

I recently read the article by Janice Kirby-Smith on the "pathways" section of the TOPRA website entitled *Developing Careers for Regulatory Professionals*. It invited responses to the question posed below:

*** How can the education and training needs of such a diverse group of recruits to the regulatory profession be met?**

As a recent graduate now studying an MSc and hoping to go into a career in regulatory affairs upon finishing my studies towards the end of this year, I found the above question particularly relevant. It seems to me that Ms Kirby-Smith hit the nail on the head when she mentioned the apparent paradox surrounding work experience. Having spent many hours searching for graduate level jobs in regulatory affairs, it very quickly becomes apparent that there are very few around. Or if there are, they are extremely well hidden or simply not advertised. Those which do occasionally crop up often require work experience in a regulatory affairs environment. This I think is where the main issue lies. How does one go about securing relevant work experience in a regulatory affairs environment when one needs experience in order to secure such a position? Thus far despite having searched extensively, I have been unable to find any such opportunities.

This is in contrast to the USA, where graduate recruitment seems to be carried out in a very different way. There, it is common place for companies to offer internships to graduates enabling them to gain the required work experience before hiring them on a permanent basis. In the UK however, internships are both rare and hard to come by (unless as part of an undergraduate sandwich degree which are typically R&D focused). It is particularly hard to find even those opportunities as a graduate, as you realise that you are in fact ineligible for the various funding schemes that they use. I think if more of the big companies were encouraged to offer graduate training schemes, then more graduates would be able to enter the profession and what's more presumably they would receive better training, thus increasing the quality of regulatory output in the UK. As it stands only two companies offer such schemes: GSK, who actually haven't recruited for the scheme in the past 2 years and the other being Novo Nordisk, however the scheme is actually based in Copenhagen.

In conclusion, where as it is certainly true that not many graduates have heard about regulatory affairs (I know this because I am forced to explain what it is on a

regular basis) the information is out there for those who want to find it. I myself found out about the profession whilst I was still an undergraduate by looking on the popular careers advice website prospects. Somewhere that students are guided towards by University careers services however are given no particular advice on its useful functions. I have since been able to expand my knowledge using various other industry websites (including TOPRA's) and now that I am a student member, I intend to attend a 1 day basics in regulatory affairs course later in the year. In my opinion, the problem lies in the lack of obvious opportunities for graduates such as myself to gain the experience required.

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