

'I'm really proud that I did so well'

In 2020 dental nurse Ilona Traknyte was named BDA Education Outstanding Radiography student, sharing the award with Natalie Ofkants, who was interviewed in the July issue

(<https://go.nature.com/3yTsQXe>). Ilona spoke to **Kate Quinlan** about her career so far.

Ilona Traknyte, 30, from Lithuania, is a dental nurse at a private dental practice in Aberdeen.

Interview

How did you start out in dentistry?

I started working as a dental receptionist and the opportunity arose to become a trainee dental nurse.

I had not considered a career in dentistry. I had various jobs before joining the dental practice and had completed a business course. While on maternity leave with my first child I completed an office admin course which led me to the dental reception role. Taking on the trainee dental nurse role gave me the opportunity to develop a career.

Can you outline your career history to date?

I started as a trainee dental nurse in 2015 and qualified as a dental nurse in 2017. I initially worked in a group of NHS practices as a floating nurse. In 2017 I joined Fergus & Glover, a wholly private practice where I have been able to expand my skills and scope of practice.

Have you continued working during the pandemic?

I was on maternity leave during much of the pandemic and have only now returned to work this summer.

Why did you decide to study the BDA Radiography course?

I was keen to expand my knowledge and skills and be more involved with patient care. My employers encourage the team to gain new skills.

What did you think of the course?

I really enjoyed the course and did not find it to be as daunting or challenging as I first thought, as English is not my first language.

Did it require a lot of study time?

I managed to fit my study time around my role at work and I was fortunate that I was given time to study at work.

Did you find the course user-friendly?

Yes, there were always tutors available to answer questions.

The online format suited me well as I did not have to travel to a course and be away from my family.

How did it feel to achieve the joint-top marks and be awarded the BDA Education Outstanding Radiography student of 2020?

It was very unexpected and I'm really proud that I did so well. My family and colleagues had no doubt I would do well and were all delighted that I achieved the joint top marks.

Have you used your dental radiography qualification since completing the course?

Yes, having returned from maternity leave I have been actively encouraged by my



colleagues to use my new qualification and skills.

The radiography qualification has given me an extra skill and qualification and allows me to be more involved in patient care.

Do you have further career plans?

I am keen to continue to learn and develop additional skills. I am considering the sedation nursing qualification next.

How did you spend the summer?

I have just returned from annual leave where I went camping with my family to Loch Morlich. Hopefully next year there will be more opportunity for travel.

What do you like to do outside work?

Spending time with my young family. I have recently enjoyed learning to kayak.

For more information on the BDA's Radiography course, visit <https://bda.org/dcps>.

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