs, such as rugby and rowing, to theatre and drama classes to charity and volunteering societies to even faith societies. Also, most courses have their own societies, so it may be worthwhile signing up to get to know other people on your course.

But above everything else I would urge you to enjoy your time at Queen's. It may not seem it right now, but it won't be long before you are preparing to enter the big, bad world of employment in your final year. Until then enjoy the unique experience university has to offer, you may not get an experience like it again!

*Dion Houston*



Emily Dickinson - Law

MEET THE TEAM







Michael McConway -  
History & Politics



Phoebe Craddock -  
History



Yasmin Parahoo -  
Politics, Philosophy &  
Economics

## MEET THE TEAM



Natasha Russell -  
English & Creative  
Writing



Lauren McShane -  
French & Spanish



Dion Houston -  
History & Politics

# AHSS Students Takin' Care of Business in Brussels

MyFuture, the online Queen's Careers Management Platform, offers students countless opportunities to apply for part-time jobs, internships, and Queen's Career Programmes. The *Brussels Workplace Study Tour*, organised by Tom Mervyn and Greta Campbell from Queen's Careers, Employability and Skills team, offered AHSS students the chance to spend a week in Brussels exploring internship and graduate opportunities.



A group photo at the EU Commission

Aoife Marken, MA in International Business Law and Student Assistant for Careers, Employability and Skills at the SGC Hub, and I were among the lucky 24 students selected from the competitive application pool to go. Back in June I sat down with Aoife to share and evaluate our experiences....

**How did you first hear about the Tour and what tips would you give to a student applying for similar experiences?**

I actually heard about the trip through my job in the Student Guidance Centre when I saw an upcoming workshop scheduled, and I went onto MyFuture to find out more details about the tour. I also attended the information sessions which explained what the study tour entails, which helped with my application.

**Which workplace visit on the trip did you enjoy the best and why?**

The Hume Brophy visit. In comparison to all the other organisations we visited, it felt the most down to earth, and the employees spoke very candidly about their work. On a more personal level, it gave me an insight into a field of work I'd never considered before and showed me how my degree and skill-set could be transferred and utilised in a lobbying organisation within the socio-political sphere, both in Europe and closer to home in the UK and Ireland.



Shane Lyster, Senior Executive for European Affairs at Ibec Europe, discussing the benefits of Erasmus study and multilingual proficiency when applying for internships and graduate opportunities with Ibec.

The QUB Language Centre offers language classes to study alongside your degree (registration for Semester one is from the 1<sup>st</sup> September until 4<sup>th</sup> October). Do you think it is an advantage to study a language when applying for internships/graduate opportunities in Brussels?

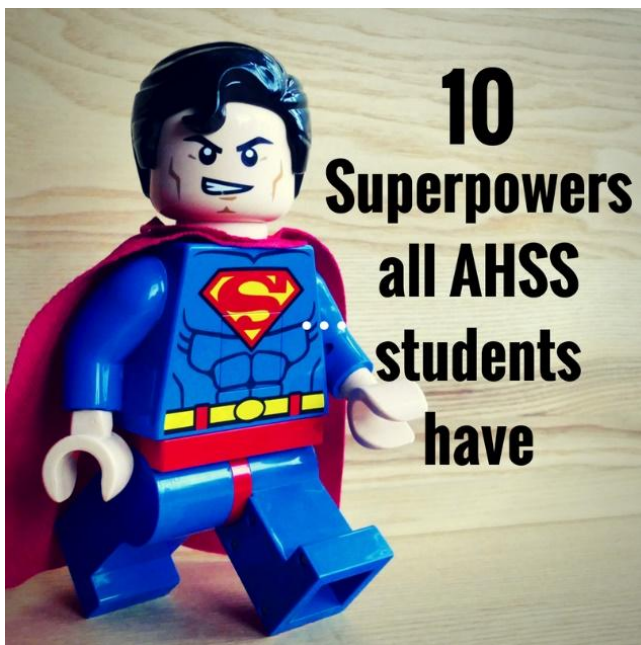
From what I found from the tour, you will have little to no success applying for internships and graduate jobs alike without at least some language proficiency. Most wanted at least A Level standard in one if not two languages other than English! I myself do not have any language skills beyond GCSE Spanish and so I did feel at a disadvantage every time it was mentioned. The only exception was Hume Brophy, a firm established in Dublin who didn't have additional language skills as a prerequisite.

To read the full version of the article visit [blogs.qub.ac.uk/theedit](https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/theedit)

Michael McConway

### GO GLOBAL WEEK

- Come along to the **Opportunities in Europe** session on *Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 12-1pm*.
- There is also an **International Fair** on *Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 12-3pm*. You can speak to the tour participants here!



So now you've discovered all these superpowers, what next?

Well, superpowers aren't worth much if they're invisible (cue corny joke about invisibility) which means you need to ensure employers **know** that you have them and, crucially, that you can **use** them. Claiming you have developed these skills through your degree is unfortunately only half the battle. You also need to **convince** your target that you can apply these skills to real-life situations (because, to many employers, university is a mythical place in a galaxy far, far away).

The easiest way to prove you are the real deal, is to have an arsenal of **examples** where you demonstrated a particular skill or skills that you can talk about concisely on a CV or application form and subsequently expand on in an interview.

It's always best to have a **variety of experiences** to talk about. By this I mean that although that one time you did 15-minute experimental dance to explain Plato's concept of epistemology, was a masterpiece your classmates will never forget, you should only attach two or three skills to this triumph before moving on.

We don't all have boundary-pushing dance presentations to cite in our job applications but not to worry, every time you make notes, write an essay or engage in discussion during a tutorial, you are **demonstrating the skills** above. So, every time you show one of the aforementioned special skills, you're sending out the bat-signal to future employers that you should be their next bat-related employee. (Well, perhaps not the bat part).

Emily Dickinson

You boldly research where **no** one has researched before...and sometimes where they have.

You manage the heck out of **your** time.

50-page article to read for tomorrow's tutorial? Ha! You've read it and extracted the key points quicker than you can say "CRAAAAM".

Your arguments are stronger than *Vibranium* – who needs a shield when you have a devastating intellectual riposte.

You retain more information than a Snapchat story after a night out.

You're more organised than Sheldon Cooper's sock drawer.

Your presentations are legendary (who else can work those PowerPoint backgrounds like you?)

You're so objective, you could argue Theresa May *can* dance and not break a sweat.

You're as flexible as Elastagirl – whether you're in a team or flying solo, there's no doubt you'll bring the skills to get the job done.

And, of course, creativity flows from your every orifice. You don't even know what the inside the box looks like.





# Master Your Degree

**Bernie McGill** is an Irish author known for her work in theatre- *The Weather Watches*, *The Haunting of Helena Blunden* and her novels *The Butterfly Cabinet* and *The Watch House*. Before establishing herself as a writer, Bernie studied English with Italian at Queen's and pursued her passion into a Masters in Irish Writing. Since then, she has been nominated for several awards, won the *Zoetrope: All-Story Short Fiction Award* in America and continues work as a Creative Writing Facilitator. Following her release of *The Watch House* and her participation in this year's Belfast Book Festival, we asked her for some advice on exercising your degree's full potential and the pros and cons of sticking around for Masters degree.

**Natasha:** One of the main issues *The Edit* tries to address is degree anxiety; am I doing the right subject for my career, what career do I want and is it difficult to get that dream job with my course?

**During your time at Queen's, did you know you wanted to be a writer?**

Bernie: I probably did know—always know—that I wanted to be a writer, but I probably wouldn't have confessed to it at that stage.

**Natasha:** And how much did your degree help with your decision?

Bernie: I didn't do very much writing when I was at Queen's, there wasn't the option to do a Creative Writing module when I was here. If there had been I certainly would have done that. I was very interested in writing, but if you don't see any writers around you who look like you and kind of come from where you come from, then it's very hard to imagine yourself in that role. And

I didn't see much evidence of any current women writer's around me when I went to Queen's. Quite a lot of the writers I studied were English and American, so, it wasn't really until I did my Masters at Queen's in Irish Writing – and that again wasn't a creative study, that I started to get to know a little bit more about the writers that came from here. After I left Queen's, I moved to Portstewart and I was working with a writer's group in Flowerfield Arts Centre and I did start to write a bit myself, then get a wee bit more confidence, but no I didn't really start to write until afterwards really.

**Natasha:** Yeah, a lot of writers probably throughout university degrees don't want to admit that they want to be a writer. It's one of those professions that people kind of roll their eyes at and go “aw, right” and just kind of give you the awkward thumbs up like let me know how that goes. So, it is difficult to admit to that sort of thing, so I understand that. And you had mentioned your

**Masters in Irish Writing.** Many arts, humanities and social sciences graduates are faced with the choice of either doing a Masters or going into the world of work, particularly teaching.

**What would be your pros and cons for going into a Masters?**

Bernie: Well, largely because I didn't want to leave Queen's, and I was looking to extend that for as long as possible. I was really interested in literature obviously and if there had been an MA in creative writing at that time I certainly would've opted for it, but I really enjoyed the MA in Irish Writing. I did consider doing a PHD but by that stage I'd already completed a four-year degree in English and I had a year abroad in Italy, so by the time I'd finished my Masters I'd been here six years. I sort of felt like it might be time to go and get a proper job.

*Natasha Russell*

Check out the full transcript of the interview at: [blogs.qub.ac.uk/theedit](https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/theedit)

# Separating Yourself From Your Degree



Since our school days, we were told, “Keep your options open”. Yet we face choices which only seem to narrow them through picking our GCSEs, A levels, our degree and so on. It is easy to feel that we have backed ourselves into a corner.

So how can you avoid feeling trapped in your degree? The traditional path that comes to mind would be **conversion courses**. These are generally Masters qualifications **specialising** in a profession. It is a sound investment if you want to break into these fields but do not have prior formal training. In some cases, they will even prepare for professional exams to get you up to speed.

**Graduate programmes** are another viable route. While intensive, they are often open to all graduates. The Civil Service Fast Stream and PwC are prime examples. Simply choose a route that you would like to explore, complete a series of assessments and an interview. You can receive more advice on each stage of selection through our Careers workshops. Besides this, you can attend job fairs, GoGlobal internships and programmes like the Global Leadership Programme. These will let you experience a **different workplace culture**, now invaluable in our global marketplace.

To prepare yourself for our expanding international job market you must adapt a **diverse skillset**. This should be easy; we know you're good at reading and researching, you are an AHSS student, after all. Besides the mass of books available in the library and second-hand, millions of Youtube tutorials exist for every professional query. Queen's provides language courses, study materials in the library and a free Tandem language exchange. To prepare for a **digital economy**, we can learn computer skills through the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence). Moreover, the career-savvy reader will be happy to know that both activities are accredited through the Queen's DegreePlus program.

**Volunteering** also accelerates your career growth. It is often easier to land than paid work and gives you industry-specific skills. You can start your own non-profit or get involved in VolunteerSU, Volunteer Now or another local charity. You can even volunteer online for researching, admin, translation, web design and writing.

Using the opportunities available at Queen's can help you land your dream job, no matter what your degree background is. Don't forget to keep in contact with alumni, mentors and Careers Consultants to discover how to take your next steps.

For more tips, read the full article at [blogs.qub.ac.uk/theedit](https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/theedit)

Lauren McShane

## International Student Employability Programme

DegreePlus accredited!



### Workshop 1 - Prepare

Tuesday 20th November (10am-12pm)

SGC Hub

Building a Global Mindset- Planning and Preparation for Job Search

### Workshop 2 - Apply

Tuesday 27th November (10am-12pm)

SGC Hub

CVs and Cover Letters

### Workshop 3 - Action

Tuesday 4th December (10am-12pm)

SGC Hub

Interview Preparation

On-the-Job Etiquette



# Is a Postgraduate Degree Right for You?

Sometimes we're told that getting an undergraduate degree is key to success in the world of work. But we rarely hear as much fuss about postgraduate degrees. If you're an undergraduate student, consider

what you're going to do once your degree is finished. If you plan to go into the world of work, great! If you're less certain, have a think about a postgraduate degree.

A postgraduate is great for someone who really loves the studying they've already done. You'll meet a lot of people that drop out of their courses because it's not for them, but a postgraduate is for those who love their course with a passion.

Do you leave lectures wanting to know more? Do you have specific questions and theories that you'd love to test? Postgraduate degrees are designed to scratch these itches through their research-intensive modules. A thesis, an expanded version of a dissertation, is your main tool to further your knowledge.

A thesis may sound scary, but really, it's an opportunity to jump to the forefront of research in your chosen field. You can finally dive straight into your specific area of interest. If you have an inquisitive mind, a question to ask, and a desire to answer it, you'll love a thesis.

But a postgraduate degree isn't just for those straight out of an



Undergraduate course. After university some graduates go into the world of work for a few years. If you're feeling the urge to return to university and make yourself more employable, a postgraduate degree could work for you as well.

Even if your area of study isn't related to where you wish to end up working, a postgraduate degree demonstrates desirable qualities a step above an undergraduate. Completing the degree requires tenacity, self-discipline, and a strong work ethic, all desirable attributes in any employee.

Nowadays student loans are available for postgraduate degrees as well. This means that if you're out of pocket, but still want to enhance yourself, you have some options.

If nothing else, think about it. Whether you're a 1st year undergraduate, or have left university years ago, a postgraduate should be on your radar. It's by no means mandatory for success in the world of work, but it's another path to get there.

*Alex Reid*



## SKILLS FOR SUCCESS: EMPLOYER-LED WORKSHOPS

Degree Plus Opportunity  
(Route B)

**Herbert Smith Freehills** –  
Develop Your Growth Mindset  
*Thu 27<sup>th</sup> Sep (12-2pm) @The Moot Court, School of Law*

**FinTrU** – Social Media for Job Success  
*Tue 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct (12-2pm) @SGC Hub*

**KPMG** – Commercial Success  
*Thu 4<sup>th</sup> Oct (1-3pm) @SGC Hub*

**EY** – Assessment Centre Success  
*Thu 11<sup>th</sup> Oct (12-2pm) @SGC Hub*

**Deloitte** – Ace Your Application  
*Mon 29<sup>th</sup> Oct (12-2pm) @SGC Hub*

**EY** – Know Your Strengths  
*Wed 7<sup>th</sup> Nov (12-2pm) @SGC Hub*

**PwC** – Being Interview Ready  
*Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Nov (2-4pm) @SGC Hub*

Book through  
**MyFuture> Events**

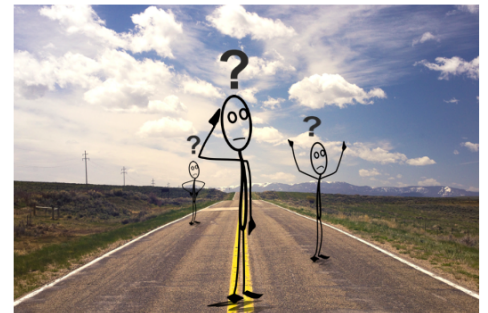
# Employment: An Unexpected Journey

Hearing the dreaded question “What are you going to do after Uni?” **honestly makes my stomach churn.** And I don’t think I would be alone in saying that. I’ve gotten to the stage where I have prepared a dummy answer just so I can avoid the ‘you – need – to – figure – out – what – you’re – going – to – do – with – your – life’ lecture. However, recently my eyes were opened up to something I had never really considered before – **the likelihood of an unpredictable employment journey.**

I have definitely been guilty of fantasising about that perfect job which magically appears straight after graduation, but in not-so-recent years, **the ideal of that one dream job has become increasingly more unrealistic** (although not totally impossible). You could argue that this is especially accurate for a large number of AHSS students who struggle to come up with clear post-graduation plans.

I think what makes the world of employment so intimidating is the seemingly infinite options, especially for AHSS students. **Contrary to popular belief, there is a world of opportunity outside of doing a PGCE.** And with teaching jobs becoming increasingly scarcer in Northern Ireland (in comparison to England, Scotland and Wales), I think it’s more important than ever that we explore these other options. With so much choice, it seems only right to move around and find the right fit. We should prepare ourselves for what could be an extensive journey with some unexpected destinations, even if you are the sort of person who has had a solid career plan from you were 5 years old.

As a music student, I expected to be told that my only options would be teaching or attempting to ‘make it’ in the seemingly impossible world of professional musicians. You can imagine my surprise when I found an incredible variety of career paths taken by students who had already graduated with my degree. Alongside those who chose to continue their studies with a PGCE, many others have found work in the media, on film sets, within charities and in recording studios. **It is refreshing and encouraging to see graduates in many varied careers.**



The hard truth is - your career path is not likely to be a straight line to success. We should be prepared to expect the unexpected and seize the opportunities that are given to us - no matter how unorthodox they may seem in relation to achieving our goals. The ‘big bad world of employment’ does not always allow for an easy and predictable course, so don’t wait for that ‘perfect’ job to find you, because it’s your responsibility to search for it. So, let’s strive to become more open-minded to what might be ahead, and begin to prepare for the road of employment after graduation.

*Amy Murray*

**Issue 9 Editors**  
Alex Reid, Amy Murray,  
Eimear Conway and Emily Dickinson

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