Nick, what made you choose to study at Henley Business School, and why did you select this programme in particular?

'This wasn’t really what I thought I originally wanted to do, but I was attracted by the fact that the programme has a good balance between practice and theory, and most other courses don’t include a specialist Investment Banking element.

'I knew of Henley Business School’s reputation, and had seen the ICMA Centre, which is spoken of very highly, so Reading was an easy choice – it’s a modern environment with great technology and facilities.

'I also spoke to a few people about the postgraduate and executive education opportunities at Henley, and saw from the FT rankings that Henley offers a world-class MBA. So, when I came to the open day and saw how rounded the course was – incorporating areas all the way from accountancy to econometrics and portfolio management– I felt it was absolutely the right choice for me.'

And what have been the highlights for you so far?

'Just the sheer range of opportunities. I’ve met so many professionals who are working or have worked in the industry, and they bring a totally different perspective. We’ve had visits from the Big 4 firms and former bankers – people who have had a real impact on the industry.

'We’ve also had the chance to use some amazing software that opens your eyes to how things really work in the industry.'

You’re doing an internship this summer - how did that come about?

'Yes, I’m working with BDO* this summer, and if all goes well, I’d hope to be offered a graduate role with them in the future. And it’ll be a chance to find out more about what I do and don’t want to do and where my skills and knowledge best lie.

'The careers team at Henley were so helpful and gave me great support in preparing for the internship. The advice they gave me was invaluable, and the help they gave me with my application and developing my interview skills was really useful; I don’t think I’d have secured it without them.'

And what advice would you give to anyone thinking of enrolling on the programme?

'Approach it with an open mind, and take the opportunities it presents. Every person you meet can be a stepping stone to the next important contact.

'The staff here are really committed to getting the best out of you, so you can be confident that you’ll have made the right decision by coming here. So be studious, and embrace it!'
Pearl, what made you select this programme, and why did you choose to study at the Henley Business School in particular?
'I was looking for a course that covered both finance and investment banking, but also for a business school where I could be sure that I’d get a good level of support. Some universities just seemed so big and impersonal and you’re just another statistic for them. I liked the look and feel of the campus at Reading, and was especially impressed by Henley Business School’s triple accreditation, which not many universities have.'

And what have been the highlights for you so far?
'I really like the different modules, and I’ve had lots of advice from the tutors and lecturers. But for me, the biggest highlight was taking part in trading simulations at the ICMA Centre. Wow! It was one of the most amazing experiences. I was very excited to be able to trade on my own after just two lectures.
'I really appreciate the help and support I’ve had from the tutors. They really go out of their way to help all the students and make life easier for us.
The knowledge of the people has also been very impressive, and the social life – there are so many societies and clubs. I’ve already joined the yoga club and the Bible society, as well as the finance society. The nightlife is great, too!

What are the main things you’ve learned so far?
'I’ve got a much clearer idea of how investment actually happens. The processes behind loans, bonds and banking. And I now understand how and why the financial crisis came about.'

So what advice would you give to anyone thinking of enrolling on the programme?
‘Definitely come! It’s such a beautiful campus. There’s so much green space, so when you need some space to yourself, you can go to the lake or into the gardens, and it helps you to think more clearly.
‘You will get very good support from the people at the Business School and from the other students around you. The people are very interesting, and it’s a very supportive environment. And it’s a whole new world. It’s fascinating and exciting. I love it!’

Pearl Ntshambiwa
1st year

“ It’s a whole new world. It’s fascinating and exciting. I love it!”

“ The biggest highlight was taking part in trading simulations at the ICMA Centre. Wow!”
Ellis Murley
Final year student on the benefits of the BSc Finance and Investment Banking

Ellis, how did you come to choose the programme?

‘Actually, I always wanted to be an orchestral clarinettist, and I’d played at the BBC Proms and Buckingham Palace, so I assumed my career would be in music, but it soon dawned on me that the pay was relatively low, and the hours long. I was getting A’s in my business exams and I knew of Henley Business School’s reputation, so I thought I’d explore the courses on offer. ‘I looked at Business and Management, and when I came to the open day, I knew it was the perfect place for me. I did go to look at other universities, but none of them lived up to Reading. ‘After the first year, although I was enjoying the economics and accounting elements of the course, I wasn’t completely sold on it. But after seeing the ICMA Centre and speaking to my tutor, I was able to transfer onto Finance and Investment Banking and I’ve never looked back.’

What have been the highlights for you so far?

‘I’ve particularly enjoyed learning about asset management, and generally, I really like the practical elements of the course. ‘Working on the trading simulations has been very enjoyable, and we’ve been constructing our own equity-only portfolio which has involved analysing companies and assessing the potential impact of macro events such as Brexit, Trump and the Greek debt crisis, then weighting our securities to optimise the portfolio. It’s been a fantastic, insightful project, bringing together economics, accounting and world news and forming our own opinions. ‘I have been accepted at Santander Global Banking & Markets for a summer internship, they seemed very impressed with my portfolio. If I do well there, I should get a full-time job there once I graduate. And I have to say that the support I got from Henley Careers on mock interviews and psychometric tests, preparing me for meeting Santander, was absolutely fantastic.’

So what is it about Reading that you particularly like?

‘I love the fact that even though it’s only 30 minutes on the train to London, the campus is so green, with lakes and the River Thames so close.’

And what advice would you give to anyone thinking of enrolling on the programme?

‘Look at all the options, and choose the one that feels right for you. Don’t be afraid to speak to people, and ask questions. And get involved, right from the start. ‘Freshers’ week is a great time to meet new people. Embrace it and you’ll have a great time.’
Victor Ferrat
3rd year student
on the benefits of
the BSc Finance and
Investment Banking
programme

‘the careers advisors
from the ICMA Centre’ have
been really supportive.’

‘We have very good
access to information
from Bloomberg and Reuters
too, and the facilities are
first class.’

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Victor, how did you choose this course, and why did you elect
to study at the University of Reading?

I’ve always been interested in finance and I think it’s a very important element in all
aspects of political and economic decision-making. I am good at maths and fascinated
by problem-solving, so for me, it’s a very interesting subject and a great way to show
what I can do.

I went to an international school back home in Mauritius and came here in 2014
specifically to attend this programme, having never been to the UK before, so it was
a big decision for me! But I had done a lot of research about the University and this
particular course, so I knew exactly what to expect and that this was the course for me.
There are only a few good universities that offer this course and the campus at Reading
is better than any of the others, so it was a very easy choice.

You’re now in your second year; is this year different from the
first year?

Only because of the amount of group work in the second year. In the first year, we were
mainly working individually, but I’m a team player, so it’s good to gain the experience
of working as part of a group.

And do you plan to do a placement?

There is an expectation that students will do an internship between the second and
third years, so I am already looking for a suitable opportunity, and the careers advisers
from the ICMA Centre* have been really supportive. If that goes well, I hope to follow the
graduate programme at a private wealth management firm, perhaps in London, Zurich,
Hong Kong or another financial hub, once I’ve completed my degree.

What advice would you offer then to anyone thinking of taking
this course at Reading?

If you are focused on finance and investment, this course is definitely for you. There’s
a high degree of practical work, and there is a great community of people on the
campus. I’ve found it easy to get around, and the location – which is very close to
London – means that we have lots of excellent guest speakers, and we can easily get
to lots of very interesting events.

We have very good access to information from Bloomberg and Reuters too, and the
facilities are first class.

As a foreign student myself, my message to other foreign students would be: don’t
be scared! Enjoy the experience. It can only be a good thing to experience new things
and learn more about yourself and other people.

*International Capital Markets Association – part of the
Henley Business School, which provides business learning
at the University of Reading