This MSc is a fantastic course that will provide you with the theory and practical skills for a career in the marine environmental realm. Unlike most of my fellow MEMs, I didn’t have a marine biology or marine science background. I graduated in 2012 with a BA in Geography and Business Management before working in offshore finance and travelling over a two year period. I had a lot of basic biology and marine knowledge to catch up on, but by putting the extra hours in, the course was definitely possible...and worth it!

There were a variety of core and optional modules. All of which will broaden your skill set, and mind! Whilst the statistics and GIS modules were challenging, I highly recommend them as they will help you in your future careers or studies.

I also highly recommend future MEMs to take the Maldives field course module. It will improve your fish and coral identification, survey techniques and diving skills (whilst having lectures in a beautiful tropical location!). Plus, it gives you hands-on experience and transferable skills for future employment. The field-trip module is a pricey option, but save and set money aside as it is a top highlight of the MSc!

The summer placement was a fantastic opportunity to acquire practical experience, work experience and research skills. I completed my placement at home in Jersey, Channel Islands and worked with the government. I undertook a Marine Spatial Planning project and for one part of it, I used ArcGIS to create maps of human activity use in Jersey waters to understand how the environment is used, and to aid marine managers. Throw yourself into your placement and make the most of it; network, volunteer and work hard. You never know, you may be offered a job at the end!

The new Environment Department building is almost complete, which I’m sure will be a great asset to future students by having study space, lecture theatres and staff all under one roof. The MEM lecturers are fab and you’ll also have a pastoral supervisor to help you along the way. The MSc is demanding, but so worth it! You will be challenged and there’s lots of work, but make the most of the year, network, read around and join in during class discussions.

This course was a fundamental stepping-stone which enabled me to leave a finance career and follow my passion in marine management and conservation. I am about to start a temporary post in Jersey as a Water Resource Management and Regulation Officer, specialising in marine & coastal science. Hopefully this will be the start of an exciting career.