

# Diary of a student...



## Beata Klejszta MCIPPDip

*Payroll manager,  
Be Payroll Limited*

### Tell us a little about your background and life so far?

Originally from Poland, I moved to the UK in 2004 to work for a language school in Dorset. Since 2007 I headed their finance department and started to be involved more in payroll.

The introduction of automatic enrolment in 2013 was one of the biggest challenges in my payroll career, but it helped me realise payroll was what I wanted to do full-time. In 2016, I started to work for a busy payroll bureau, where I quickly progressed to payroll projects leader.

Outside of work, I enjoy hiking and travelling with my husband.

### What can you tell us about your career and qualifications?

I completed a political studies and political marketing degree in Poland, but my career in the UK has led me in a different direction – finance and payroll. I have always had an interest in numbers, so this was the path for me.

Progression within the finance team, a few CIPP courses I attended, and the fact I wanted to focus on payroll increased my interest in gaining a recognised payroll qualification.

I completed the Foundation Degree in Payroll Management in 2016. During year 3, I changed jobs and joined a payroll bureau, and that was an eye-opener and another confirmation that payroll was what I loved and wanted to do. I headed the direct clients' team and liaised with partners on multiple projects, migrations, and audits.

This year I decided to start a business processing payroll for small- and medium-size enterprises and supporting accountancy practices.

### Why did you choose to study the CIPP's Foundation Degree?

I wanted to progress my career in payroll, and many employers were looking for a CIPP or equivalent qualification. As I was already aware of the CIPP through a pension course in 2013, I chose the Foundation Degree and in 2014 enrolled via the RPL (recognition of prior learning) route and completed years 2 and 3.

Choosing to study for a recognised qualification shows commitment to payroll and investment in personal and professional development. It proves you are hardworking, driven and have passion.

### How did you find the qualification?

The academic writing part was challenging, as I wrote my last academic paper over ten years ago in another language. Still, once the course progressed, I gained more confidence.

My tutor, Polly Sinclair, was fantastic and always ready to help, even outside of the tutorial sessions. The course itself is very well structured.

### What advice would you give to others who are thinking about studying to improve their career?

Just go for it, and you will not regret it. If you think it will be challenging to find the time, you are right, but I am sure you will succeed with good organisational skills. It was the best investment I have made in my professional and personal development. It has opened many doors for me.

While studying, take advantage of the tutor group and network with fellow students. The timetable and deadlines are given in advance, which helps planning, which is vital. Make sure you attend the

module review days and tutorials. The sessions are beneficial, as you will have a chance to practise what you have learnt and brainstorm ideas with others.

### How did you manage the work-life balance and your study? Do you have any tips for others in the same position?

Working full-time, I found it challenging at times. I have moved to a new house while studying year 2 and changed jobs while finishing year 3. However, good organisational skills and prioritising tasks helped me achieve my goals. I could use what I learned straight away at my new workplace and contribute to making their processes more efficient.

### What would you say is the most important thing you learnt?

The processes the company should have in place to avoid losing important data or safeguarding against a security breach. Apart from that, the course was just the start of my lifelong learning journey and continuous personal and professional development.

CIPP membership makes it possible with annual updates, specialist courses and access to experts in their advisory team.

### What did you gain from this qualification – both in terms of skills and also career progression?

I am more confident in my role and could progress my career in the direction that I have planned. The qualification was just the start of my learning journey as it introduced me to the CIPP networking events, advisory, webinars and courses that constantly enhance my knowledge of payroll.

In terms of skills, the qualification enhanced my research abilities and the way I adapt to changing environments, which proved to be particularly helpful in the challenging time of the pandemic, furlough, and remote working. My written and verbal communication skills were also strengthened. ■