

Case Study: Internship

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Which company did you undertake work experience with?

I was working this summer at MBDA missile systems in the aerodynamics and propulsion department.

How did you go about finding the internship?

Websites such as grad-cracker were useful in finding the internship, along with word of mouth - asking other people on my course if they had heard of any or what they were thinking of applying to. I started applying to internships in October, and continued throughout November. I probably applied to 8 in total. My application to MBDA specifically was sent on the 30th of October. I had to pass an online verbal and numerical reasoning test, and then I heard nothing until March the 14th, when a member of the HR team called me to invite me to an interview day. There were over 80 applicants and only 4 invited to the day so it is very important to make your CV and motivation letter (if required) stand out.

What was the application and interview process like?

My interview was on the 21st of March - I was given a week's notice. The interview day consisted of 3 main activities. A group exercise, a ten minute long presentation, and an hour long interview. The topic of the interview was of technical nature and given a week in advance. I was to email the PowerPoint to them a day before my interview. On the day, we arrived and were greeted by HR. We were given an introductory talk by our interviewers, and one by one taken off to give our presentations. We presented to about 6 senior members of the aerodynamics and propulsion team, which seemed daunting but they were very approachable and friendly. There was a 5 minute question and answer session at the end as well, so it was important to make sure you knew enough about the discipline you were presenting on. For lunch we were accompanied by 2 graduates so we could ask them questions and get to know a little about what it's like to work there as a graduate and what the graduate scheme is like. The interviews were in the afternoon and were formal but friendly. The majority of questions were in relation to my CV and the motivation questions they had asked me to fill out while applying. It was very beneficial to go over these before the interview as I had written them 4 months ago. A few technical questions were asked but the majority were competency-based. Within the week I had been told my application was successful.

What was your role and what did it involve?

I was working alongside the other intern within the aerodynamics and propulsion department. At the start of the placement we were assigned a large project to work on together, and this lasted us the duration of the



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summer. It involved heavy use of MATLAB and a good understanding of basic aerodynamics. Some reading was necessary and it was perfectly acceptable for us to do that within the department, during work hours.

What was the most valuable thing about your work experience?

Several valuable things have been taken from my time working at MBDA:

- The opportunity to see what work within a relatively big company was like
- Getting a taste of graduate life
- Seeing if a technical role is suitable for me
- Building hugely on my MATLAB skills
- Gaining a vast amount of knowledge on the operation and design of missiles
- Learning that I would enjoy living in Bristol!
- It has been extremely useful to have a short 3 month taste of what working within MBDA is like, which makes the decision to commit to a 2 year long graduate program much easier.

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

- Make sure to apply to something you will enjoy. The role I applied to was very technical, and this isn't for everyone.
- It can be very hard to get an internship. Apply to as many suitable internships as possible, remembering that it is important to make your CV and cover letter stand out. This takes a lot of time but is worth the effort.
- Make sure if you are invited to an interview day, you learn as much about the company as possible. If you are asked to give a presentation, this is your chance to really stand out, so rehearse it from a few days prior to the interview until you know it off by heart.

