

Case Study: Internship

Tereze Gaile, Fourth Year Aeronautical Engineering Student

Can you tell us about your second year internship experience?

I'm sure many students find themselves in the same predicament: how can you know what career path is best for you? My approach was to gain insight about as many different roles and industries as possible to build a broader understanding of potential opportunities. In my second year I wanted to try a consultancy role and fortunately secured a summer internship with BAE Systems Applied Intelligence (formerly known as Detica) as a Business Analyst. This allowed me to work with various clients and see how technology developed by Applied Intelligence was transforming their business. In relation to preparation my mentor from IBM helped me with interview style questions and gave me constructive feedback about my presentation. This made me feel considerably more confident and made a huge difference on the assessment day.



What did you do in the summer of your third year?

I wanted to find out about finance roles and I got on the Finance Summer placement at Centrica. Currently I'm working in Internal Audit which has given me extensive insight into how the whole business functions and has allowed me to interact with multiple senior stakeholders. Centrica is brilliant as it allows you to learn about other finance roles through shadowing and interacting with Finance Grads into areas such as trading, investor relations, business finance and M&A.

“I have gained invaluable experience giving me a stronger foundation when applying to future opportunities.”

- Tereze Gaile

What have you gained from completing your two internships?

These two experiences have highlighted the areas that most appeal to me such as company management and have made me seriously consider specialist finance roles like M&A. I'm still not sure exactly where I will end up after graduating but now I have a much clearer understanding of various roles and I have gained invaluable experience giving me a stronger foundation when applying to future opportunities. The best advice I can give to anyone is to try and talk to as many people as possible about their careers as it really opens your eyes—especially if you are on a placement working with people with different seniority levels.

How did you find out about the internships you undertook, and what was the timescale for your applications?

I attended different career fairs where various companies from a whole range of sectors would be present. It can be very insightful to talk to some of the representatives but probably the most useful piece of information is picking up the career fair booklet that has a list of all the attending companies and what schemes they offer with respective application deadlines.



I think the deadline for BAE Systems Applied Intelligence (AI) and Centrica was at some point in January but it's worth remembering that places are filled first come first serve basis so if they find enough people they like the recruitment will stop. With AI the application process was a bit longer - so I think I sent everything off by end of October, had my phone interview in December and interview in February. With Centrica the whole process was a lot faster: phone interview in Nov and assessment centre in Dec followed by a call two days later to notify me about the offer.

What was the application and interview process like?

Both had an online application form to fill in with competency based questions. Then phone interviews were more about what I knew about the company and the role I'm applying for. For AI I had to prepare a 15 min presentation with questions and had an interview which all in total lasted 3 hours. For Centrica the assessment centre included group exercises, individual interviews and a presentation that you have to prepare on site within 1h based on the documents and criteria they provided. The amazing thing about Centrica is that they give you feedback at all stages so after the phone interview I received another call telling me what I did well in and tips for the assessment centre. After the assessment centre I received a 6-8 page breaking down my performance including an analysis of my personality traits and strengths which is very insightful and interesting to see.

Have you used the Careers Service at Imperial, or attended any careers events?

I have always attended the career fairs even if just to familiarise myself with companies and I have been to a CV checking drop in session too.

Do you have any tips for future Imperial students looking to make the most of their summer?

Think carefully where you want to work over the summer because you are giving up your summer so it has to be worth your time. If you get a placement use it as an incredible opportunity to learn about the corporate world, different roles and career paths - talk to as many people as possible, especially senior colleagues. This allows you to get ahead and find out exactly what interests you or not. Then when it comes to choosing your first role you are in a much better position to steer your career.

