

Case Study: Internship

Ossie Ihecherenoma, First Year Chemistry Student

Which company did you undertake work experience with?

I completed an internship with Cancer Research UK at their head office based in Central London. It lasted 12 Weeks in total but I was excused from attending the first week; I had the pleasure of taking my exams that week!



How did you go about finding the internship?

I found the opportunity by directly searching on the charity website. I was searching through a few charity websites and most had internships available during the summer period. But Cancer Research was the charity I was most interested in working with.

What was the timescale for your application?

Given the time I actively started searching for internships and placement (i.e. very late); I finished and sent off the application dangerously close to the deadline date (which was 23/04/14). During the process, you're allowed to apply for up to 2 positions - one main position and another position to be considered for if the former was unsuccessful. There were a huge range of internships that the charity offered covering many types of disciplines. The interviews were scheduled between the 8th - 22nd May.

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- Ossie Ihecherenoma

What was the application and interview process like?

The application itself wasn't as intimidating as I thought it would be. Questions that were asked were general competency-based questions such as “Please give an example of a time when you have used your own initiative to solve a problem” and so on. Other information required in the application was any previous voluntary/work positions held and academic history. In terms of interviews, they asked questions specifically based on the role you apply to- to ensure you are the right candidate for the job. In addition, I was handed a task to complete which related specifically to the internship I applied for.

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

As the “Sports Team Supporter Relations” intern, I worked with the Sports Team. This team is fairly large consisting of members in other regional offices and in the marketing team also. This team sits under the “Fundraising and Marketing” directory within the charity which consists of a vast array of other teams and other sub-divisions.

What was your role and what did it involve?

My role included managing high quality supporter communications which provided them with the important



information about the charity and how each supporter helps the charity fulfil the charity's research strategy. In addition to this, I also worked on updating internal and external databases within the charity with any relevant information. My tasks involved getting involved with the charity's development with some major events such as the 2014 Bupa Great North Run (which I and the majority of the team went to) and the 2015 Virgin London Marathon.

What was the most valuable thing about your work experience?

The most valuable thing from my time at the charity was the huge insight I gained into how progress is being made into beating cancer. I was able to attend talks and conferences with leading scientists into how they are exploring cancers in their specific field of study. Essentially, I saw the bigger picture and I now know just how fundamental it is that the charity receives as much support as possible so that these researchers can carry out their life-saving work.

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

Tips for Imperial students? Do something. Anything. I launched myself into this internship with the premise that I had very little in the way of professional skills and insight to my name. Therefore I thought by taking this placement, I could somewhat solve this issue. Sure, there's the argument that you lose the majority of your summer, but the thought of me building my foundations early was worth it. Relaxation feels that much better after the hard work is done!

