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MULTI STORY EDINBURGH

Congratulations

Congratulations! You did it!

This is your moment. However you choose to mark this milestone, enjoy it.

Tomorrow is another day. And whatever you feel when you wake up, whether that’s a burning motivation to start the next chapter, a need to pause and take stock, a desire to catch up on lost sleep and lapsed relationships, or a mixture of everything, you’re not alone.

We wanted to share some of the stories, experiences and wisdom of the people who walked in your shoes not so long ago. We hope they will inspire you, reassure you and remind you that there is no ‘right’ path after a graduation, just the one you carve out for yourself - either accidentally or with clear purpose - at your own pace.

To help you to make your next steps, we’ve put together some sources of information and support. You’ll find these at the back of this publication. We are still here for you, whether you need help with career planning, continuing your learning, or simply staying in touch.

Good luck. And remember you are part of Edinburgh’s story.

Contents

Doors

Poem by Catherine Wilson Garry

Second act

Louisa and her leap of faith

What does transformation look like?

The Multi Story Edinburgh podcast revisited

Opposites attract

A lawyer and a doctor share their personal stories of transformation and discovery.

The opportunities that are around you

Doors from across the campus

Sharing things

A conversation between two members of the University of Edinburgh community

The sounds of friendship

Songs that remind graduates of their university friends

Making your next steps

Support and resources from the Careers Service and your university alumni community

Acknowledgements**06-07****08-15****16-31****32-37****38-43****44-51****52-53****54-61****62**

doors

doors

Not all doors are as humble as wood. They can be made with ink and paper; late nights and stronger coffee; a password

and a webcam; another hand holding yours in the place it is meant to be. A door can be a book: a tree finding itself again. A door can be a phone

call, or a party or a really good cry. It's surprising what one day can unlock. At night, joy will creep its fingers under the threshold if you let it.

Those you love will post you letters from the other side of the world. What you find when you open it is yours.

So here's to your doors, whether they started with a new tab or a moving box, it was your hands that opened them.

Catherine Wilson Garry
Poet and Writer

Second act

French graduate
Louisa and her leap
of faith



*Performance photography from
'Living Doll' by Olivia Spencer.*

Most of us have had that fleeting moment when we wished we could reinvent ourselves - or at least an aspect of our life. The 'what if' question is one of life's great irritants and the uncertainty brought about by the last two years has seen more and more people question their own choices and personal values.

2010 French graduate Louisa Robinson is one such person, and she has decided to answer the 'what if' by embarking on a new career that puts her firmly in the spotlight.

"I'll probably be one of the only performers you'll talk to who values security over freedom and creativity."

Louisa could well be right, and the Durham native knows that her career trajectory has so far been guided by a need to feel safe, but with incrementally daring changes over the years. Now a London resident of four years, last year she decided to take the metaphorical dive into her dream career as a full-time actor, but only after a decade working in higher education administration.

"We all know ourselves," she says. "But I think that sometimes you don't get to that point of wisdom and acceptance until you're in your 30s."

So who is the real Louisa that she has been getting to know in the past year?

"I'm 35 now and I can say 'okay, this is who I am'. I can change this about myself but not change that because it's part of my identity. This is who I relate to being, and

I've realised that it's based on personal and professional values. But as a creative and someone trying to make a living, I'm very conflicted and these values often overlap."

“Freedom and creativity are in my top five values but security is number one.”

Louisa can also now call herself a professional actor with numerous theatre and screen performances under her belt, and a diligent London agent to boot.

“She’s made me realise that my strong Durham accent is my unique selling point”, Louisa says with a laugh. “In fact it’s one of the reasons she put me on her books.”

Louisa has started her own business too, which offers virtual admin support to a variety of companies, and hopes that the overlap in personal and professional values can finally complement each other.

“Freedom and creativity are in my top five values but security is number one. And with that in mind I’m trying to process map - and I know that sounds very much like corporate speak and not creative at all - but I’m trying to waterproof a fully creative life that also ticks the boxes of security.”

For Louisa, this includes financial security as well as the emotional reassurance of steady work and a settled home life. She’s not



Headshot by Nick James photography.

naïve, however, to the challenges life as a performer could bring to maintaining these values, but it’s a mindset she’s determined to stick to.

So just how did a pragmatic French graduate working in office admin come to be pursuing an acting career in London?

“It’s been a slow process over years,” says Louisa. “I’ve wanted to act since I was 11 and studied for a term at Stagecoach Performing Arts. I was brought up by my grandparents and they could only afford for me to go for that one term but I absolutely loved it. But performing arts wasn’t really a thing at my regular school, and there was a gap of five or six years before I did any kind of acting again.”

By that point Louisa had been accepted to study French at the University of Edinburgh, and arrived as an eager fresher hoping to pursue her love of drama as an extra-curricular endeavour.

“But my confidence let me down”, she says. “One of my biggest regrets even to this day was not having the confidence to join the Bedlam Theatre Society. I saw it as a little bit elitist and intimidating, and felt like I wouldn’t fit in socially.”

“I did, however, join Les Escogriffes [the University’s French theatre society] in my second year and performed in their annual play, but ultimately I didn’t do as much acting as I would have liked at Edinburgh.”

“90% of actors are out of work, which is a depressingly high statistic, but on the other hand in order to succeed I needed to make myself available for any work I was offered.”

After graduating Louisa returned to Durham. Her grandparents had both become ill and she moved back to live with and care for them. She also began working at a nearby university, and any ambitions to resume acting were placed firmly on the back burner.

“It comes back to security”, she says. “Looking back, that is something that has affected every decision I’ve made. If I’d had money and security then maybe I could have gone out and tried to achieve my goals and dreams five years earlier - and plenty of people have told me that that’s what I should have done - but I felt compelled to go home and be a bit more secure and save money, to do those sensible things. I don’t have any regrets from the perspective that I was able to spend those five years with my grandparents, caring for them, and when they passed away it felt like a natural progression in my life. I said to myself ‘okay, where’s my life headed now? I can go to London if I want; I can forge my own path.’”

And that’s exactly what she did. Although initially continuing her career in higher education, Louisa used her first few years as a Londoner to take local acting courses, and accepted roles that she could fit in around her job.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020, she continued working from home, all the time saving money and devising a plan for how she could achieve the creative yet secure career she had always wanted.

“I just said to myself ‘take a leap of faith’. 90% of actors are out of work, which is a depressingly high statistic, but on the other hand in order to succeed I needed to make myself available for any work I was offered.”

“Before, I was faced with dilemma after dilemma: is this opportunity good enough to make me change my life? Is this one good enough to let me give up my full time job? So during the pandemic I saved enough money to do just that. I quit my role in higher education and began to concentrate on my acting career full time, while setting up the business in my spare time.”

The business, Libra VA Services, is the brainchild of Louisa and fellow graduate Bree Ngwena (pictured with Louisa). The pair have been friends since meeting at the University of Edinburgh in 2006, and it was on the suggestion of Bree’s husband that they decided to harness their joint experience in administration and the third sector to establish Libra VA Services last



year. The work involves supporting small businesses with day-to-day admin, as well as offering services like finance support, marketing, events organisation, and project management. Clients range from universities to estate agents, and it offers a flexibility that allows Louisa to operate the business in tandem with her acting career.

“I feel like a bit of a chameleon”, she says. “I’ve got my business and my acting - the pragmatic and the creative. My next goal is to completely combine the two.”

Louisa plans to do this by adding more creative sector businesses to the books with a view to offering a service solely for them.

“Over the next 12 to 18 months I want to align my creative interests with my business. My passion is leading on creative projects so I’m asking myself if I can combine my project management skills with my career and performance background, and work in that environment for my business. It’ll be a long process but that’s my plan.”

Louisa is also using her French degree by tutoring pupils in a local secondary school, and believes this has also awakened her to the kind of values driven life she wants to lead:

“I’m becoming more and more connected to what’s important”, she says. “I really want to start giving back. I’m currently working in a school - a really great school - full of kids from all ethnic minorities across South

London, and it’s a very, very challenging environment. Working there over the last six months has really opened my eyes to how unfair and unjust our education and social systems are to the point that I’m coming home tearful everyday.”

Louisa is visibly emotional as she talks about the teenagers she teaches and says she feels a drive to help them have the same opportunities that she did:

“Even though I was affected by the class divide, being northern and working class, and not really having anyone in my orbit who had left Durham or gone to university, it was still easier for me than the kids I teach: I’m white, went to good state school, and I knew how to get the system on my side in terms of getting grants and loans.

“And now I’m working in a school where, yes there are aspirational pupils who want to go to Russell Group universities, but they say to me, ‘Miss, what’s the point? Even if I do well in my exams, what are the chances of me as a black person or somebody coming from a Muslim background getting in?’. That’s heart-breaking to hear, so I want to support these kids and make a difference to the trajectory of their lives, their goals, and their choices.”

“For me, acting is very much about understanding the human connection.”



And how does Louisa factor acting into this desire to give back to society?

“I think it all comes down to human interaction”, she says. “Empathy. I’m deeply interested in human psychology and why people behave and interact with each other the way they do. For me acting is very much about understanding the human connection - why we behave in certain ways; why we have chemistry with some people but not with others.”

“If I can connect with people, whether that be an audience in a theatre, a single person watching me on TV at home, or teenagers in an inner-city school, and if I can then make them think and feel something about themselves and others, well - and I know it sounds like a cliché - then I feel like I’m making a difference. To me that’s satisfying my personal and professional values, and to me that’s fulfilment.”

Understand yourself

The Careers Service can show you how to identify and understand your strengths, skills and values, and factor them into your planning.

What do you want?

Reflect on your current and previous experience.

What do you have to offer?

Assess your strengths and skills.

Changing your plans

Find out how to adapt your plan if the unexpected comes up.

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I don't know if I'm good at it, but I'm doing it. I'm making it work. But I'm still very new at it. I think the pace that I'm going at is very fast, and I'm learning really fast - despite everything. And I'm just grateful that I was given this chance to begin with because it is a really great opportunity.

Angkrit Khemaphiratana (Jay), 2020 Psychology
Multi Story Edinburgh podcast
Season 1, episode 13

In October 2020 we started to talk to our graduating students. Over the next seven months we listened to the stories of 32 graduates and published them as part of the *Multi Story Edinburgh* podcast. As 2021 played out we kept listening and we kept sharing.

Each snapshot is about a specific time and place but it is more than that. It is about how we manage uncertainty and change. How we draw on each other and how we transform.

To better understand this transformation we returned to seven of our graduates from 2020 and 2021, and asked them to listen to themselves and reflect on what happened next.

Make it happen

The Careers Service can help you prepare for all types, methods and stages of the recruitment process.

From writing CVs, cover letters and applications, to practising selection tests and preparing for interviews or assessment centres.

Find our more
[ed.ac.uk/careers/
graduates/make-it-
happen](https://ed.ac.uk/careers/graduates/make-it-happen)



What does transformation look like?

The Multi Story Edinburgh podcast revisited

If you want to tell us your story in the next season of the podcast, contact us at alumni@ed.ac.uk and you talk, we'll listen.



Last year I was a perma-shattered mum to two young children who had just completed an online MSc in Carbon Management from North Yorkshire.

Now I appreciate how much my life has transformed. I have just been offered a dream role at the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute (ECCI) after a year of volunteering, job applications, moments of self-doubt and plenty of self-care.

I remained steadfast in my pursuit of finding a job that feels like the ideal fit but being out of paid employment for 12-months has admittedly had its challenges. My struggle with confidence - or a lack of it – sometimes left me internally framing my situation as a ‘failing’. However, continuing to chat openly about my issues with wonderful friends, including ones I have made from the MSc programme, has boosted my levels of optimism through the journey.

Putting the negative self-talk firmly to one side, I realise my skillset has expanded over the period. Since last September, I have worked in a voluntary capacity for a local climate action group.

My primary focus has been managing a Walk to School scheme, which over 10,000 children from 57 local schools have participated in over the course of the 2021-2022 academic year.

It has been particularly wonderful to witness first-hand the impact of this initiative, as school children – including my own – have taken steps to protect

their planet with enormous amounts of enthusiasm.

I have also gone from cutting out sleep just to fit every task into the day, to understanding the importance of making time for self-care, even if this just entails switching off in front of some rubbish tv!

Additionally, I trained for and participated in the Edinburgh Half Marathon in combination with practising Pilates regularly, boosting my mental and physical health no-end.

Finally, we have decided to take the plunge and move north of the border. I completed my undergraduate degree on-campus at the University a painfully long time ago now, but Edinburgh has always retained a piece of my heart. Luckily, the rest of the family adore the city as much as I do so we are currently in the process of purchasing our first ever home there. Excited by the prospect of being back in this beautiful area and feeling fully-charged energy-wise, I am ready and eager to help tackle the climate emergency as part of the team at the ECCI.



Listen to Sarah's episode of the podcast from 2021.

Last year I feel like I was someone desperately trying to survive so I didn't have to leave Edinburgh.

After two months of unemployment, I more or less took the first job offered to me, which fortunately turned out to be incredibly easy-going and stress-free. Once I knew that I could sustain myself, I feel like I have just slowly been getting to grips with the fact that I am in full control of my life now, and discovering what I'd like to fill it with.

Looking back at my episode, I seemed to have some anxiety about the world being shut off to me. While it may sound naive, visiting London with my friends for the first time definitely helped ease that a bit. The size of it is just immense, even compared to Edinburgh, let alone the tiny fishing town I come from in the North East of Scotland, so just spending a few days there and chatting with radio industry professionals helped ease some anxiety I had about my place in the world, even if I don't really intend to live there or work in that industry anymore. I think I discovered that my interest in radio was driven by a rather narrow desire to have everyone fall in love with the same music I love, and the more shows I presented the more frustrated I became that the shows did not match the energy I desired at all.

While last year I was still scrambling to become an adult with no vision of the future, now I feel more self-assured and the fog is a bit clearer. Assisting my best friend with her wedding preparations has really

made me think about what I want from my own life, and my friendships across Edinburgh and my hometown have done wonders to reassure me that I am worthy of the love I'd like to receive.

I'm never going to be the kind of person to formulate a detailed ten-year plan for my life, but I feel confident in my ability to steer myself in the right direction, even if I might live with no hands on the wheel sometimes.



Listen to Michael's episode of the podcast from 2021.



Michael



Last year, I decided to take a gap year and apply for PhD programmes worldwide. This year, I am proud to announce that I have been admitted to the economics PhD programme at Boston College.

Thinking back, it's been such a difficult journey for me. With a full-time job and very short time to prepare my application materials, I pushed myself very hard. Whenever I'm not teaching, I stay at the main library to prepare for GRE [Graduate Record Examinations] and TOEFL [Test of English as a Foreign Language] tests. Walking back home alone from the library after midnight is my unique memory for this year. I feel lucky that Edinburgh is such a safe city.

By working as a tutor, I stand on the other side of the classroom for the first time. I still remember my legs were shaking a bit and my voice was trembling at my very first class. It took all my courage to greet my students and introduce myself.

Gradually, I changed from extremely nervous and scared, to slightly nervous, until at the very end not nervous at all. This journey gives me the confidence to talk in front of many strangers, and the courage to be the ice breaker. Most importantly, I am no longer confused about my future. This job made me realise that working in academia suits me perfectly.

Another thing this job has taught me was responsibility. Being late was quite a normal thing when I was a student. But being late as a teacher is completely

different. For the first time in my life, I understand the heaviness of responsibility and the feeling of being depended on.

I didn't get a distinction in my degree. It hit me very badly. I remember I did nothing that night. I just lay down on my bed thinking what to do next. Instead of giving up, I still chose to do the applications. Now I am very grateful for this decision. In the end, everything just worked out.

Nearly all my friends went back to China after finishing their studies. It wasn't easy, since I've always had friends to keep me company. Because of this, I picked up my reading hobby. My annual goal is to finish 100 books this year. I'm grateful for this year since no one can always have company. Now I'm perfectly fine with doing all sorts of things alone.

Of all these changes, one thing remains the same. The longer I live in Edinburgh, the more I love it. In the future, I hope I can come back here either to work or travel. Looking forward, I feel confident and excited about my new life in Boston.



Listen to Yao's episode of the podcast from 2021.

Since graduating from Edinburgh in 2020, I decided to return to the University and complete a Masters in Theology in History.

My interest in the subject and the world-class reputation of the School of Divinity meant it was the only place I wanted to do my Masters. I knew I wanted to pursue teaching but I also wanted to spend an extra year continuing to learn and expand my subject knowledge.

After completing the Masters, I applied to Glasgow University for a PGDE [Professional Graduate Diploma in Education] in Religious Education. This was always the plan, as I've wanted to become a teacher since I was in high school myself.

This has probably been one of the most challenging years of my life with plenty highs and lows. However, I've been incredibly fortunate to have a very supportive family and good friends who provide a sympathetic ear and a lot of patience.

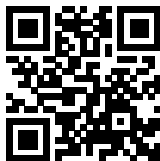
I recently found out that I'll be completing my probation year at my old high school and it feels so surreal that everything's come full circle! I feel confident that I can draw on the rich wealth of knowledge I gained from my time at Edinburgh and apply it to the classroom.

I included clips and references from lectures I'd attended, and even showed a documentary made by the Head of School, Professor Helen Bond. I think the pupils were surprised when I said she taught me

at university after seeing her on the TV. They didn't believe I was telling the truth!

I hope my passion for the subject will shine through and help motivate the pupils and allow them to see the worth and value of the subject.

I will always look back fondly on my time at Edinburgh. I learned so much and really found a love of learning there, which I believe will be lifelong. I would love to one day return to pursue further studies.



Listen to Marc's episode of the podcast from 2020.





Shirley

For the past two years since I graduated with my MSc in Equine Science, I have been working as an independent equine nutritionist.

Along with that work, I advise local feed producers on how to develop better feed for horses in Israel, as affordable options for those who cannot afford imported feeds.

I have been learning a lot from each person and horse I meet, and I can see a gradual change in the mindset of the equestrian community here. People are becoming more open to learning, accepting, and changing - for better horse welfare. There is still endless work to be done, but I feel so grateful to be able to contribute, and help animals here in Israel.

One of my main goals after graduating was to continue towards a PhD. However, life is what happens when we are busy making plans. Due to a difficult year of extensive physical and mental rehabilitation following a severe car accident I had to change my path but I still believe that challenges help us build new paths that can make us stronger.

In my journey of recovery, dealing with disability and PTSD, I have found new powers within me:

I have discovered my love of teaching, and have become an Advance HE Associate Fellow, hoping to develop my teaching skills and academic career. I started teaching more, especially remotely, and started working with the Dutch equine

education platform - ANIVADO, on new online courses in equine nutrition, in English and Hebrew.

I have realised how much animal behaviour as well as human behaviour both take a tremendous part in my work. Thus, I have recently rejoined the university as a student in the Clinical Animal Behaviour postgraduate program, and am planning to complete the courses needed towards certification as a Clinical Animal Behaviourist. It's really good to be back with the University of Edinburgh online student community.

And lately, I have gained a new understanding of my own neurodivergent mind. This gives me a new perspective on how we need to adapt many stressful modern environments to accommodate different needs, for both humans and animals as individuals of a large and varied spectrum. Instead of trying aimlessly to make individuals fit what others might see as typical.

I feel blessed to have the opportunity to continue my journey in the seeking of knowledge and improving animal welfare and hope to continue on this path toward research, innovation and change.



Listen to Shirley's episode of the podcast from 2020.

Over the last two years I have worked mainly at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley rotating in a wide variety of placements.

I initially spent eight months in general medicine which entailed working on various hospital wards from COVID wards, to rheumatology, to cardiology, with the occasional brief stints in various acute medical receiving wards.

After a spell in general surgery, I got a chance to venture out into the community via my general practice placement at the beginning of foundation year two. This was a surprisingly refreshing and insightful look into medicine from a different lens, particularly how GPs adapted to the pandemic. I have subsequently decided to pursue GP training in the future. I returned to the coalface working in the emergency department over winter which was challenging and at times gruelling shift work but ultimately very stimulating and I was left feeling more competent and experienced.

I am currently back in general medicine having now completed my foundation programme portfolio so no more deadlines or pressure. I am officially unemployed as of August and I couldn't be happier.

I finally get a chance to jump off the treadmill and have a break for the first time since graduating early and being immediately thrust into working amid a global pandemic.

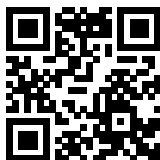
Looking back, there was a lot of uncertainty surrounding that time with regards to how things would unfold and the outlook seemed quite dark.

There are many things I could lament about missing out on but I actually would rather focus on the positives.

It was tough but I really enjoyed working alongside some incredible people. My immediate circle of family and friends got through things relatively unscathed and in good health.

As for me, overall I feel more relaxed and self assured about the future and my ability to handle what comes my way.

I can see a way forward that's more aligned with my goals and values - whether that be personal or with regards to work and my career.



Listen to Elson's episode of the podcast from 2020.





Molly

I left the receptionist job that I mention in the podcast for a higher position in the same company. It felt more like a “career job”, whatever that was.

I met some really lovely people, other graduates from other universities. This wasn't exactly a “graduate job” but a lot of graduates fitted the role.

Having a degree opens more doors, but this felt a bit dead end. I was hoping to be determined and move up the company and become a proper business woman at the time. I basically ended up answering phones to financial advisers with a litany of questions about investments, pensions, etc. It was very dry compared to what I was used to. It started off well but I felt the life being sucked out of me and it was very draining.

I think after graduation the focus for me was finding a job, a career. I worked all the way through university and had never really had a break. By the end of January, I had a few offers in my field and a lot of people interested in me as a candidate. I didn't think I could jump straight into a career. I didn't feel like being a “jobsworth” and only saving up for a rainy day that might not even arrive in the first place. People around me could see I was unhappy, so mid-February I put in my notice.

I started saving when I moved out of my parents' home in second year and decided to put that money to good use. Right now I'm in Spain. I've just been to my first music festival, and I've been travelling Europe for

the past seven weeks with my partner. It's been fantastic. I feel happy and full of life. People tell me I look so much happier.

I definitely feel more confident in my abilities as a human person than I did before and I'm very grateful to finally be having a break from everything and to just enjoy life a little. The world is so big, there are so many opportunities everywhere, although my trip is nearing its end. Not only will I have the memories I have made, but my scope of what I want to do feels a lot wider. I feel more inspired.

There's no one way to do things. I'm still young (as people keep telling me) so there's no need to rush into anything. It's ok to take it easy sometimes.



Listen to Molly's episode of the podcast from 2021.

Opposites attract

A lawyer and a doctor share their personal stories of transformation and discovery.



Karla
Associate Lawyer
LLM in Medical Law and Ethics by online learning, 2018

I have a lot of family history of medical complications. My brother, who died two years ago, was cognitively and physically disabled in many ways. My whole life I had helped to take care of him, and I had always been very interested in his care.

I really wanted to figure out a way to make the world the best I could for my brother, but how could I do that if I didn't want to be a doctor or a nurse or an occupational therapist?

I don't think I realised my direction until I was doing my undergrad at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. I did a joint degree in Law and Health Administration and alongside my studies, I also worked for the Autism Society in Cape Breton, working in group homes.

My brother had been in foster care then. But he aged out of the children's aid programme and ended up going into this institution. He was cared for, but it just wasn't the way we would have wanted.

So, my parents and I got him into a small group home, very similar to the homes I was working in with the Autism Society. At the meetings we had, I stepped in and asked a lot of questions. I kind of knew the right things to say, what was going on, what we needed to fix. That experience really pushed me to learn a lot more and figure out how I could be a good advocate for my brother. Over the next few years, I really strove to master that world of health law, ethics, and medical law.

“I really wanted to figure out a way to make the world the best I could for my brother, but how could I do that if I didn't want to be a doctor or a nurse or an occupational therapist?”

The Edinburgh programme seemed like a very natural progression for me to build on the things I had already learned but it was more of an intense “deep dive”.

I really appreciated the more international focus of the programme because it was expanding beyond what I had learned in law school, which obviously had a very Canadian-Nova Scotia focus. It was the perfect fit for me, combining my previous degrees and my own personal experience and interests into one programme.

“Doing the programme really gave me that confidence boost I needed to think ‘Yes, I can do this. I can pursue my dreams.’”

I actually had my first son near the end of the programme, so it was really nice to be able to find pockets of time to log into forums and contribute what I had to say to the discussions, but I didn't feel pressured to be there at a certain time.

Being completely virtual, not being on campus at all, it's really hard to feel connected to the school. People are in completely different life stages. A lot of people have full time jobs, people have families, they're all over the world. But there's a benefit to that too because you can bring so much more experience.



I did come for the graduation and the night before, there was a mixer for all the students. And that was just fantastic.

The whole experience gave me a much-needed confidence boost. I'd had so many things in life that had crushed me. I didn't have the self-confidence. So, I started this programme, and I really wasn't sure where it would lead me, but I thrived.

I reached out to a woman who had started her own firm. I first met her when I was going to law school. I said, "We met a couple years ago. I don't know if you remember me, but I would really love to come work with you." And she said yes.

Doing the programme really gave me that confidence boost I needed to think, "Yes, I can do this. I can pursue my dreams." Doing this degree, getting back into law, and having a positive experience were so huge for me.

The programme affirmed my values. I think I've always had a really strong sense of the importance of inclusion for people with different ability levels, but also the acknowledgement that not everyone can be included in the same way.

My brother died before he was 30 but had he reached an older age, he could have had dementia coupled with a cognitive impairment. And how do you marry those things, really focusing on that individual? How can our society set up appropriate institutions and programmes?

The focus on the individual throughout the programme did become a huge thing for me, and that's something I bring into my practice. I try not to treat two clients the same because everybody's experience is so unique.



Erin

Trained doctor, currently Patient Safety and Risk Advisor
LLM in Medical Law and Ethics by online learning, 2018

I always wanted to help people since I was about four years old and at some point, I announced to my parents, "I'm going to be a doctor and a scientist!" That was basically how it started. I kind of ran with it and always tied that to who I am.

I'm originally from the Bahamas but I went to medical school in China. China was my Everest. I was like, "If I can get my medical degree and finish it in Mandarin, there's nothing I wouldn't be able to do if I put my mind to it."

"I always wanted to help people since I was about four years old, and at some point, I announced to my parents 'I'm going to be a doctor and a scientist!'"

I did my medical training in Singapore and while I was there, I went to a medical legal forum. I met people who worked at the Medical Protection Society, including a couple of doctors with law degrees. I found that interesting. But it was the talk about the shift from informed consent to shared decision making that got me thinking. How many aspects of the law don't we see? How

many of them intersect with medicine? Since then, the dream was to become a medicolegal adviser with the Medical Protection Society.

In my clinical work, one of the things that interested me a lot was the intersectionality between the frontline and those supporting and making decisions from behind the scenes. Medical legal issues and things like consent, negligence or public health inequities, those things got into my psyche quite a bit over the years.

I was also very keen to look into legislation and regulations around international medical graduates. As an international medical graduate myself, I have had a very long torturous road getting into practice. And I've always kind of wondered what the implications are from a legal standpoint. Is it a perceived legal implication, or is there a real legal implication? It plays into human rights, it plays into public health law, it plays into health equity. I actually did my dissertation on that.

I was looking for a programme that would be able to cater to my interests and would be appreciative of the fact that I was not just a student. I was also working, and I was going to have to split my time.

I started the Edinburgh programme in Singapore. There were a lot of days where I had to figure out my work schedule, because I worked full time. I did feel part of Edinburgh, even from so far away. I enjoyed the interactions virtually with my cohort, as well as the advisors and the coordinators. It was amazing. I was actually kind of heartbroken that I didn't get to go to graduation, because I wanted to go and see my advisor. She was amazing and I loved bouncing ideas off her.

“I did feel part of Edinburgh, even from so far away.”

I guess it's different for different people, though. The experience has a lot to do with what's going on in your life. While on the Edinburgh programme, I had chosen to relocate to Canada, and that had a time crunch on it. I was dealing with all of that while dealing with my dissertation and I also had some family issues going on at that time. It was intense but I felt supported, even though I only had that virtual connection with the University.

The most enjoyable part were the discussions. I'm not the most confrontational person but I enjoyed arguing! Having to come up with arguments during the discussions, it helped me use a different part of my brain. The programme got me out of my comfort zone. I'm now more able to look at all aspects of both sides of the argument and come to a conclusion.



Currently I'm a Patient Safety and Risk Advisor for an agency in Ontario, looking at risk management and patient safety, with a little bit of medical law and ethical decision making in there as well. Hopefully in the next 5 to 10 years, I will be licenced in Canada as a medical doctor, and hopefully will be working as a physician advisor with the Canadian Medical Protection Association, which is a similar concept to the Medical Protection Society in the UK.

Keeping an open mind about different things, or different cultures, has always been there, but the degree actually pushed me further. Sometimes when I feel like I might be becoming a little more narrow or myopic in my thought process, I now think, "Okay, what am I not seeing here?"

“Keeping an open mind about different things, or different cultures, has always been there, but the degree actually pushed me further.”

It's helped me to galvanise the vision that I have for myself, as someone who feels that their purpose is to help people. The programme has kind of underlined that.

In my job, I'm now looking at things that I do on a daily basis and go, "Okay, is this correct? Is the right way to go?" I can see things as a doctor, as a lawyer and from a client's perspective.

Karla and Erin completed the Medical Law and Ethics (Online Learning) LLM and graduated in 2018.

To find out more about Postgraduate online learning at the University of Edinburgh visit:



[ed.ac.uk/studying/online-learning/postgraduate](https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/online-learning/postgraduate)

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“I love the way that the opportunities that are around you - they come from the people you’re with and the people you want to be with.”

Nikki Moran, Senior Lecturer in Music, Edinburgh College of Art
Sharing things podcast
Season 3, episode 8



Where are our doors?

Tell us where on campus you would find our eight portals to knowledge, opportunity and transformation, and we'll send you some University of Edinburgh merchandise if you correctly identify them all.

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Sharing things

Sharing things is a podcast, a conversation between two members of the University of Edinburgh community. It starts with an object. What happens next is sometimes funny, sometimes moving, but always unexpected.

Here's when PhD student Nuam Hatzaw met graduate Olivia Sweeney. Hosted by law student Ayanda Ngobeni.

*Illustration by
Philomena Marmion*

AYANDA: We're gonna start by introducing ourselves. Nuam, would you like to go first, then Olivia?

NUAM: I'm a third year PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. I'm studying World Christianity at the School of Divinity.

OLIVIA: I graduated from Edinburgh in 2017 with a Master's in Chemical Engineering, so I spent five years studying with the School of Engineering. Now, I work as a sustainable waste consultant in Bristol, for a company called Resource Futures.

I also have a side gig. I'm a Black and Green Ambassador. So that's a National Lottery funded project that aims to lead, connect and celebrate diverse community action for the environment. It's about exploring that



intersection of racial and climate justice. I have a radio show, and I have a project that's all about clean air.

AYANDA: I was quite interested in something you said Olivia, about intersectionality. What does that mean to you?

OLIVIA: So much of how we do things in the West and in academia is like, 'this is this, that is that, this is this'. Intersectionality is just about exploring all those blurred lines and the grey in the middle and understanding that everything that makes a person or a society or a culture unique is about all those different bits that overlay and how that changes your relationship with people and the world and nature.

I think it's really important. I'm mixed race, so I sit at a very obvious intersection there, that duality.

AYANDA: Nuam, do you experience those grey areas as well?

NUAM: Oh, yeah, definitely. This whole kind of blurred lines as you mentioned, Olivia, is very much something that is of both personal and academic interest. I was born in Myanmar, but I've spent most of my life in Britain, as you could probably tell from my accent. I'm constantly thinking about who I am, and where I belong. And do I belong in Britain? I've spent most my life here but then at the same time, my physical appearance marks me out as different. So this kind of hybridity in between us is

something that I explore in my academic research.

AYANDA: In terms of your academic research, what is it exactly?

NUAM: I was doing research in Myanmar, which is where I'm from. Originally, I was going to look at the faith experiences and the spiritualities and theologies of Christian women among my ethnicity in Myanmar, and then the pandemic hit. So that forced me to return home. And I spent the rest of 2020, like most of us, panicking, and trying to figure out how to continue my research. And just as I found a new direction, the military coup happened in Myanmar, which really closed the door to that avenue.

So the latest version of my PhD is now looking at the theologies of migrant women from my ethnic group: migrant women in the UK, and Europe. I'm basically questioning how their experiences of life, in a context so different from where they grew up, has impacted the way they understand God, the divine, all that kind of stuff. That's a very kind of elevator pitch version of it.

AYANDA: And yes, Olivia, just from what Nuam said about her career and how it really links to personal experiences, you kind of spoke about intersectionality and how it's your personal experience. I think it's also translated into your career, would you say so?

OLIVIA: I've grown into my career, embracing more about who I am, and what my experience is, and bringing that in. The environmental sector is a bit all over the shop, because nobody knows what the environmental sector is really. So that's part of the problem. But from the best data we have, it's one of the least diverse sectors in the UK. So embracing, you know, what makes me unique within that, and then going with it and using it to your advantage.

At 18, when I started at Edinburgh, I definitely wouldn't have been like, oh, you know, I'm going to have a job that means I have to talk explicitly on the radio about my race. . . definitely not!

NUAM: Does that ever get taxing, talking about your race and your identity as part of your day to day job?

OLIVIA: What's good about Black and Green is it's by the black community for the black community. So within the team, and your immediate hub, you're around people like you or who aren't going to ask stupid questions, and are not going to treat you like an EDI [equality, diversity and inclusion] consultant.

I think I'm still learning how [to say] what I want to say, and there's definitely still stuff I don't say, and don't talk about. I don't know if that'll change, or if that's just my boundary.

NUAM: It's hard to find a balance, isn't it? Because you know, you're personally invested in this project as well. So you do want to talk about stuff that's important, but at the same time it's emotionally draining to be constantly reminded of this. Sometimes I feel like I have a sense of duty almost to be like, hey, if no one's going to talk about this then I should because I've got personal experience, but then, you know, that's a lot of responsibility on someone.

AYANDA: So Olivia, would you like to share with us what you brought with you?

OLIVIA: I have brought with me a necklace that my mum got me for my 21st birthday. It's a Tiffany necklace and it's the classic Tiffany heart, with my initials engraved on the back.

I was really grateful for it because it's a lovely thing and it's an expensive gift but at the time I'm like I'm not gonna wear that necklace. I don't do hearts. But I wear it all the time now.

AYANDA: And Nuam, I believe you brought jewellery as well with you?

NUAM: Yeah, I've got my grandmother's ring. It's very blingy. It's got like, three rows of about six rubies. She passed away two years ago. And when she passed, I got given it by my mum. So it's very, very important and significant to me.

“Do I belong in Britain? I’ve spent most of my life here but my physical appearance marks me out as different.”

“I could just call her and have a minor breakdown on the phone and then be ok.”

AYANDA: When you guys look at the special objects that you brought with you today, what's the emotion or special memory that they evoke?

OLIVIA: I suppose the special memory is that fact that I had that gut reaction of just no, yet I kind of came full circle and really love it. I think that's partly because my mum knows me better than I necessarily know myself. But I'm not a birthday person. So even for my 21st I was just like, oh, it's just another day, another year. But it's also that marker in time, isn't it? I'm only twenty seven now, it wasn't that long ago that I was twenty one but even then to kind of you know, look back and be like, what's changed? May that be physically, mentally, emotionally. I'm always after the new next thing, like the next goal, and that definitely comes from the type of university and school we went to. You're kind of taught to be looking for the next achievement. I don't often look back and reflect. I think having those things that pinpoint moments is important to be able to do that.

AYANDA: What about you Nuam, does the ring encapsulate some kind of emotional memory?

NUAM: Yeah, it's really significant to me, because it obviously reminds me of my gran. My gran and I were very, very close. She was a remarkable woman. She must have been like 80 when she migrated to

the UK to look after me and my siblings so that my parents could study at university, which is insane when you think about it! She didn't speak any English, she only spoke my language. So it must have been a terrifying experience for her to come over to a completely new place where she didn't know anyone. The ring symbolises her commitment and devotion to us as a family. It reminds me of who she was as a person.

AYANDA: Olivia, can you tell us a little bit more about your mum?

OLIVIA: My mum is great! My mum and dad are very different, but very similar at the same time. They've been together since they were like 18. My mum's the artistic and the emotional one. She studied Law and English, and my dad was Maths and Computer Science. So they have very different ways of thinking, which is why I'm lucky enough to have kind of both of those in me. My mum gave it all up to have me. She did go back to work for a while but she was like, I don't want to leave her in a nursery. And so I think as a woman, I'm always thinking, do I want kids?

My mum is white British and my dad is from the Caribbean. So when talking about race and those things, those conversations can be hard because it's coming from a different place with each person. And my mum obviously doesn't have the experience of not being white.

But today, I had a day from hell for various different reasons. And I could just call her and have a minor breakdown on the phone. And then I was okay. She sent me a card in the post the other day and it says 'nobody is you and that is your power'.

AYANDA: That's beautiful, and what about you Nuam?

NUAM: So a bit about my gran. When she passed away two years ago, it was quite cool to listen to my mum and other people who knew her talk about how she was as a person before I knew her. From all accounts, it sounded like she was a really remarkable woman who was very concerned about everyone around her. She grew up in Myanmar, and where we're from, it's the poorest state in the country. So life was hard, life was really hard. My grandfather passed away when my mother was quite young, so being a widow in those times, you're kind of screwed, really, as your husband is your main source of income. But she was very determined.

AYANDA: I'm interested in the change that we go through when we're growing up. And how you saw yourself in the past, how you see yourself now and how much you've changed?

OLIVIA: I know this guy who met me when I was at Lush and that was a couple of years ago, and he met me recently and he's like

“Olivia, oh my god, you’re so confident [laughter], what’s happened?”

And that’s in two years. I think that’s a big part due to Black and Green. I’m not gonna save my racial identity or ethnic identity or blackness for when I’m at home. And I think that’s a big thing. I think I’m just more comfortable with who I am. I still don’t know what I want to be when I grow up.

NUAM: It’s quite nice when you get to that stage where you’re like, yeah, this is who I am and that’s it.

AYANDA: What about you Nuam? What has changed? What has grown?

NUAM: I think I’ve become a bit more confident in who I am and what I believe and what I stand for, and just kind of being.

OLIVIA: I think it’s also the confidence to be wrong and change your mind. I would hold on to things, like I decided that I’m going to do this and I’m going to see it through to the bitter end, despite the fact I hate what I’m doing. Whereas now I’m like, no, I’ve got enough going on in my life, I’m just gonna let that go. I’m evolving.

NUAM: I think it’s like the pressure, isn’t it? When you’re 21, you’re surrounded by so many interesting and amazing influences in your life. It takes you a while, at least certainly for me, to find the kind of group or the type of person that you want to be and to be okay with the fact that it might not fit with A or it might not fit with B, but you know, whatever, this is who I am.

AYANDA: But how do you then interact with the environment around you, that is used to you being a certain way?

OLIVIA: Run away! [laughs]. So, yeah, university, I was there for five years and I’ve moved twice. I have an expiry date on being in a place, therefore you kind of don’t have to deal with that, which is a nice thing, apart from the people I choose to keep. And they obviously get it and evolve with you.

AYANDA: Nuam, what about you?

NUAM: I think I would say that there’s always an element of the previous version of yourself in your current version of yourself. I went to SOAS in London, the School of Oriental African Studies. It’s got a reputation for being a very left wing radical University, which I love, love, love, love, love. But there I’m more outspoken than I am in Edinburgh for various reasons. But when I’m back in SOAS, when I’m engaging with activist spaces, all that kind of stuff, that’s who I am. And how I am in Edinburgh, doesn’t necessarily mean that I’ve forgotten who I am back in London, or that aspect of my personality that’s a bit more vocal about political social justice issues, it’s just like, I’m wearing a different hat or I’m not putting it as the first thing that people see.

AYANDA: So Olivia has mentioned moving around, but you know, I’m sure we all have that one place we call home. So where is home for you?

NUAM: That’s a really tough question because I don’t know if I have a home. That sounds really sad but I don’t know if I can name one place home. I think I mentioned doing fieldwork in Myanmar, which is where I’m from. Prior to going there, I was super excited about doing fieldwork among my own people. I’ve grown up in Britain, I don’t know the language or the culture as well as I want to but eight months of fieldwork will set me straight, and it’ll be nice to connect with my culture again. And I got there and I realised oh no, I’m very British!

I didn’t find the sense of belonging and returning home that I thought I would find. That was quite difficult for me. I had all these fantasies of being back home, but home doesn’t recognise who I am because I’ve become Westernised or there are elements of this culture that I don’t find comfortable.

That was a big catalyst for all these big questions about who I am and where I belong, and what my identity is having grown up in Britain but looking physically different from most Scottish people.

So yeah, the question of home is a big one. I don’t know where home is. I think home is where you feel comfortable to be yourself.



This is an abridged extract from an episode recorded in 2020.

Listen to the full episode.

Meet Ayanda



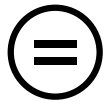
Ayanda Ngobeni was Season five’s Sharing things podcast host. She is an Edinburgh law student graduating this year.

Speaking about this episode of Sharing things, she said:

“I remember a sense of comradeship between us where we discussed the good, the bad and how it is we view the world as women trying to pave our path and leave our own legacies.”

The sounds of friendship

We asked 22 graduates to tell us what song reminds them of their university friends. From good times spent on a minibus to Birmingham to a student exchange in Berlin and fun moments on the dance floor, here is a selection of their choices. You can head to Spotify to hear the playlist in full.



Listen to the playlist on Spotify.

Friday I'm in Love

by *The Cure*

My flatmate in third year (a stranger when I moved in, but still a good friend 12 years later) had a mix CD with this on - I don't remember any of the other songs on it, because we'd just replay 'Friday I'm in Love' over and over on repeat. **Annie, 2011 German and Russian**

I Am Here

by *P!nk*

This song reminds me of my closest friends from university. One of my fondest memories was on our journey down to Birmingham for BUCS*. We told the rest of the minibus crew they'd only be listening to P!nk the entire journey and my friend even printed off booklets with song lyrics for everyone to sing along! **Emily, 2021 French and Spanish**

Wagon Wheel

by *Darius Rucker*

When I hear this song, I think of deadlines and pints with my pals.

Luke, 2020 Applied Sport Science

You're So Vain

by *Carly Simon*

The song reminds me of my first summer at Uni, travelling in Romania with friends from Edinburgh and St Andrew's. We sang this with carefree abandon under a fountain in Braşov, laughing and feeling invincible!

Sarah, 2000 English Literature

Send Me On My Way

by *Rusted Root*

This was the song of APEX* and our compilation video, and reminds me of the great times we had on our expedition.

Greig, 2019 Medicine

Work from Home

by *Fifth Harmony ft.*

Ty Dolla \$ign

Fond memories of dissertation writing over brunch.

Nina, 2016 Nationalism Studies

Will Ye Go Lassie, Go?

by *The High Kings*

For some reason I started playing this band's songs a lot in my third year flat when I lived with some of my best friends at Uni. When I listen to that song I think about those times.

Vainius, 2015 Economics

These Chains

by *Hot Chip*

The album it's on came out during our year abroad in 2012 and some Edinburgh friends who were also on exchange in Berlin introduced it to me. We ended up going to see Hot Chip play in Glasgow when we returned for 4th year.

En-Chi, 2013 French and German

I Think We're Alone Now

by *Tiffany*

It didn't matter where we were, who you were speaking to, when this song came on we dropped everything and congregated on the dance floor. When I say dropped everything I do mean that I have sprinted from the toilets to do the actions to the chorus of the Tiffany song.

Lisa, 2000 Law

* BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sport)
APEX (Altitude Physiology Expeditions)

“So I wish I’d had some better advice at that age about what I really wanted to get out of life, what I wanted my pathway to be, what my values were, what would make me happy and fulfilled. And that’s not to say I haven’t had a great life, I really have a great life and career. But I may have done something differently if I really thought it through.”

Laurence Heron, 1984 Biology
Multi Story Edinburgh, the podcast
Season 3, episode 4

Making your next steps

Whether you’re seeking careers advice as you navigate life after graduation, thinking about continuing your learning or taking time to focus on your wellbeing, being part of the University of Edinburgh community gives you access to the advice and resources that you need.

ed.ac.uk/alumni/new-graduates
ed.ac.uk/careers/graduates

Your career

Whatever stage you are at on your graduate career path, the University is here to support you at this exciting, and sometimes daunting, time.

Two-year access to career support for all graduates

It can take a little time to settle into your post-university life which is why you can continue to access support from the Careers Service for two years after graduating. If you are graduating in 2022 then the Careers Service is here to support you with a tailored package of support.

Graduate Coaching

If you're struggling to get your post-university career started then a Graduate Coaching appointment with one of our Careers Consultants is a great place to start. You can book these online appointments through MyCareerHub.

Graduate Toolkits

The Careers Service has a graduate toolkit to support you. Whether you are not sure what you should do, you are ready to make applications or want to make a successful start in your first job. With our online toolkits you can make progress with your career at a time and place that suits you.



Help for newly employed graduates

If you're starting a graduate job and want to make an impact, the Careers Service has created resources to help you develop the skills you need to thrive in the professional world.



Support for entrepreneurs

You're eligible to receive free support and advice from Edinburgh Innovations for up to two years after you graduate, including one-to-one appointments with a business adviser, and specialist workshops.



Watch out for the Graduate Outcomes Survey

Be part of the picture and contribute to the UK's biggest annual social survey. Anyone graduating from a university in the UK will be invited to take part in the Graduate Outcomes Survey around 15 months after completing their course.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
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“Given the current climate I was left feeling a bit confused and demotivated after graduating, but I felt the university careers team really helped me to focus my job search, understand my priorities and gave me a confidence boost.”

Your learning

If you're thinking about continuing your studies at the University of Edinburgh, there are several options and resources available.

Postgraduate study

Discover your postgraduate options and learn about different types of degrees, whether you're interested in on-campus or online postgraduate programmes.

Alumni scholarships

The University offers two scholarship schemes for its graduates, each providing a 10% discount on tuition fees.

Free online courses

There is a range of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) available to you. MOOCs are freely accessible and open-licensed short courses, delivered to large groups of learners fully online.

Short courses

Whether you're curious about a particular subject or just looking to be creative, the University's short courses offer a great opportunity to develop your knowledge and skills, with the added bonus of a 10% discount for alumni.

Access to the Main Library

As a graduate of the University, you are entitled to join the library as an external borrower for free. Visit the website to find out how to apply for membership and discover what services are available to you.



Your wellbeing

Taking time for your own wellbeing is just as important as focusing on your career path or further study. Here are a couple of resources to support your personal journey and help you be the best version of yourself.

Feeling Good App

As a new graduate, you have free access to the Feeling Good App. The app offers a mental skills training programme which teaches how to calm the mind and develop the greater emotional resilience to deal with challenges of life.

iThrive Edinburgh

iThrive is an online space where you can find information and resources for mental health and wellbeing in the Edinburgh area. It's managed by a local mental health charity, and includes access to services, support, activities, events and places.



Your community



The University of Edinburgh will always be your community. It's a place where you will always belong and somewhere you can find people who are ready to support, inspire and encourage you.

Platform One

As you look to the future, you may need some inside information on how to start out on a particular career or want to speak to someone with a specific set of skills on another continent. On Platform One, you can join friendly people from all over the world who will answer your questions and share their experiences. The one thing you all have in common - the University of Edinburgh.

Sharing things, the podcast and blog

Sharing things is about the University of Edinburgh people and their stories. Through the podcast and the blog, alumni, students and staff reveal themselves and their lives, their memories and their hopes, and talk about what makes them tick.

Multi Story Edinburgh, the podcast

This podcast is a snapshot and a sneak inside the minds of Edinburgh graduates. Subscribe now and find out what everyone is up to.

More graduate stories

Get inspired by reading your fellow graduates' stories and experiences.

Alumni clubs and networks

You are joining a community of over 300,000 graduates. Find a club in your city, or a network with particular interests - you are never far from Edinburgh, wherever you are in the world.

Being Edinburgh, the alumni award

Sharing stories, recognising achievement and getting to know your university community - that's the essence of the Being Edinburgh award. Read about Edinburgh alumni who were nominated in the past and find out how to participate.

Alumni benefits and perks

As a graduate, you can still take advantage of certain facilities - including but not limited to the University's gym or free on-campus WiFi. You also get access to exclusive alumni discounts and special offers including on accommodation, venue hire, and official University merchandise.

Social media

The Edinburgh alumni community is very active on social media, with conversation, nostalgia, opportunities and stories being shared on a daily basis. You can stay connected by following us on these channels.

Instagram
@edalumni

LinkedIn
/groups/74624/

Twitter
@EdinburghAlumni

Facebook
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For more information and stories from the university community visit the new website for 2022 graduates.

ed.ac.uk/alumni/new-graduates

**Your
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