

# Graduate Traineeship

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## About Optimis

Optimis is an award-winning planning, development and ecology consultancy providing a bespoke compelling service to a range of private clients. We aim to deliver customer-focussed, commercially-sound advice.

Our primary focus is residential planning, with a portfolio of work spanning the full spectrum of development projects, ranging from large scale developments with national house builders to smaller unique domestic projects.

We specialise in co-ordinating project teams, informing development proposals and developing relationships with local planning authorities to deliver planning permission for our clients. Covering Bedfordshire, Greater London, the southeast and beyond we pride ourselves on our commerciality, ability to identify solutions and the strong and sociable relationships we have built with our clients.

We are a small friendly team offering an enjoyable and fulfilling environment in which to work. Optimis can offer unique access to clients and projects, from which junior members of the team especially benefit, and in this context career progression is supported and strongly encouraged.

## The Graduate role

At Optimis, we see the graduate training role as an opportunity to equip you with the skills and knowledge you need to further a career in the planning and development industry. Whether you already know what you want to specialise in, or know you want to work in the industry, but are not sure what area, we can tailor our programme to suit you. You will have the opportunity to rotate through each of our 3 departments, to develop the breadth of your knowledge and you will find detailed below the things you might get involved in while you are working in each of the departments.

As part of each of these roles you will also be provided with training in the administrative aspects of consultancy work including taking enquiry calls from clients, producing Confirmation of Instructions, time recording and invoicing.

## Optimis Consulting – Planning

### Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- Assisting senior colleagues in the Planning Department, as directed, with:
  - reviewing enquiry details and preparing responses;
  - preparation of fee proposals during the enquiry process;
  - preparing and submitting planning applications, pre-application schemes, appeals;
  - site appraisals;

- policy reviews;
  - checking documents and reports for accuracy and compliance with planning policy and the project strategy;
  - analysis and research related to Local Plan or policy preparation;
  - seeking fee quotes and coordinating other consultants;
  - photographic surveys at site visits
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- Advising team colleagues on planning procedural changes, legislation and implications;
  - Assisting on public consultations with preparatory materials and attendance at public events;
  - Monitoring of planning applications and contacting Case Officers for update/progress;
  - Gathering and assimilating data for analytical assessment of information;
  - Undertaking site visits, as required, as part of a project under the supervision of a senior colleague;
  - Attending meetings with clients and other stakeholders, Parish Council, the Council, including Planning Committee, and note taking;
  - Undertaking technical and general administration work: filing, printing, photocopying, binding, setting up of enquiry and planning files, updating appeals database;
  - Planning your work and workload on a weekly basis;
  - Developing your technical knowledge and understanding of planning and environmental law;
  - Work towards professional qualifications and undertake training

## **Optimis Consulting – Land**

### **Main Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Assisting senior colleagues in the Land Department, as directed, with:
- Site Searches
  - Strategically selecting locations to undertake searches, considering 5 year land supply/Green Belt/Market Values/etc.
  - Identify potential sites based on technical and planning constraints
  - Research into local plan, SHLAA
  - Contact landowners or their representatives
- Land Disposal
  - Identify suitable buyers
  - Write sales prospectus; researching planning and technical constraints on site, local policy, and market values

- Review offers; considering commercial terms and planning prospects
- Review contract
- Monitor planning process after exchange and arrange access for surveyors and consultants
- Gather market information from estate agents (house prices, most popular types of unit, price ceilings, buy vs let, etc.)
- Site Acquisition
  - Identify suitable sites for developers based on their requirements
  - Enter discussions with landowner's agent
  - Advise on terms of bid and write offer letter
- Networking
  - Meet with developers, keeping a database of their site requirements
  - Meet with agents
  - Identify potential landowners; private, public, and corporate
- Development Appraisals

## **Optimis Consulting – Ecology and Biodiversity**

### **Main Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Assisting senior colleagues in the Ecology and Biodiversity Department, as directed, with:
- Desk-based Assessments and Reporting
  - Collate and review ecological information for desk-based assessments
  - Search publicly accessible national databases and request locally available data on protected sites, habitats and species from the Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC)
  - Review relevant ecology and biodiversity local planning policies
  - Prepare Site descriptions and details such as photographs
  - Assist with inputting the findings of the above into reports
- Surveys and Data Collection/Mapping
  - Assist with survey planning including scheduling, liaison with landowners, gaining site access, preparation of equipment
  - Assist with undertaking field surveys for protected species such as great crested newts, reptiles and bats
  - Assist with undertaking habitats surveys, with the ability to differentiate broad habitat types in the field
  - Keeping accurate field notes in accordance with the principles of scientific data collection, plus handling, recording and storing data effectively

- Support with mapping tasks via both Adobe design and GIS software packages
- Developing a good understanding of wildlife legislation and policy, and be able to communicate this clearly to colleagues, clients, and contractors
- Taking personal responsibility for your health and safety whilst at work, learning procedures and conducting your work in a safe and responsible manner