

Article

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NAW2023 – Dominic Citrone

Management Accountant Dom joined Waterstons in 2018 and has worked his way up from Finance Assistant to where he is today through the support of the team and his apprenticeship studies.



Dominic Citrone

Management Accountant

Email dominic.citrone@waterstons.com

"I studied a Level 7 Accountancy and Taxation Professional apprenticeship which is moulded for those targeting any of the chartered accountant statuses (ACCA, CIMA, CTA or ICAEW).

"I chose CIMA which I started in 2019, completing all exams in 2021 and submitting all evidence in 2022 to achieve chartered CIMA status."

- **What made you want to study an apprenticeship over another type of course?**

I studied accounting and finance at Newcastle University and the apprenticeship was an 'add-on' which really appealed to me as an excellent route to get into the profession – allowing me to continue studying without having to go through all the exams again. This was an excellent option as it gave an opportunity to solidify my knowledge from university in the workplace and allow for CPD.

- **What attracted you to the course you studied?**

I've always had an interest in finance and business; growing up I was surrounded by family who had started or continued the legacy of small family-owned businesses. My intention was always to expand my knowledge on finance and business having studied similar topics in sixth form, university, then through my higher-level apprenticeship. Choosing CIMA as the accountancy body was an easy choice for me as it is geared more to accountants in industry by blending both finance and business.

- **How did Waterstons support your apprenticeship studies?**

I joined a small team when starting my apprenticeship – just three people including me. Having team members who had studied previously meant that I had great support and guidance throughout, but the Waterstons' flexible model and trusting values meant I could manage my time in a way that best suited me, both inside and outside of work.

- **What is the most important thing you've learned from your apprenticeship?**

Confidence. Studying can help build up foundational knowledge of topics but be very broad, doing an apprenticeship helped tie that knowledge to the workplace. As my apprenticeship progressed and my studies aligned with my output in the workplace, my confidence progressively grew.

- **What has your apprenticeship enabled you to do that you otherwise might not have been able to?**

Working alongside studying has given me the opportunity to gain the solid foundations of transactional and day-to-day operations of the business in line with the syllabus. This has compounded over the years and has transitioned into managing, leading, and influencing three finance team members. If I had chosen a different route to an apprenticeship, I feel I would've missed out on those foundational early years which have proved very valuable in my work today.

- **What are your future career plans?**

My motivation has always been driven from learning; it's impossible to know it all, but if I've learned something new I'm further forward than I was the day before. My career plan is to continue to push on with my CPD and CIMA provides a lot of additional training on its online platform to help keep knowledge fresh. Aside from focused learning, my plan is to continue learning from professionals who have different learning backgrounds and to influence with my expertise.

- **How does Waterstons support employee learning in general?**

It aligns with our general values. A key part of our DNA is that we want people to feel empowered to make decisions, so if people feel like they have a skills gap or find something interesting or innovative to add to their arsenal of knowledge, then it is encouraged. As a business that has grown a lot over the last couple of years, we are still understanding and trying to improve our ways of learning across the business. A few of these include an internal academy, knowledge sharing sessions and having an L&D coordinator within our people and culture team.

- **What would you say to anyone looking at studying an apprenticeship?**

No matter what level you are at, if you have a keen interest in something to definitely explore an apprenticeship. There are so many options available now, some niche, some broad, which can really help to yourself up on the path you want to follow. Having experienced both university and a higher-level apprenticeship, I know that both have moulded my career path and enhanced my knowledge, however the real-life skills gained in an apprenticeship can really accelerate your career.

"It is hard, it can be challenging to find the balance at times and sacrifices do have to be made. I think getting into the workplace early in your career by working and studying is really beneficial to gain knowledge from those who have been in the industry for many years."

Check out [Dom's profile](#) to find out more about him, or head to our [careers page](#) to learn more about the opportunities available and life at Waterstons.
