

Recruit ■ Train ■ Retain **Careers and professional development**

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Career progress

Two of the 2013 JIEB award winners offer tips about their study methods and talk about their career progression following their successes.



TIM ARMSTRONG, who won the IPA and ICAEW prizes, found routine and the support of his firm, PwC LLP, helped him study and revise in the run-up to his exams.

Tell me a little about what work you're doing at the moment.

Since taking the JIE, I've been working on a really wide variety of projects. This has covered the more 'traditional' restructuring projects such as trading insolvencies and lending reviews, but also running AMAs and advising companies on cash flow forecasting and working capital improvements.

I am really enjoying the variety of work that I can get involved with, and being JIE qualified is helping me to be a more rounded restructuring adviser.

How important is the JIE to your career progression?

The JIE is really important to my future career progression. I have wanted to take the exams for a little while and was very pleased to get the opportunity to do so. Although I'm keen to experience a variety of work, I am looking forward to the opportunity to take appointments in the future.



LEE GREEN passed his JIEB last year and became a licensed IP at Larking Gowen, where he runs the Norwich insolvency team. He won the Leonard Curtis prize and the R3 SPG prize.

What work are you doing at the moment?

I'm actively involved in approximately 100 live cases of varying types. Recent cases include the voluntary liquidation of a mobile platform services company and a compulsory liquidation involving the recovery of a six figure sum from a European lawyer operating out of Switzerland. I have also been heavily involved in overseeing compliance reviews, allowing me to use technical knowledge from the JIEB qualification.

How important is your JIE success to your career progression?

It has been instrumental. Shortly after passing I was promoted to manager within the firm and obtained a non appointment taking licence. I hope to start taking appointments next year, which will be a big step in my career progression. Ultimately the success may allow me to achieve my ambition of becoming a partner within the firm.

How did you manage your workload and work/life balance with studying? And what are you doing with the extra time you have now you're not committed to so much studying?

The exams were really tough as they are time pressured and such a wide range of topics could be covered. I was fortunate enough to be supported by my firm who gave me some time off for study in the lead up to the exams. Having said that, I started studying in April and tried to do one day of study each weekend, which I think put me in a reasonably good place by September time when revision courses began.

I'm definitely enjoying having my weekends back and, since taking the exams, I have married and bought a new house – both of which have helped to fill the time gap left by study!

How did you celebrate winning the IPA and ICAEW prizes?

Having left my twenties behind this year, the celebrations these days are a little more relaxed than when I was studying for ACA a number of years ago! The results were released in the afternoon and I took time off work to get my results at home. I was

obviously delighted to see I had passed and then found that I had won the prizes. Once I got over the shock of that, I went out for a couple of drinks with friends in Norwich to celebrate in the early evening and then headed out for a meal with my wife, Eleanor.

What tips do you have for current and future students?

My most productive day of revision was when my wife managed to lock me in our house while she went off to work in Ipswich! I'm not sure that this is a 'tip' or 'revision technique' per se, but certainly ensured I got through quite a few hours of practice papers!

I think it's really important to find a method of revision that works for you as an individual. It's definitely a marathon not a sprint in terms of the work over the course of up to a year for learning and revision and I think unless you settle into a routine, the workload will become unmanageable. For me, it was getting up early to get some revision done before the day really began and never finishing later than around 6pm, then making sure that I took one day off per weekend and not taking any revision with me on holiday!

The JIE papers are notoriously tough – how did you manage your workload and work/life balance with studying?

At the outset I found it very difficult to be motivated to study after a day at work. I found it easier to come into work an hour early, one or two days a week. I continued playing sport on Saturdays, but I would study for a few hours in the morning so that I could have a break later that night. Sunday would be similar and I usually saw family later in the evening.

What are you doing with the extra time you have now you're not committed to so much studying?

I made a point of not changing my lifestyle too much, but I'm now playing squash again and have also started freestyle skiing lessons at my local dry slope.

How did you celebrate winning the Leonard Curtis and R3 SPG prizes?

On the day of the results our whole team went out for food after work and celebrated with a few bottles of champagne. Then in June I attended the JIE awards ceremony at the British Medical Association to receive my certificate and prizes. It was a

prestigious event, followed by a drinks reception in the enclosed gardens. I stayed until the very end, before heading to a nearby bar with a few other attendees to watch the Netherlands vs Spain World Cup game – the atmosphere was great. With the prizes I bought myself a new iPad and I went away for a week in the sun with my partner.

What tips do you have for current and future students?

Learn to love the *Butterworths Insolvency Law Handbook*. Colour coded tabbing for the exam is essential, although you need to limit the amount of tabs or I doubt it's effective. Book time off before the exam. I was lucky to get four weeks' study leave, added to the time I spent on revision courses, plus some of my own holiday entitlement. In the month leading up to the exam I had a full schedule of what I would be studying each day, and found it beneficial to do a few days together of the same syllabus. I also scheduled in mock exams and stuck to doing them in exam conditions as best I could. Lastly, don't over study, and allow time to socialise – otherwise you'll resent study.

Joint Insolvency Examination – November 2014

Congratulations to all the successful candidates.

A

Addley M (8067) Cambridge
Andrew A (8155) High Peak

B

Ball C (8165) Manchester
Bishop G (8232) Caerphilly
Brunt H (8195) Wakefield
Buck A (8241) Newton Abbot
Buckley G (8152) Oldham

C

Carmichael J (8015) Glasgow
Carrington L (8246) Nottingham
Cavanagh N (8153) Altrincham
Clark P (8197) Leeds
Coomber M (8032) London
Cray E (8146) Birmingham
Cusack N (8223) Fareham

D

D'cunha V (8243) Berkhamsted
Dixon S (8208) York
Dobson H (8501) Southampton
Donohoe M (8093) London

E

Edkins D (8118) Rochester
Edwards J (8192) Leeds

F

Fairhead H (8097) London
Farrell A (8500) Paisley
Ferguson C (8236) Newcastle Upon Tyne
Ford L (8235) Newcastle Upon Tyne
Fowler R (8023) Craigavon

G

Gearing J (8049) Grays
George W (8136) Presteigne
Gilks A.M (8193) Leeds

H

Haines R (8115) Reading
Hann M (8071) St Albans
Harper E (8139) Lichfield
Haynes A (8046) Hornchurch
Hichens J (8190) Leeds
Holborow M (8072) Tonbridge
Holloway N (8068) London

JIEB 2014 prize winners

Insolvency Practitioners Association Prize for First Place

Russell Simpson

PricewaterhouseCoopers Prize for Second Place

Rachel Lai

Leonard Curtis Prize for Third Place

Tania Kallis

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants' Prize (awarded to the ACCA member with the highest mark)

Rachel Lai

ICAEW Prize (awarded to the ICAEW member with the highest mark)

Luke Wiseman

Insolvency Lawyers' Association Prize (awarded to the lawyer with the highest mark)

Helen Fairhead

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland Prize (awarded to the candidate in the Scottish papers with the

highest and sufficiently meritorious marks)

Scott Adams

BPP Prize (awarded to the candidate with the highest mark in the Personal paper)

Russell Simpson

R3 Smaller Practices Group Prize (awarded to the candidate with the highest mark from a smaller practice)

Tania Kallis

Holt M (8174) Todmorden
Holton N (8248) Northampton
Hooper C (8079) Orpington
Howarth G (8207) Leeds
Howarth J.L (8161) Sale
Hughes R (8191) Leeds

J

Jagger S (8078) London
John A (8103) London

K

Kallis T (8083) London
Knott C (8173) Stoke-On-Trent
Kwei C (8234) Cardiff

L

Lai R (8228) Cardiff
Latimer G (8019) Belfast
Lennon M (8157) Manchester
Lewis M (8199) Leeds
Livingstone A (8008) Glasgow
Lloyd C (8113) London
Lockwood K (8180) Manchester
Lysandrou P (8075) Wembley

M

Maddalena D (8213) Bristol
Mantle S (8202) Leeds
Mason K (8218) Bideford
Mitchell E (8237) Newcastle Upon Tyne

N

Nelson I (8163) Manchester
Ng C (8172) Oldham

O

O'Keefe C.N (8086) London

P

Parrott B (8062) London
Piacquadio M (8135) Milton Keynes
Pinder R (8196) Mansfield
Pinteaun D (8035) Kingston Upon Thames

R

Raggett D (8002) Edinburgh
Rea S (8042) Guernsey
Reeds M (8221) Poole
Robbins J (8162) Nelson
Roden J (8129) Walsall

S

Savage H (8131) Birmingham
Sharma R (8239) South Shields
Simpson R (8073) London
Sims J (8074) London
Skey C (8502) Knutsford
Steele S (8109) Brighton
Stone A (8170) Manchester
Stratten N (8056) Epsom

Swan K (8137) Birmingham

T

Thompson E (8116) Barnet
Tilley G (8145) Rugby
Todman S (8085) Morden

W

Waldron B (8148) Derby
Wallis D (8060) London
Wentworth L (8215) Tunbridge Wells
Wiseman L (8090) London
Wright O (8169) Manchester

Y

Young R.A (8098) Kent

Z

Zia J (8082) London

Analysis of November 2014 results

Papers sat	Papers passed				
	3	2	1	0	Total
3	52	19	8	24	103
2	–	25	22	23	70
1	–	–	32	44	76
Grand total	52	44	62	91	249

How was it for you?

Stephen Allinson reviews his first year as chair of the Joint Insolvency Examination Board.

Once again, I am writing this article as candidates await the results of the 2014 examination. All involved in the JIEB take a very active interest in the results and we have a wealth of information available to us, so we can judge how we as a board have done. We take great pride in the examination process and for the students, passing the JIEB is a real achievement.

It certainly has been a baptism of fire for my first year, as I don't think the profession has ever been in the headlines as much as it has in the last 12 months. Clearly, it is important that the JIEB keeps abreast of those developments and changes, as we must ensure that any examination reflects the current state of the market.

It has been a real privilege, however, to develop the board against this background and I believe I can truly say that we are 'fit for purpose' as we move forward.

I want to express my thanks to all my fellow board members. We give our time voluntarily and without any remuneration and often deal with matters 'out of hours' due to the pressures of our day job. Similarly, our whole team of examiners, moderators and markers spend many hours ensuring that the examination runs smoothly. This year we have had a new senior moderator, Steve Treharne, and he has slotted in excellently to the role (he even told me recently that he had enjoyed his first year!).

Reviewing the way JIEB operates

Last year in writing for *RECOVERY* magazine, I talked about responding to the changes in our professional world. In particular, the partial licensing debate was raging and as we know, these will now be brought into play. JIEB has been very much part of the debate (although as we exist through a memorandum of understanding with the RPBs we must hear their views), and I am predicting that this subject will be on my radar in the coming year. As always, we will seek to ensure the examination process responds to the needs of the profession and so I am seeking to move the position forward with representatives of The Insolvency Service at the moment.

The timing of the new Rules (seemingly in 2016) could present an interesting challenge too, with a November examination traditionally not formally examining changes post-April in that year! I have decided to cross that bridge when it comes, so watch this space.

The examination must be more than just a theoretical test of insolvency knowledge and we are always aware as a



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team of people responsible for it, that we want to seek out, through our questions, those candidates who have a real feel for the practice of insolvency in the professional world.

Much has been said about a separate paper on ethics, and as the examination process evolves with the partial licence position, inevitably there will be changes and possibly new papers. However, ethical issues can, and are, examined in all papers and that will always be the case, regardless of the format of separate papers moving forward.

So, how have we reacted to the ongoing developments in the insolvency world? I hope we have, and will, embrace the changes. The examination must always be an accurate test of the up-to-date position in the insolvency and restructuring world we work in.

Last year I mentioned the assessment of future IPs' soft skills and received some interesting feedback on that area. Soft skills are becoming more and more important so it is a debate that I hope continues.

A few general points to finish

First, I and my team, always welcome feedback (positive and negative) on the examinations as set and the overall process. Please feel free to contact me at the email address at the end of this article.

Second, I should announce now, that it is highly likely that the cost of sitting the examinations will have to rise this year to reflect the ongoing and extra costs we are incurring, particularly through our move to e-marking. This year was the first year that it took place for one paper, but we intend to roll that out across the board for the forthcoming examinations.

Third, it is a matter of some disappointment to me that the numbers entering the JIEB are reducing year on year. Is this indicative of how firms are looking at training and career development issues for their staff or is there a bigger picture to consider? I believe passionately in the power and advantages of professional education and I will continue to champion this examination and its processes. Surely as a profession we need to see increasing numbers of young professionals want to qualify as IPs?

Finally, and on a more positive note, I look forward to meeting and greeting those who have passed our examinations at the ever-popular graduation ceremony in June this year. It will be my pleasure to raise a glass with you, for achieving success in the Joint Insolvency Examination is a significant professional honour and one that indeed should be celebrated. ■



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To give feedback on the JIEB examinations, please contact: steve@allinsonlaw.com