

Case Study: Internship

Yang Zhang, Third Year Civil Engineering Student

Which company did you undertake work experience with?

My placement is with CH2M HILL - a US Civil Engineering company with a London European head office.

How did you go about finding the internship?

I actually learnt about this opportunity from a fellow student. It was an advertised role on its website.

What was the timescale for your application?

I started the applications in mid-October and applied to roughly 15 companies. I received interviews around March/April the following year.

What was the application and interview process like?

The application process consisted of four stages: Application form filling; online aptitude tests (normally two); Telephone interview; and finally Face-to-face interview. The face-to-face interview consists of two stages: Competence based interview and 15min Presentation on a topic of your interest (you will be told of this by the interview invitation email).

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

My team here in London is consisted of 15 people, and it is part of a 250 strong Highway/Transportation team all over the UK.

What was your role and what did it involve?

My role as an engineering intern involves plotting CAD drawings for senior engineers, doing preliminary research on new schemes, compiling project files, sending out utility enquiries to various companies and being involved in project meetings.

What was the most valuable thing about your work experience?

The most valuable thing has got to be the fact that now I have a good understanding about the processes involved in a large design project, the parties involved, the legislations involved, and how engineers communicate and collaborate with clients. The highlight was my site visit to the Crossrail tunnels - that was amazing!



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

My tips are:

- Don't be afraid of getting rejected by some companies; see this as a trial run for the real job hunting when you graduate. The more you get rejected, the more you are used to it! You fail before you succeed!
- Asking what companies your friends are applying to is very important, sometimes they know a company that you have never heard of as happened with me.
- You've got to use Imperial Careers Service for checking your CV and Cover letters, you will be silly not to! They can spot all the wrongs on your CV within seconds, saving you hours!
- When doing the online aptitude tests, you must make sure that you are in a very quiet room with no one potentially bothering you, because the timer on the test will not pause and one little distraction could cost you the test (I know someone who did!).
- And finally, keep faith, because the company I am with only emailed me back three months after my submission (they take their time with interns).