

Case Study: Internship

Mateusz Dyda, Second Year Computing Student

Which company did you undertake work experience with?

I worked for SQR Systems, a small and quickly growing cyber-security start-up based in London.

How did you go about finding the internship?

During the summer term I went to one of the careers fairs organised by the Careers Service and this was where I met one of the co-founders of SQR Systems. We got into a discussion about what the company does and he asked me if I had any experience with doing something similar to which I replied by giving him a brief description of a project that I had worked on. He was impressed, by saying that they were looking for people like me. I got his business card and promised to send him my CV later that day.

What was the application and interview process like?

I was invited for an interview held in their office after sending them my CV. The interview was conducted by the co-founder that I had already met and their leading developer. During the interview they asked some technical questions designed to test my thinking ability and also some questions based on my CV. It was a friendly discussion, which included me asking a lot of questions to find out more about the company and life of a start-up in general. I had to wait a few days for the result of the interview since they also had other candidates applying for the same role.

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

The structure both the team and the company was simple. The two main people (the CEO and the co-founder that has recruited me) were the core of the company working on the business and management side. The developing team had five people, plus two interns (including myself). Therefore, the whole company of 9 people in total were all sitting in the same room. This made it a very friendly atmosphere. It was easy to interact with everyone and as there was virtually no hierarchy everyone was treated with equal respect.

What was your role and what did it involve?

They had given me a choice of potential projects that I could have worked on. They knew that it would be best for me to be doing something that was both interesting for me and useful for them. I ended up tackling one of their bigger technical challenges. They wanted to integrate a specific and sophisticated piece of



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technology with their project and this required a bit of research and testing. I ended up conducting this research, also writing some implementation code. On the side, I was also a member of the team working on an Android project, an app for secure and reliable video chat. This included working on various features and fixes that were most anticipated by our clients. Besides the technical aspects of the job, I also had to write a weekly report and take part in daily meetings of the R&D team and weekly meetings of the whole team.

What was the most valuable thing about your work experience?

There were way too many valuable things to list just one!

- I learnt how a start-up company is run from the outset.
- I was part of some critical decisions which might affect the future of the company.
- I learnt new technical skills and knowledge.
- I experienced problems that such a small company might face.
- I also learnt about the defence industry and networked with people by going to a conference organised by the Ministry of Defence in Canary Wharf.

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

My tip for the future Imperial students is to not look at what other students are doing and follow your own interests when looking for some summer internship experience. If you can find a company that you can link to your interests then you are not only at an advantage during the application process for showing your genuine enthusiasm but you are also less likely to end up working with a company/project that you do not like. Another tip is that you do not necessary need an internship to count your summer valuable. You can always organise your own project or find some other opportunities that will provide you with some useful experience. The key is to plan things ahead so that you do not end up telling yourself that it is too late to start doing something!



The Employer's View

“I have been impressed with Mateusz’s performance during his summer internship and how quickly he settled into the role and in the company.

Mateusz not only carried out his assigned tasks with efficiency but took on more responsibilities as the internship progressed. When set a challenging, open-ended problem, he exercised initiative and great tenacity to progress a critical part of our company’s technical development. He is technically gifted but is also genuinely passionate about his work. Mateusz has contributed significantly to our technology roadmap and his work during this internship will directly feed into our core products.

I would recommend employers to use Imperial College’s Internship Careers Fair; the event was well organised and the number of applicants exceeded our expectations.”

Rockman Law, Director, SQR Systems

