

Case Study: Alumni

Nikolaos, MEng Chemical Engineering
Graduation Year: 2006

Job Title: Associate

Employer: CRA International

Department: Business Consulting - Chemicals & Petroleum



What has been your career path up until now?

After graduating from Imperial College in October 2006, I joined an engineering consultancy firm and spent 6 months working as a graduate engineer, focusing primarily on risk assessment studies of offshore oil and gas facilities. I joined CRA International in September 2007 as an Associate in the Chemicals and Petroleum, Business Consulting practice. Since joining CRA I have been involved in a number of projects within the chemicals and oil and gas sectors and have been exposed to a wide variety of tasks.

What does your job involve?

Since joining CRA in September 2007 I have been involved on a range of different projects which have involved tasks ranging from market research and company analysis, designing and conducting interviews with the client or third parties, financial analysis of companies, or even assisting with new business initiatives. I have had a reasonable level of exposure to senior levels of client management and have been involved in all phases of new projects. Due to the project oriented nature of the business, work days tend to vary with the tasks. Depending on the scope and the length of the task, teams will vary in size; therefore, the key skills required for someone doing this role include team working skills and the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with different individuals. A lot of the project work involves a great amount of quantitative analysis and therefore, highly developed analytical skills are essential for someone doing this role.

Do you use the skills that you obtained during your Imperial course?

Many of the skills I obtained during my degree at Imperial have proved to be a valuable asset. The skills I have found most useful involve the ability to communicate effectively within a team comprising of various individuals and being able to work under pressure and deliver within a specified time frame.

What are your future plans?

My primary focus is in gaining a broad range of work experience and exposure to a variety of different tasks and enhancing my understanding of the oil, gas and chemicals industries.

“My decision to follow a career related to the oil and gas industry was greatly influenced by the summer internship I completed...”

- Nikolaos



Name 3 things you like about your job

Three things I enjoy about my job include:

1. The challenging and varied nature of projects, while maintaining focus in the chemicals and petroleum sectors for which I have a great interest in.
2. The opportunity to work directly with highly experienced industry specialists, due to CRA's relatively flat organisational structure.
3. The positive working environment with a great level of support from all levels within the company.

Anything you are less keen on?

Deadlines and travel requirements can be unpredictable at times. As a result a certain level of flexibility and the ability to adapt to project requirements is essential.

Did you choose your course with this particular occupation in mind?

No, I chose to study Chemical Engineering because of my interest in the topics it covered and the broad set of career choices available after graduating. My decision to follow a career related to the oil and gas industry was greatly influenced by the summer internship I completed between the 3rd and 4th year of my degree.

What part of your course did you particularly enjoy?

I greatly enjoyed the balance between the practical and theoretical aspects of the course.

What skills did you develop within your degree that you find useful in your present role?

The skills I developed during my degree and that I have found most useful in my present role include team working skills, which are essential in a job that is entirely project based and where you have to work with a range of different individuals, analytical skills, the ability to work under pressure and deliver within a specified time frame.

Did you gain work experience or an internship whilst at ICL?

In between the 3rd and 4th year of my degree I gained work experience through a summer internship with Hellenic Petroleum.

Were you involved in any extracurricular activities?

During my time at Imperial I was involved with the Jazz and Rock society and made great use of the music studio that the society provided for its members.

Did you use the Careers Service or go to Careers events? E.g. job fairs, employer talks etc.

Unfortunately I did not make best use of the Careers Service during my time at Imperial. However, I attended numerous careers events and found the employer's presentations and career fairs extremely useful and a great opportunity to interact with potential employers and understand the range of opportunities available to graduates.

Could you give us one or more career tips for Imperial graduates?

One piece of advice I would offer Imperial students would be to get interested and involved with activities at an earlier stage of their degree and explore the opportunities related to potential career paths.