

Case Study: Internship

Sergiu Iliev, Second Year Aeronautics Student

Which company did you undertake work experience with?

I did an UROP under Dr. Vito Tagarielli from the Aeronautical Engineering Department and participated in a space studies internship organized in collaboration with the Russian Space Agency at Samara Space Studies University, Russia.



How did you go about finding the internship?

I was recommended the small internship in Russia as a consequence of attending a similar one last summer in collaboration with the European Space Agency. The UROP opportunity was made possible by the Head of the Aeronautical Department and was promoted to the students that have expressed interest in doing summer research.

What was the timescale for your application?

I started to apply quite late, in December, and made many applications in the following months to various companies and other potential summer opportunities. In total I applied to about 20 companies for 30+ positions. The interviews were in April-May.

What was the application and interview process like?

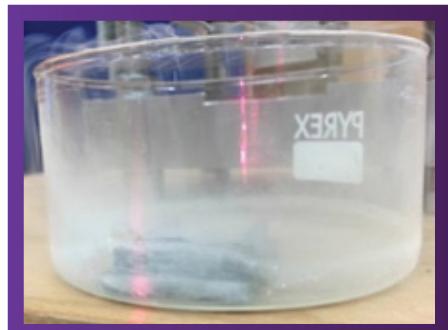
For the UROP position I made an application to express my interest to all the opportunities that resonated with my research interests. Afterwards, I spoke with the professors that would become my supervisors and made a decision for the position that would be suit both of us best. Regarding the experience opportunity in Russia, I had to submit an application to a contest consisting of a series of answers to open questions and my resume. Subsequently I won a place and had to do a second application to find sponsorship. I was fortunate enough to be successful to the second application as well and with the help of the City and Guilds Alumni Association I could participate.

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- Sergiu Iliev

How big was your team and where did it sit in the organisation?

I will detail only my role in the UROP for the following questions as I think this would be more relevant for our purpose. I was the only student in charge of that specific UROP project under my supervisor. Therefore, I had a significant responsibility in gaining a sufficient level of knowledge in the field and carrying out all the required experiments successfully in the given timeframe.



What was your role and what did it involve?

I was responsible with carrying out mechanical static testing of a supercooled metal sample. Achieving this primary objective involved a number of procedures ranging from sample preparation to safe operation with liquid nitrogen as well as preliminary data processing for the analysis of my supervisor.

What was the most valuable thing about your work experience?

I think that the most valuable aspect of my work experience was gaining a perspective on scientific research from the view of the researcher. The exciting possibility of discovering something new that would contribute to the progress of mankind was a significant motivator.

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

I would encourage you to pursue any work position that you would enjoy. This way working would be fun! However, I would recommend reserving two weeks for some proper R&R before the start of a new academic year. Also, for first year students – there are a couple of companies for which you could work for, although they are like islands in a sea of job opportunities, it is definitely worth considering them.

