At school, I often felt out of place in the science lab or maths classroom but thrived in more creative subjects. This made me aware that the lessons which weren’t necessarily restricted to sitting behind a desk, or where there often weren’t any objectively right or wrong answers, was where I belonged. I chose Drama as one of my GCSE options – that as well as English were always my favourite lessons on my timetable and became some of my highest grades on results day.

This made choosing what I wanted to study at college relatively easy, by simply knowing where I was happiest. I did A Levels in English Language, Creative Writing and Drama and Theatre Studies. I received a lot of new and exciting opportunities from my college, however I sometimes struggled with the written exams that come with A-Levels. This meant I didn’t quite achieve my predicted grades, but still left with a respectable BBB, which I was satisfied with.

At the time, I had my sights set on continuing my study of acting by progressing onto Higher Education, however I believed the only correct route was to do this at a drama school. When applying to these institutions, sometimes also known as conservatoires, there is a rigorous audition process that whittles down thousands of applicants to a class of around twenty. I spent three consecutive years auditioning to five drama schools per year, which was challenging but also helped to build my resilience and confidence. I would make it through to recall auditions and sometimes even get a reserve offer, however due to the highly competitive nature of the process, was never offered a place.

With each rejection I received, I became increasingly eager to move away from my hometown, gain independence and get back into studying what I enjoyed. I then realised I had to find out if there was another way to achieve this, which is when I found the Performance for Stage and Screen degree course at Sheffield Hallam University. The application process involved writing a personal statement and sending an audition tape – much less stressful, expensive and time consuming than what I was used to. Because I already had my A Levels, I received an unconditional offer relatively quickly, and that was it!

When I moved to Sheffield, I felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders, as I had finally got what I wanted. During my degree, I worked with industry professionals, performed in a lead role at the Crucible Theatre, acted in short films for ‘Welcome to Yorkshire’, co-created two feminist theatre productions, and made friends for life. My course was assessed seventy percent on my performance in practical exams and only thirty percent on written coursework. This often-meant long days in rehearsal rooms, particularly in third year when I was devising my final show, however the support network I had made of my friends and lecturers played a vital part in my success and ultimately leaving with a First.
Alongside university, I worked part time as a student ambassador for Hepp and HeppSY. This made for the perfect part time job, as the organisation understood my degree had to take priority, which meant shifts were very flexible. Also, working within an outreach programme was so much more interesting and rewarding than retail or hospitality, and I was able to transfer the skills I had learnt from being a performer into presenting workshops and assemblies in schools.

Towards the end of my degree, I heard that Hepp were hiring new Graduate Interns. Applying for the role felt like a natural transition and will play a key part in my development for my future career, whatever that may be. I feel very fortunate to do the job I have today, as I would not be qualified to do it without a degree. My whole experience has taught me that everything happens for a reason, and just because something isn't going to plan, does not mean it's going wrong.