

Testimonial: Melissa Moncrieffe

2nd May 2018

I have great pleasure in providing a testimonial for Melissa to acknowledge her skills and abilities in developing and operating Valued Educational Services (VES), LLC.

I supervised her PhD studies throughout her study period, initially with Professor David Raffe. His untimely death led to a change and Professor Lyn Tett agreed to join me as her second supervisor. From the start, Melissa proved to be an extremely hard working and efficient student. She never missed a supervisory meeting and always presented a written account of her most recent work ahead of the meeting to allow for a more detailed discussion of progress and further work. Her technique of including questions in her text to direct us to areas that she wished to discuss was very a useful device, especially in the early stages of her thesis when she was shaping her research questions and focusing in on a more specific area of non-formal learning. I am sure that she will be able to make full use of these skills in developing and operating VES, LLC.

She is an excellent researcher and during her PhD studies she took every opportunity to develop her skills further both by attending additional courses but also in developing the skills in dealing with the challenges that she met when researching for her PhD. These challenges were both at the conceptual and the practical level. At the conceptual level she needed to develop a way of comparing programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable young people through providing educational opportunities in two different contexts - the US and Scotland. This involved operating at different levels, the macro (national policy), the meso (programme), and the micro (the experiences of the young people). To guide her in gathering data and in the subsequent analysis of her data, she developed a conceptual framework that distinguished between the three levels. This framework was commented on favourably by her PhD examiners. At the practical level, she proved tenacious in gaining access to policymakers, programme leaders as well as young people participating in the programmes to gather her data. The group of young people that she engaged with and interviewed formed part of a group considered hard to reach. Her skills in engaging with these young people will provide her with skills to provide services to young people.

Her thesis 'Analyzing a Model of Non-Formal Education for Young People: A Comparative Case Study of National Programs in the United States and Scotland' provides evidence of her hard work and represents an important contribution to a field that has little comparative research of this nature.

In addition to working on her thesis, Melissa also contributed actively to the international student community at Edinburgh University in a number of ways but mainly as Global Assistant. She made an important contribution to the Internationalization Conference and the Black History Month Festival. She has also presented the findings of her work both internally at PhD student seminars but also at a conference at the University of Cambridge.

Melissa also has a very wide range of experiences with other organisations and in other settings that have contributed to her development and knowledge base as a researcher. It is my view that her range of skills and effectiveness in working with others will allow her to to develop VES, LLC to provide a range of valuable services. In addition to her academic achievements, Melissa is a delightful person who works effectively with others.

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