Student dissertation project – a case study with Callum Rowett and The JBA Trust

The JBA Trust and Lancaster University have a strong working relationship, ranging from collaborative research projects to delivering professional qualifications through the Lancaster Environment Centre.

Callum Rowett completed his dissertation project with The JBA Trust whilst completing his taught Masters degree. JBA researches and promotes the development of knowledge and skills in environmental risk management, especially in the water environment. This fit well with Callum's interest in hydrology and a project was developed to utilise modelling techniques to simulate sediment deposition and movements based on different wave environments. This analysis helped to develop a predictive model which is now being used to manage coastlines and specifically to regenerate mangrove communities.

Industry-based dissertation projects provide incredibly useful learning and development opportunities for students, giving access to external companies and real world field environments. This is great for companies as well – they can access an expert resource to help further their aims and activities. These projects also act as extended interviews, sometimes leading to full time employment after completion of the degree, such as in this case.

We asked Callum how the project went from his point of view.

What kind of interaction did you have with JBA and what benefits did you see from this?

During my project, I was involved in several face-to-face meetings with staff at the Skipton office who were able to provide excellent feedback on the work I had done so far and to offer guidance on where to go next. There was also an initial teleconference to start off the project work where ideas were discussed. I benefited greatly from this as I was able to work with industry leaders and take their advice and feedback to make sure my work was targeted and fulfilled its objectives.

What were the challenges you faced?

The main challenge I faced as part of the work was that very little previous research into mangroves and sediment traps and I initially struggled to find any data or work in the area. JBA staff were very helpful and provided me with lots of case studies as well as literature surrounding the topic.

How would you sum up your experience and how it's helped you following your course?

I had a very good experience with JBA, the staff were always warm and friendly and very supportive of the work I was doing. The staff at JBA are leaders in their respective fields and were more than happy to share their knowledge and experience around the subject to aid my project. Following the completion of my course, I am now part of the coastal team working at JBA. I am now able to use the knowledge I gained from doing a coastal project and apply it my current work on UK coastlines.