



Alicia Harding
Data Analyst

Alicia had been out of university for just over 2 years when she joined Nominet as a Data Analyst at the start of this year.

"I studied Economics, and while I was at university I looked for work that was relatable to my degree subject. I secured a placement year with Disney in their research department and then moved onto a role with Sky on the Data & Analytics graduate scheme. It was after that I found my role at Nominet."

Alicia had experienced gender bias on her university course, with a ratio of males to females of 5:1. "It was very male-dominated," she recalls, "because, I would say, subjects like Economics and Maths are often perceived to be a 'male's field'. But thankfully this is changing – with far more female Economists and Mathematicians taking the spotlight."

She remembers a similar bias in place further back in her education too. "Stereotypes are made clear from a really early age, even in primary school you often found girls were encouraged to spend their time colouring or skipping, while the boys built towers and played with cars. While I was studying for my A-Levels I found that I usually performed better in English than Economics, but never enjoyed English quite as much. I remember a parents' evening when my tutor told me I was stupid to want to study Economics at university, as I wasn't as good at that, then my mum backed me up, and said to him: 'But she wants to do Economics!', and so that's what I did. I think at a young age, when you are slightly clueless and unconfident, you can be influenced by what you are told by others around you, so there could be many people missing opportunities as a result."

My direct team are all women

In a happy twist to the tale, Alicia has found that maths is in fact her strongest skill. Moreover, she finds that in her role as a Data Analyst at Nominet, gender bias at work is not as pronounced as her time at university. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Does this mean gender bias is being gradually being eroded? "Generically, I think the world of tech is gender biased, favouring men. In my career experience so far, the teams I have worked in have had a good gender balance, but I have seen of course in other teams that this isn't always the case. At Nominet my direct team are all women – which is fab, and my wider team is a great mix."

"What I really enjoy about my work is using data to answer business questions, usually to then guide and support business decision making. I love the amount of value data can provide. If data is available and we can use it, a Data Analyst can help to answer questions for many teams across the company. We could investigate financial data, for example, or data that could help marketing and comms. It is incredible what you can do with data. There is always something to learn as a Data Analyst too, there are endless opportunities to grow and develop. Whether that be a new software to learn, or a new way to present and provide data to the company."

Pursue what you are passionate about

Although progress has been made in breaking gender bias in industry, it can still be difficult for women in certain sectors, but Alicia is optimistic: **"I would say pursue what you are passionate about and what you are interested in.** You will excel if you really enjoy something. Have strong role models, female and male. I am so lucky to be surrounded by incredibly strong individuals in my life, who I look up to and learn from. Play to your skill set, you are very much equal to a man – think of yourself as an individual and look past gender stereotyping. In the world of tech, men won't worry that there are too many females, trust me!"

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It's just a stereotype that boys like cars and girls like skipping
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