



# SUMMER INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE 2025

Feedback from some of the Oxford students who took part in internships in 2025 through the Summer Internship Programme

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This document contains feedback from some of the Oxford students who took part in internships in 2025 through the Summer Internship Programme. Internships are listed by the country in which the employer is based, and the title clarifies whether the internship was remote working, if it took place in person or a mixture of both. Please click on the index links to browse the feedback entries.

The reflections included here have been written by students who took part in internships through the programme. Each contribution represents the individual student's personal experience and perspective. To ensure readability and consistency, some comments have been lightly edited for grammar, length, and tone, but the substance of the feedback has not been altered. Both positive and critical observations have been included, to provide a balanced and authentic view of the range of experiences. When we receive constructive or negative feedback, we work closely with the relevant internship hosts to review and strengthen their professional practice, helping to ensure the highest possible quality of future placements.

Some students have given their consent for their name and college to be included; others remain anonymous and only their course and year of study have been shared. Many of the amazing images shared here have been provided by Oxford students (past and present) who have undertaken an internship through the programme, and by our internship hosts.

[Gold Standard Internship Hosts](#) (employers which were officially recognised as top partners in 2025 for the excellent quality of the internships provided) are marked with a gold standard internship host partner badge.

If you have any questions about the feedback, please email [summer-internships@careers.ox.ac.uk](mailto:summer-internships@careers.ox.ac.uk).



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# AUSTRALIA

## PALIN COMMUNICATIONS

### MBiol Biology, Final Year Undergraduate, hybrid

#### Work Projects

I worked on a range of projects at the agency, including both internal and client work. Some of this was with not-for-profit organisations, where I worked on disease awareness campaigns, conducting research, liaising with spokespeople, and doing media outreach to gain media coverage of the campaigns. Clients also included larger companies, where I created regular social media assets and copy. Additionally, I helped to develop new business pitches, researching potential clients and brainstorming with the rest of the team to develop innovative and creative angles for campaigns. Internally, I also assisted with marketing and social media, bringing new ideas to the table, designing graphics, and writing copy.

The work was rewarding – I saw a new business pitch through from its initiation to the agency's successful landing of the project and also saw a disease-awareness campaign through to the



end, organising interviews, seeing them aired, keeping track of coverage, reporting back to the client, and completing a post-campaign evaluation. On every project, I was very well supported by the team, guided where I needed but also given responsibility and independence to do my own work.

The whole team prioritises communication, so I always felt well-informed, and that I could easily and quickly get support on tasks where I needed.

## **Daily Life**

Daily Life in Sydney was a dream! I lived close to the beach so I would swim in the ocean at sunrise every day before work and then get the bus into the North Sydney office which took about an hour as I lived a fair bit outside of the CBD. Everyone at the agency was so friendly, which made settling in very easy. Outside of work, I took full advantage of the beautiful beaches and scenery in and around Sydney. Although it was wintertime, the weather was still good most of the time, so I spent a lot of the time hiking, running, and swimming all around the coast, and even took up surfing whilst I was there as well! There are always things on in the city, whatever you like to do – live music, markets, watching the NRL – and Sydney is especially great if you love fitness as there's so many gyms, classes, and running clubs.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The internship was a truly amazing experience - I got to work with lovely people, on meaningful and interesting projects, and gained a lot of insight into PR and Health.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Accommodation in Sydney can be very difficult to find - I would recommend using Facebook groups or house share apps to find a short-term sublet rather than an Airbnb, as these can be prohibitively expensive. The cost of living in Sydney is very high, so be prepared for this. It's also worth noting that you'll likely require a working holiday visa for the internship, which is fixed at 12 months, so I would recommend mostly for those in their final year and planning to stay on in Australia after the internship.

# AUSTRIA

## INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AUSTRIA (ISTA)



Kate Hague, Magdalen College, MBiol Biology, Third Year  
Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my internship I was carrying out research in the Benkova Lab group at the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA). This group specialises in research on plant hormonal signalling, particularly the integration of the plant hormones cytokinin and auxin. One of the main experiments I carried out was genotyping experiments, to investigate if seed stock had the correct mutations, which were meant to be in specific genes hypothesised to be upregulated by both cytokinin and auxin signalling together. I also carried out an experiment with a line of plants where a mutation has caused one such gene to be purposefully upregulated. I then grew these plants on treatments with cytokinin and auxin separately and then



combined. I took images of these plants using a stereo microscope to analyse the root morphology, in particular the position of first root hair initiation, the number of root hairs, and the average root hair length. From my statistical analysis of these results, I was able to conclude



that this gene appeared to be most affected by cytokinin and not significantly upregulated under treatment with auxin. I also investigated whether cytokinin and auxin signalling was integrating in response to osmotic stress. To investigate this, I grew plants under varying levels of osmotic stress and analysed their root morphology. To investigate if changes in root morphology were potentially linked to integration of cytokinin and auxin, I placed a GUS reporter behind a promoter of a gene known to be unregulated by the combination of these hormones, which led to a blue colour in the roots if both hormones were present. Throughout these experiments I developed skills in growing and caring for plants, reading and writing protocols, different skills within the lab and making scientific posters and presentations. I received a lot of support from my supervisor in the lab, and the organisation that funded me was very helpful for the visa and travel process.

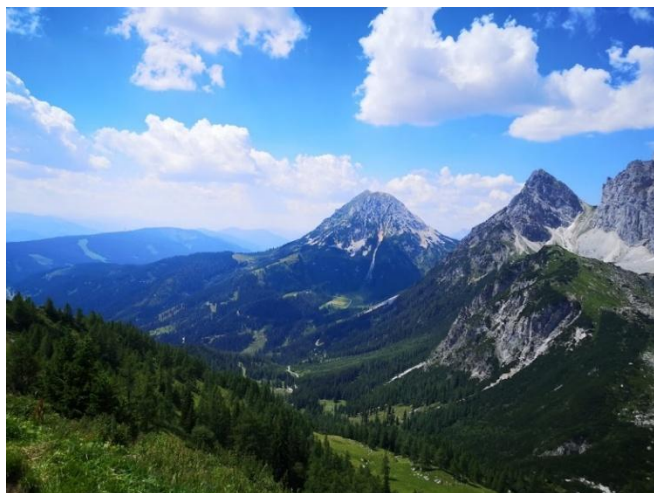
## **Daily Life**

During my scientific research internship at IST Austria, I lived on site, which was organised by the funding organisation although they also place some interns in Vienna. The site is about a half an hour bus journey outside of Vienna, so living on site was great as it meant no commute! I lived in a large guesthouse which had a shared kitchen, which was a good way to socialise and get to know the other interns. There were around 40 other summer interns from all over the world, so it was a great experience getting to know people from such different backgrounds and hear what it's like to live in their countries.

With the other interns I spent lots of my free time exploring Vienna, there are lots of museums, beautiful parks, palaces and places to swim along the Danube. There are also many events in the summer, so we went to a large festival on an island in the Danube, an orchestra and opera concert in a park and outdoor cinema screenings – all of which were free! I also explored other areas of Austria, including a day walking up a mountain in the Alps – which to our surprise had a bar and live band at the top – and visiting the very colourful city Linz and stunning Alpine Lake villages. I felt like I had a great work-life balance on this internship. There were also events organised by the organisation such as summer BBQs for interns.

## Lasting Impressions

My two months researching at IST Austria were genuinely two of the best months of my life. I really enjoyed being challenged in a fast-paced lab environment, where I learnt lots of new



skills and gained a valuable insight into what it's like to have a career in research. I also really enjoyed exploring Austria and found the transition to living in a foreign country much easier than I expected as the research institute and most people in Vienna can speak English. This has encouraged me to seek more opportunities to travel for work opportunities in the

future. I feel this internship has confirmed my career ambitions of wanting to work in plant molecular biology research. The experience of meeting lots of new people and making new friends of a variety of ages also built my confidence for going into the workplace and meeting new people.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Put yourself out there and meet as many people as possible, also read up on the research area beforehand, and have questions to ask.

[Olivia Ward, Merton College, MChem, Third Year Undergraduate, in person](#)

## Work Projects

The internship that I completed at ISTA was performing research into the mechanism for the reduction of sulfur to lithium sulfide in lithium-sulfur batteries. This research is important as Li-S batteries are a possible alternative to the current Li-ion intercalation cathode batteries, as

they have a far greater theoretical capacity and are more sustainable as they do not contain any transition metals. The main task that my project involved was making a stoichiometric series of solutions containing varying amounts of lithium and lithium sulfide and performing UV/Vis spectroscopy on them to determine the speciation of the polysulfides present. This data was then combined with previous data the group had collected to determine the different speciation of polysulfides in different electrolyte concentrations. The final results of this work will be published in a scientific paper in the next couple of years. In addition to my own research, I also had the opportunity to learn from many other researchers in the group, meaning that I used lots of other techniques as well, such as Raman spectroscopy and electrochemical impedance spectroscopy. ISTA was very supportive of all of the interns and gave us the chance to present our work at a poster session at the end of the internship period, which was a valuable experience for my future career.

## **Daily Life**

For the duration of the internship, I was provided accommodation in Vienna by the OeAD. This meant that my commute to and from work was over an hour long and so I generally woke up quite early in the morning to give me time to get to ISTA. Other interns were provided with accommodation on site and so our daily routines varied a lot between us as a group. Vienna is a lovely city and is super easy to get around so actually commuting was fine and the public transport was relatively cheap as well. People mainly speak German outside of ISTA and so it is super useful to know some German, however despite knowing none I still managed to get by.

Vienna has pretty much anything you could want to do. After work we would go bouldering at a local gym or go swimming in the Neue Donau and so it was very easy to keep a work life balance. As well as this, in Austria it is normal to finish work early on a Friday which meant that I got to do weekend trips to Budapest, Prague and the Austrian Alps – all were places I had never been to before and so I loved this experience. At ISTA there are lots of summer interns and people who are doing their master's studies there and so it was super easy to make friends and find people to go travelling with.

## Lasting Impressions

My lasting impression of the internship was that it was the best summer of my life. I got to help with scientific research, which I enjoyed, as well as travelling around Europe with the loveliest people who I met at ISTA and have since become close friends with. I have also gained so much confidence in working internationally



from this experience, as previously I had only ever worked in the UK. This is useful for my future career as with science it is very common to travel to different countries to perform research or attend conferences and so getting more comfortable with working and travelling alone is important. This experience has confirmed for me that I want to work in scientific research, as although I love the research element, I also really enjoy the travelling that can come alongside it, and the international community which becomes accessible.

## MPhys Physics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

The focus of the internship was merger supermassive black holes (SMBHs) which emit a burst of gravitational waves (GWs) that carry away energy and momentum, causing a nearly instantaneous mass loss and a recoil to the remnant black hole. This sudden change in gravitational potential and velocity can significantly alter the structure and thermodynamics of the surrounding circumbinary accretion disk. Electromagnetic signatures produced during and post-merger can also serve as electromagnetic counterparts to aid multi-messenger studies of GWs, with sources detected by LISA (Laser Interferometer Space Antenna). Previous studies



suggest these post-merger effects launch hydrodynamic shocks with circular or spiral morphologies across the accretion disk.

The aim of the internship was to study the response of the disk to these shocks, given a more realistic disk configuration by following through the full merger process, and study what happens when the shocks propagate to the outer parts of the disk where the orbital velocities are small, potentially triggering accretion flares.

During the internship I contributed to both the physical modeling and computational development of the project:

### 1. Code development and implementation

- I incorporated post-merger black hole recoil (“kick”) velocities and instantaneous GW-driven mass loss into the simulation code.
- Added thermal cooling prescriptions following the code described by Westernacher-Schneider et al. (2022), allowing for measurement of EM emissions.
- Implemented robustness measures like density, pressure floors, and ceilings for the disk aspect ratio and gas velocities.
- Implemented a realistic Shakura-Sunyaev Disk (a model for accretion disks around compact objects) as initial conditions for the simulation.

### 2. Simulation work & methodological improvements

- For preliminary testing, the publicly available code SAILFISH (v0.5) was used to carry out 2D hydrodynamic simulations of circumbinary disks. Measurement of accretion rates and X-ray emission matches previous results (e.g. Krauth et al. 2023).
- Post-merger shocks modified by the presence of an asymmetric elliptical cavity.

### 3. Methodological improvements

- To observe the effects of the shocks on the outer edges of the disk in realistic simulation times, simulations are run with a version of SAILFISH which supports a logarithmic polar mesh, allowing the simulation domain to be many orders of magnitude larger. Tests are currently being carried out.

- The code development and implementation are also applied to this version of the code, which is still under development by the Clemson Computational Astrophysics Lab.

Preliminary results confirm orders-of-magnitude drop in accretion rates and X-ray emission at merger, consistent with findings by Krauth et al. (2023). Shocks triggered by mass loss and recoil are affected by the formation of an elliptical cavity during the binary inspiral phase. Future work will involve running simulations using the new, improved code, using logarithmic mesh to follow the shocks to the disk's outer edges, allowing for better predictions of long-term electromagnetic emission and accretion rates.

A concern in using the new code is the presence of an inner boundary using the logarithmic polar mesh, which may modify the dynamics of the accretion streams inside the cavity. Experiments will be run using the mesh wobbling feature in the new code which enables the mesh to be centered on one of the orbiting masses, thus avoiding placing the inner boundary inside a region where the dynamics could potentially be modified.

Support from the institution was very helpful – ISTA provided scientific guidance, workshops on various research functions (for example, paper-reading sessions, poster sessions to showcase our work, etc.). Scientific resources were also provided to assist my research, for example the computing resources required to perform high-resolution hydrodynamical simulations.

## **Daily Life**

Interns live on campus at the ISTA institute. Dormitory buildings are well-kept and with a kitchen. There is easy access to a nearby market. Commuting into Vienna is also convenient, on weekdays a direct bus takes us to Vienna where a greater variety of shops and restaurants can be found. Working hours usually last from 8am to 5pm. During this time there would be lunch breaks and an informal coffee break around midday. Plenty of entertainment exists outside of work.

There are sports facilities (some are under construction), for example a football field, and a gym. There is a bar for after-work snacks, and sometimes we would play board games there.

Social events are regularly organised by various departments. I have been to several outdoor BBQ sessions. On weekends I generally head into Vienna to explore the various museums there. People I socialise with are mostly from the Astronomy department (where my internship focus is in), especially my fellow interns. The PhD and post-docs there are also very close-knit and we would often go to lunch together.

### **Lasting Impressions**

This was an amazing experience – ISTA provided a great work environment, and everyone was supportive and friendly. I gained much in terms of what to expect from a friendly but rigorous working environment. This experience confirmed my focus of a research career.



# BANGLADESH

## ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

Wyn Garner, Magdalen College, MMath Mathematics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was a maths teacher at a summer school for women aged 15-20 who were not yet enrolled at university, the main tasks involved designing a curriculum for the students to follow involving



algebra, statistics and geometry; planning and creating lessons and resources for the students to use in the classes and then ultimately delivering the lessons in an engaging manner. Many students showed a great increase in their passion, enjoyment and resilience towards maths, which was a key goal of ours as these students often felt neglected or simply didn't enjoy the subject at their high schools.

Additionally, we were to organise extra-curricular events, these included a Movie Night (showing Hidden Figures), dreamcatcher-creating and a team maths competition/Olympiad. Alongside this we were tasked with

creating projects for a science fair: our stand included project pieces on women in STEM and calculus, a demonstration of the properties of mobius strips, and some 'math magic' demonstrations and explanations. Throughout the summer school we were provided with teaching assistants to help us deliver lessons e.g. translating Bangla or providing classroom



control, support with organising events (as we were unable to book rooms or use printing facilities), and liaising with students about when and where events were occurring.

## **Daily Life**

Settling in was slow but our accommodation was very nice. Each of us shared a 3-bedroom apartment with a joint kitchen and living area, and all rooms were en-suite. The beds were slightly uncomfortable due to the absence of a mattress, but air conditioning and mosquito nets were provided. We didn't receive an induction/tour, but this could be due to us arriving late as the Oxford term ran quite late, as a result it took me two days to learn where the canteen was.

Getting to work was fairly simple, we had access to both a faculty van and the student shuttle bus between campus so could hop on, I personally chose to walk the 2km trip most days unless it was too wet, this walk was fairly precarious, at first, due to the busy roads but I quickly adapted. Outside of work, there was little to do, Chittagong isn't a touristy area and doesn't offer much in terms of recreation, so time was mostly spent hanging out with other summer school teachers or members of the international faculty who were there teaching English for a year. There were a few trips out: for example, the university organised an excursion to an eco-spa for staff and students and we visited the other university in our own time. I often ran on the treadmill provided in the accommodation gym most days.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I gained so much from the experience; an insight into Bengali lifestyle. Most notably, their kindness and willingness to simply give and care about anyone they've just met, but additionally an insight into where their priorities lie: within family, friends and happiness as opposed to some deep-rooted goal or drive. As a result, I enjoyed the experience, at times it was difficult due to the climate, nature of the area we were staying in or my naivety to teaching; these were all made manageable by the Asian University for Women (AUW) or the teaching assistants and their kindness.

As far as career ambitions, it has for the most part confirmed that I don't want to pursue secondary education as a career; I found the job incredibly rewarding when it went well and had no problems with the students, in a UK school I fear the task of classroom/behaviour management would remove that joy. However, it has left me interested in the education sphere, as a result I would consider teaching at a higher level such as a lecturer in university after completing a DPhil, or taking a position that is adjacent to teaching, for example handling education-based data.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

1. AUW canteen is not very good. I would recommend a multi-vitamin or protein powder if you are health conscious for whatever reason.
2. If you are active (e.g. run/gym) I would recommend packing electrolytes as you'll be sweating a lot more than you normally do at home.
3. Expect people to stare if you are white, they mean nothing by it just they have seen very few white people in real life.
4. Roads are incredibly busy and difficult to cross at any time except midnight-5am, so you won't be able to walk far quickly or run at all.
5. The week runs Sun-Thu with Friday as a large day of rest, often shops won't open until after lunch prayer if at all.



# BANGLADESH LEGAL AID AND SERVICES TRUST (BLAST)



Elodie Olatunji, St. Anne's College, BA Arabic with Hebrew, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

## Work Projects

One of my tasks whilst interning at the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) was running a website audit. For this, I mainly had to proofread and edit much of the site's existing English texts, write short summaries on BLAST's work and flag texts that did not have both an English and Bangla translation. This was to ensure that the website was fully bilingual, and BLAST accountable to both clients and foreign donors.

I was also tasked with researching the effects of increasing extreme heat on Bangladesh's labourers, and writing a blogpost on the subject for the website. Before leaving BLAST, my final project was to create a presentation for Sara Hussein to give at a seminar on international labour standards, being hosted by the International Labour Organisation. At BRAC JPG, I was asked to complete a literature review on assisted reproductive technology policies in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries, with a focus on IVF treatments and women's experience of gender-based violence when facing infertility.

## Daily Life

During my time in Bangladesh, I stayed in a shared apartment with a lovely Spanish lady called Jenny. We spoke, cooked and shared meals together most days during the week, and then explored different parts of Dhaka/Bangladesh on the weekends. Being that it was mango season, we would have our daily 'mango time', where we ate new varieties of mangoes that we'd picked up on our way back home. Jenny became a dear friend, and she also introduced me to her students – who were always willing to involve us in their culture and activities.

Likewise, as a Christian, I attended a local church every Sunday. There, I learnt a little bit of Bangla and made some wonderful friends of all ages & backgrounds. They were incredibly hospitable in welcoming me into their families. As for getting to work, I was initially taken to and from the office by BLAST's kind driver. Towards the end of my internship, I was taking different forms of local transport, though mostly CNGs and motorbikes.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I feel that I gained a lot from working with BLAST. I learned about the justice system in



Bangladesh and was able to get involved in some interesting projects pertaining to both labour and human rights. The team I worked with were incredibly kind and hospitable. This remains my impression of the people at large. After this experience, I am certainly interested in exploring the work of legal aid organizations further.



# BRAZIL

## IGARAPÉ INSTITUTE

Yashas Ramakrishnan, Balliol College, BA History and Politics, Second Year Undergraduate, remote



### Work Projects

I undertook my internship with the Instituto Igarapé, a “think and do tank” based in Rio de Janeiro with offices across Brazil and internationally. My work contributed directly to the Institute’s research and planning for Brazil’s leadership role at the upcoming COP30 summit in Belém in November 2025. In this context, I produced two research briefs: one on the “UN80” reform plan proposed earlier this year by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, and another on the BRICS countries, examining their climate action plans, climate finance commitments, and approaches to renewable energy and sustainable development. Alongside this, I was deeply involved in projects addressing environmental crime and illicit economies in the Amazon. I reviewed 13 chapters of a major research paper on the methodologies employed by federal police and local units against illegal operations in the region.

Building on this, I wrote my own policy brief on global anti-money laundering (AML) technologies, highlighting international best practices and recommending how Brazil might strengthen its existing infrastructure. A substantial component of my work also involved translating into English an academic study on the illegal gold, timber, land grabbing, and cattle ranching sectors across the Amazon Basin. This included preparing a comprehensive “scorecard” analysis comparing the institutional and regulatory frameworks of Amazonian countries. In the final two weeks of my internship, extended by mutual agreement given my strong engagement with the projects, I contributed to several other initiatives. These included

preparing a report based on the Global Homicide Monitor database, supporting the Green Bridge Facility (an interface designed to encourage sustainable investment into legal Amazonian enterprises), and assisting with research on the gold mining sector, prison reform, organized violence, and politically exposed persons (PEPs). Throughout the internship, I received strong support from the Institute. The team facilitated my integration through introductory calls with project leaders and subject-matter experts, guidance on translation and methodology, and regular feedback sessions. Despite the challenges of time zone differences, they were quick to schedule calls and respond to my questions, which ensured I could contribute effectively to each project.

## Daily Life

As my internship with Instituto Igarapé was remote, much of my daily life revolved around building an effective structure to manage both my workload and the Brazil – Singapore time difference. I generally worked in the late afternoons and evenings to align with my colleagues’



schedules, which required careful planning of tasks during the day so that I could be fully prepared for meetings and deadlines. This experience helped me develop stronger self-discipline and time management, as I learned to prioritise effectively across multiple projects while maintaining clear

communication despite working across continents. It also taught me values of adaptability and dynamism that I hope to take into my future workplace. Outside of work, I made sure to keep a healthy balance and unwind after long days. I often went to the gym, went running, and cooked my favourite meals with my family. I also spent time relaxing by watching new Netflix series and playing video games, which gave me a way to disconnect and recharge. This balance between

focused work and personal downtime was key to sustaining my energy and motivation over the course of the internship.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship left me with a very positive and lasting impression. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, not only because of the variety of projects I was able to contribute to, but also because of the supportive and collaborative environment the organisation fostered. Working across topics ranging from international climate negotiations and BRICS climate finance strategies to environmental crime and AML techniques in the Amazon gave me a broad exposure to pressing global challenges. The chance to translate and analyse complex research and engage with innovative data tools and platforms gave me a deeper appreciation of how rigorous research can directly inform policy and action, and the interplay of these theoretical frameworks with practical approaches and modern technology.

At the same time, the experience clarified my own career ambitions. While I remain deeply interested in policy research and the international dimensions of climate and governance, I also realised the importance of balancing this with more direct, applied roles in consulting and finance. The skills I gained (synthesising large amounts of information, drafting concise recommendations, and adapting to global teams) are directly transferable to both paths. Ultimately, this internship confirmed that I want to build a career at the intersection of policy and finance and consulting, working to shape sustainable solutions with both analytical depth and practical impact.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Go into the internship with the mindset to make the most of it, to strengthen your practical experience, technical skills, and social workplace ethics simultaneously, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

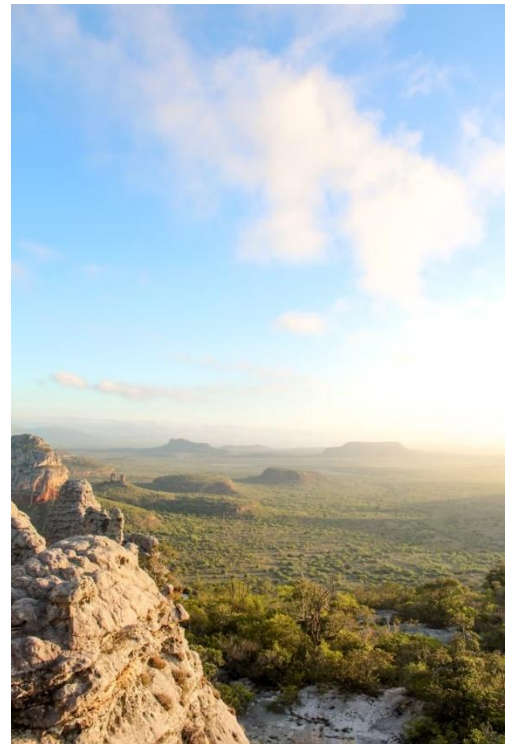
# SOS MATA ATLÂNTICA FOUNDATION

Alexander Evers, Trinity College, BA Spanish and Portuguese, Third Year Undergraduate, in person



## Work Projects

During my Internship at SOS Mata Atlântica I mainly worked with the Environmental Education team, supporting them with their daily activities. Most of this work took place at SOS Mata Atlântica's centre close to the town of Itú in the state of São Paulo. The centre received several school groups a week, and I helped the Environmental Education team with these visits, where we taught the students about the Atlantic rainforest in Brazil. I also helped the team out when we were visited by groups from some of SOS Mata Atlântica's sponsors, such as Heineken and Bradesco (a major Brazilian bank). These visits were slightly different to the school visits and more hands-on, with everyone (including me) being



given the chance to plant their own tree. On the days without visits, I was tasked with researching environmental initiatives in the UK and comparing them to ones in Brazil. I was also given the chance to work with some of the other teams at SOS Mata Atlântica, including the Clean Water Team and the Communications team, where I helped put up a new page on their website.

I was lucky to have lots of travel opportunities during this internship as well, which were a great way to get to know Brazil better. Some of these were more local trips within the São Paulo state, where I visited a few schools in Itú, a community-run park in São Paulo, and the Bradesco

headquarters in Osasco, but I also got the chance to go further afield as well when I was invited to attend an environmental conference in the state of Rio de Janeiro and produce a summary of the conference. It was a really interesting experience listening to a number of Brazilian NGOs talk about the work that they do, and I came away from the conference feeling much better informed about the environmental actions taking place in Brazil. Another highlight of this trip was getting the chance to spend a day hiking in Brazil's oldest national park: Itatiaia National Park, which had some spectacular views!

## **Daily Life**

All my colleagues were very welcoming at SOS Mata Atlântica, which helped me settle in quickly to my new environment. During the course of the internship, I stayed on-site in the accommodation block at SOS Mata Atlântica, which had very good facilities and was surrounded by some amazing scenery, where I was able to go on runs and walks after work most days to unwind. At the accommodation, I was kept company by some of my colleagues as well as two very friendly dogs! In the evenings we could eat together and occasionally we went into town for a meal, which I really enjoyed. Lunch and dinner were provided for free, which was very convenient, but there were also cooking facilities to cook when I wanted to. I stayed and relaxed at my accommodation some weekends, but I more frequently went to São Paulo to play football and even got the chance to go to two music festivals in the city which were great experiences!

## **Lasting Impressions**

I very much enjoyed my internship at SOS Mata Atlântica, and learned a lot from everyone at the organisation, and especially from my manager Kelly, who was incredibly supportive throughout the whole experience. This internship greatly developed my understanding of environmental protection and environmental education in Brazil, as well as developing my Brazilian cultural knowledge. My career ambitions have certainly been shaped by this

experience, as I can very much see myself working in a similar area of work given my enjoyment of the whole experience.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

The first bit of advice that I'd give would be to pack for a range of different seasons! Although the weather was mostly sunny and warm, I also experienced some more wintry days when I



was very grateful to have packed a few jumpers! I'd also really recommend learning some Portuguese before you go, as while most of your colleagues will speak English, this is not the case for a lot of the Brazilian population. Having a bit of Portuguese will make your life much easier when going to the

shops and navigating Brazil's cities if you're planning on travelling, so I'd definitely recommend getting to grips with the basics before you go!



# CHINA

## GOTOCO

Ellen Davies, New College, MSci Experimental Psychology, First Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

I completed an internship with CSSC through Gotoco. I taught a small class of Chinese 11-14 year olds with limited A2 English level public speaking classes. This aimed to improve soft skills in English, whilst also improving their overall English literacy and speaking. This was for a summer camp over 12 days. There were 7 classes in total, so I was working alongside other university students of a similar age to me who were teaching different classes. Each class had a Chinese speaking TA who could translate if necessary and help with behaviour management. I was provided with the google slides for lesson plans and with workbooks for the children.

The camp director Anna was very supportive, and we had a daily teacher meeting as a group in which we could discuss any concerns, as well as plans for the coming days. As well as 4.5 hours of teaching my class a day, I also did 1.5 hour lessons in dance every day, rotating around the different classes. Furthermore, every evening the mentors/ teachers were required to run an evening activity for the whole camp, again materials were provided for this. My main achievements in this camp were helping my class to improve their confidence in speaking English and forming strong relationships with the children. On the final day of the camp, each student gave their final speech to the class in front of their parents.

## Daily Life

My fellow mentors and I were given accommodation at the school where the camp was running in shared dorms. This was very helpful as it meant we did not have to travel to and from the school. We taught classes from 8:30-11:30 and 14:30-16:00 every day. We also had a teachers' meeting at 14:00 to 14:30



every day. Moreover, from 16:00-17:30 we led afternoon activities in our chosen field, for example, I taught Irish dancing. After dinner, from 18:30-20:30 we had whole camp evening activities. We used the break in the middle of the day to plan our lessons for the next day. Therefore, the schedule was very intense, leaving little time to explore the city and relax.

Some evenings, we went out as a group of interns to nearby parts of town to explore the night market and have a drink or ice cream. This was a nice opportunity to experience some of China and spend time as a group outside of the school. Moreover, our camp director took us out for dinner twice: once in the middle of camp, and once at the end. After the end of the camp, we travelled to Yangshuo where we stayed in a hostel that Gotoco had organised for us. These 5 days were a great opportunity to explore the area and spend time as a group. We went out for dinner together most evenings. In the daytime, Gotoco organised for us to go on many fun activities (which we had to pay for), for example, white water rafting and hiking via Ferrata.

## Lasting Impressions

My lasting impression from the internship is that I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to travel to China. I would not have done so without the support of my college for funding. I think the internship has improved my self-confidence and communication skills, especially when having to find different ways to communicate with the children who did not

always understand what I was saying. Although the internship was quite intense and tiring, I would say that I overall enjoyed the experience! I think the internship also gave me a good insight into Chinese culture in a way that cannot be gained without first-hand experience. Although I think I will probably not pursue a career in teaching, this internship has showed me how much I enjoy travelling and working with kids.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I think I would suggest to future interns to travel to the city that they will be working in, a couple of days before the internship starts, to give them the opportunity to explore before they start working, as there is limited time once the programme begins.

## **BA English and Modern Languages (German), First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

The internship was organised by Gotoco, which runs English teaching summer camps in countries across the world, but the camp I was assigned to was run by a separate organisation, CSSC, in Guangzhou in southern China. Over the twelve-day camp, we engaged in four and a half hours of teaching daily, helping Chinese children to improve their English skills through teaching them career prospects-based contents. Classes were provided for different initial levels, from Business at the highest level to Public Speaking at the lowest, which I taught along with another intern. The teaching was challenging, but rewarding, and accompanied by sports and team activities later in the day to provide a range of experiences for teachers and students.

Support-wise, we were provided the teaching materials, and each classroom was additionally staffed by a Teaching Assistant able to speak both Mandarin and English, alongside daily meetings with our organising staff member. Gotoco also provided us with a detailed information pack to ensure we had everything set up that would be needed for a trip to China, including VPNs and payment and communication channels, and organised a 5-day trip after the

camp had ended to their main site in Yangshuo, home to China's famous karst mountains. However, little financial support was provided by Gotoco themselves during this trip, as they only funded transport to Yangshuo and accommodation for the five days. Similarly, the teaching materials provided by CSSC often seemed out of step with the ability level of the students in my class, and little formal teaching training was provided.

## Daily Life

The camp took place on the grounds of an international boarding school, so we spent most of the day on-site. Meals were provided in the school's canteen, with a very good standard



throughout and vegetarian catering also provided. After breakfast, we headed to the first lessons of the day, covering a three-hour block of teaching with a mix of topic and language content. We would then stop for lunch - as teachers we had a three-hour lunch break thanks to the students' scheduled nap and relaxation time, during which we had a teachers'

meeting to go through any issues that had come up in the morning, behavioural or otherwise.

A final afternoon lesson capped off the teaching day, and then we switched into afternoon activities (sports, arts and crafts, and so on), before dinner and a class-based evening activity. The days were fairly long hours-wise, but the mix of activities ensured they were never too overwhelming. As a group, we twelve teachers all got on really well, and many of us went out into the surrounding neighbourhood in the evenings to relax for a bit and explore, which made a nice change from the work. The company also organised a few nights out into the centre of Guangzhou itself, which were good fun.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I think this internship has definitely helped me realise how much I'm capable of already, having managed to complete a two-week camp in an unfamiliar environment, with new people, a significant language barrier, and little prior experience in the sector. It was definitely challenging, and at times I did question my ability to actually do what was meant to be done, but there was a very strong support network in place thanks to the other interns, especially since five of the seven classes had two teachers to allow us to split the workload. As for the post-programme trip, I think perhaps the most rewarding aspect was ironically not the various activities Gotoco arranged for us, from caving to fan painting, which were all absolutely worthwhile, interesting, and good fun. Rather, I think I most appreciated the level of independence that was afforded with us, especially in contrast to the highly scheduled teaching camp.

Figuring out a routine and gradually feeling that I had confident control over how I spent my time in such a different environment to what I'm used to, even in as little as five days, has helped give me confidence ahead of my year abroad that I will be able to handle the challenges that living abroad will undoubtedly throw at me. Although I may not end up teaching English in China on a professional basis, I think starting my teaching journey, wherever it ends up going, with such a high-intensity internship will do me nothing but good in future, especially given that it comes with a professional-grade TEFL Level 3 qualification funded by Gotoco.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would advise that interns on programmes such as mine prepare a little more thoroughly than I did in terms of proactively engaging with the TEFL-course content – Gotoco said that none was needed in order to be able to complete the internship, but I have no doubt I would have had an easier time of it had I gotten a little further through the modules than I did. More generally for international internships, I would absolutely advise paying attention to any and all advice the company gives you on preparing for travel.

The e-Cosy module provided by the Summer Internships was certainly useful, but China in particular has a lot of intricacies when it comes to travelling into the country, such as around accessing the internet. Gotoco was very helpful in making us aware of all of these arrangements and guiding us through the preparations. Also – book flights early! I left mine a little late because I was waiting to hear from my college about whether I'd secured a place on a summer programme running immediately after this internship. I didn't in the end, but by the time I knew that for sure the price of my flights had gone up by over £100, which certainly wasn't ideal.

## BA History, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I taught English as a foreign language to students in two schools in China's southern Hunan province. My main role was to provide these children with cultural experience – i.e. to introduce them to the British way of life, from food to festivals, animals and popular culture. Teaching them English, whilst important, was somewhat secondary as the English level of the children was



low, and I do not hold any formal teaching qualifications beyond those of a swimming teacher.

The teaching itself covered six days at each school, working from 9 in the morning to 5 in the evening with an approximately two-hour long lunch break in the middle of the day. The classes were based around the cultural aspects noted above - for example, in one lesson I taught the children about Christmas, and in another we listened to various pieces of British music from Elgar to the present day. The support I received from the host organisation was generally



effective. There were a couple of issues. For example, at the first hotel in which I stayed, I was unable to get any breakfast, and this issue was not resolved. Generally, however, my experience was positive. The co-ordinators were friendly and did their best to make sure we settled in and enjoyed ourselves, and we were provided with pleasant accommodation and had access to all the resources we needed to teach.

## **Daily Life**

Before we began teaching, we had a 4-day orientation period in Changsha, during which time we were briefly introduced to what we would be doing and what would be expected of us. A risk assessment, noting the most significant obstacles and dangers we might encounter and how to mitigate and/or deal with them if they arose. Once the internship began, we began working almost immediately. At both schools, we began to teach no more than twelve hours after arriving - at the second school, in fact, we began teaching in the afternoon of the day we arrived. This was never a significant problem, as we had already created lesson plans and PowerPoints to accompany them, so we were able to rely on these at short notice.

Outside of work, I spent most of my time with my fellow teachers. In both locations, I was quite rural, so there wasn't a huge amount to do – there were no easy-to-reach venues, but I did not mind this as I wouldn't have used them anyway. A typical evening would consist of dinner, returning home, doing something (for example, going to swim or going out for a snack) and then briefly considering the next day before going to bed.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I definitely enjoyed the experience of working with Gotoco. Teaching was a brilliant way to explore China in a way I would not have done had I simply travelled round it. By teaching, I was able to make deeper connections with the students and local teachers, meaning I gained a greater insight into Chinese culture than I ever could have done if I'd been staying in a hostel. The experience of teaching with other students also enhanced my enjoyment of the programme. Furthermore, I definitely feel I gained something from my time abroad. I'm sure I

am more confident now than I was when I left – after all, it is not easy to explain literally foreign concepts to a group of students who speak little English, something which forced me to change my style of teaching to project a sense of authority whilst also ensuring I maintained enough of a link to the children to keep them engaged. Therefore, as well as improving my confidence, this experience has definitely improved my teaching abilities. That being said, I would not say the experience has significantly altered my career ambitions, which are at the moment quite loose. I do not feel more or less drawn to teaching – either at home or abroad – or any other career after my experience in China.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

The most important piece of advice I feel I could give would be to remind interns that the application process takes time, especially if you are completing it at the same time as exams. Therefore, leave yourself plenty of time to complete the process, and make sure that you do not leave completing documents until it is too late.

## **BA History, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I worked as part of gaining a TEFL qualification, which involved teaching English to students



aged 6 to 16, as well as teaching activities such as badminton, and running evening activities. The class I taught was a Public Speaking class, for 6 to 9 year olds. Across 12 full days, I was able to teach the class the skills required to give a speech about a topic they are passionate about, as well as building their confidence to speak

English. This involved creating and adapting lesson plans to suit students' needs as the days progressed and supporting students 1-on-1 when needed during the lessons. Thus, achievements included helping a class to grow in their English abilities and general confidence, and developing my own communication skills and confidence: working with fellow teachers in an entirely new environment, and learning to communicate to students where English is their second language.

Working with other teachers also involved a lot of teamwork, especially when planning out and running the evening activities, and ensuring a positive and safe environment for the students over the long 12 days for them. The host organisation Gotoco were very supportive in emails in the months before the internship, including how to prepare for teaching (including access to completing the TEFL qualification), and how to prepare for travel, both administration-wise and cultural-wise. Meanwhile, the organisation for the camp itself, CSSC, were supportive in offering welfare support throughout the days, and running the teacher meetings so that we were confident in how to run a class for the first time.

## **Daily Life**

The working days lasted from roughly 8:30am to 8:30pm each day: 3 1-hour lessons in the morning, a lunch break, a teacher's meeting from 2 to 2:30pm, 1 more lesson until 4pm, the afternoon activity (I ran badminton games) until 5:30pm, a dinner break, and finally the evening activity from 6:30 to 8:30pm. The teacher meetings in the afternoons and some evenings involved dealing with the administration side of teaching. Meanwhile, the evening activities were to boost the children's soft skills, and included quiz nights, a treasure hunt, and a 'Build A Scene' activity (which another teacher and I ran). On some days, the lunch break was filled with cultural lessons given by students, including calligraphy and making tea. A couple of days were different, such as an excursion day to the city centre in relation to 'finding your future', as well as the running of a formal dinner one evening, also in the city centre (as the camp was Oxbridge-themed).

The first day of arriving was to settle in and involved having a dinner with fellow teachers and exploring the city centre (Guangzhou) with the directors of the camp. This was followed by an induction day, where we were able to explore the school we were staying and working at, and get prepared on how the next 12 days were going to work. Outside of work, we had some free evenings to go to the city centre with the fellow teachers, to eat out, and do some karaoke. It was also nice to get to know and spend time with the TAs on the camp, who were bilingual and around our age. After the camp itself, we had a week free to travel within Yangshuo, doing activities like white water rafting, grape picking, exploring ancient towns, and via ferrata.

## Lasting Impressions

Overall, I really enjoyed the experience and am very glad I spent a few weeks of my summer in China. The days were intense but very fulfilling, and allowed me to get a lot of teaching experience in just 12 days. I feel I gained a lot from it in all aspects: travelling to an



entirely new place where the culture is very different from the UK's, meeting and working with lots of new people, communicating with children, having one's own classroom, working with students 1-on-1 and dealing with any concerns about students in teachers' meetings, staying in dorm rooms, eating different food, using transport networks in the country.

I have also made many new friends (including from Oxford too) as a result. The experience also taught me to adapt quickly, both in terms of living in an entirely new environment (both in Guangzhou and in Yangshuo), and changing lesson plans and how the teaching days would run, last minute. In terms of my career ambitions, I feel a lot more attracted to the idea of teaching than I did before, as this experience has opened my eyes to many aspects of teaching. Whilst I

was very nervous before undertaking the role of teaching a class, by the end I felt very comfortable talking to the children in my class and teaching them confidently, feeling that I had gotten to know my children well, and that they had gotten to know me. Therefore, I will continue exploring teaching as a possible career in the future.

## Sean Hartnett, New College, BA Philosophy and Modern Languages (French), Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I worked as an English language teacher/volunteer for GOTOCO, a company that connects UK students with teaching camps all over the world. As part of my internship, I got to teach at two summer camps in Hunan, China; this involved organising lesson plans, interacting with Chinese students, planning fun activities for them, and trying to impart a bit of my sensibility/culture onto them. I was luckily able to take a very free approach with my teaching; I incorporated a lot of music into the lessons and even performed songs with the kids at the school's respective closing ceremonies. Thanks to me, there are now a good few dozen Hunanese Chinese school children who are well acquainted with the quite obscure 1987 Australian song "Right Here". The support I received from GOTOCO was very good in general, with the staff being supportive, and down-to-earth. Some confusion often punctuated the organisation on the side of the camps, but the rickety and unpredictable nature of the experience probably added to the excitement, if anything.

### Daily Life

Daily life was pretty jam-packed, with days being long and full of teaching, planning, travelling, and going from place to place. You are tasked with teaching a considerable volume, and the actual classroom interactions can get quite tiring, especially given that the English level of the children in question, can be (here a well-placed cough may be in due order) "variable". But it's very exciting overall, and I got adrenaline buzzes from not knowing how the next day would

shape up, from the fun that would come from going to a new school. I mainly socialised with the other GOTO CO teachers, who in general were a very nice bunch; it is all dependent on luck to some degree, since the whole lot is split up into groups for the individual schools.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I think it was a very fun experience, if not quite hectic. I am glad I did it, since I've realised that TEFL teaching (at least in foreign schools), is definitely not for me. I enjoyed interacting with the



kids, but I don't see myself doing it as a career; I feel my overall strengths as a person don't quite align with the kind of resilience that one needs to thrive in this kind of a path. Sometimes it's nice to know early on in life when something is not for you. I was also very glad to have gotten a nice cultural glimpse of China, and to practice my Chinese; something which was very important to me, when I signed up for this placement, since I'm half-Chinese myself.

I feel I've come to understand the Chinese as people a lot more, and it's good to get a deep view of a country that is so different to what you are used to. After this internship, I feel a lot more confident in general, since the whole thing was quite a daunting jump in the first place. There is something reassuring about knowing that you're able to command an unruly class of 30 Chinese kids or work together with a bunch of strangers who've been thrown together in a foreign country. It's helped me become a fuller person, I think.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Don't go to China without a VPN or an E-SIM.



## BA Classics, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

The internship was an English teaching placement in Beijing, working in a summer school to develop students' public speaking skills. My core responsibilities included preparing lesson plans, designing interactive activities, and leading classroom sessions on public speaking skills. This included teaching a range of skills such as body language and intonation. I introduced practical exercises such as speeches and structured debates. This placement provided me with the opportunity to gain hands-on teaching experience, whilst also being mindful of cultural differences.

As this was also a cultural exchange programme, I introduced the students to Oxford traditions. This included having a matriculation into the classroom, and a formal dinner. A key achievement was helping several students deliver speeches to a larger audience, an experience that many had never attempted before. Some of the students began with very little spoken English, and we're able to deliver full speeches by the end of the camp. Gotoco were helpful with organising pre-departure arrangements, including flights and visas, as well as providing travel advice.

### Daily Life

My daily routine during the internship was structured around a full day of teaching and activities. Our accommodation was on site, so we stayed in the school dormitories. The teaching day began at 8:30 a.m., when I led morning content sessions focused on vocabulary and public speaking skills. Lunch ran from 11:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., providing a welcome break and time to recharge, followed by a short mentor meeting from 2:15–2:30 p.m. to reflect on progress and prepare for the afternoon. The afternoon session focused on the students writing and delivering their speeches until 4pm. Then, until 5:30, I would go to a different class each day to deliver a lesson on origami, with each mentor delivering a different activity. Dinner was followed by evening activities until 8:30 p.m., which were fun tasks for the children including

save the egg, fashion show and a movie night. Outside of formal teaching hours, I had the opportunity to explore Beijing and enjoy free time in the city after the evening activities with other mentors.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The internship left a very positive impression on me. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of teaching in Beijing, particularly the opportunity to work closely with students and see their confidence grow through public speaking and creative activities. The cultural exchange, both inside and outside the classroom, was especially rewarding. Leading lessons, creating engaging activities, and collaborating with other interns helped me build confidence in my ability to manage a classroom. It also helped improve my ability to adapt when some of the children did not understand some of the more complex language I would use, so I would have to think of alternative ways of communicating. This experience has confirmed my interest in pursuing a career in education, especially teaching English abroad.

## **BA History, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I was working as a teacher ("mentor") in a summer school in Guangzhou, South China. Specifically, I led a debate course for a class of 7 Chinese students, aged 8-12. The final project for this class was to engage in a debate with the other debate class, conducted fully in English - in front of parents! I had 12 days to work on their English skills and debating proficiency to get them up to speed for this event. Officially this was a mixed-ability class, but I was impressed by the level of English spoken in the class as a whole, so in general I could focus on more technical elements of debating rather than spending too much time on English grammar.

Outside of formal academic classes, mentors were to be leaders of fun, too. We led afternoon and evening activities, which involved sports (touch rugby for me) and team building. We also accompanied the whole camp on an excursion into Central Guangzhou to watch an English-

language film and visit the Canton Tower, a major landmark. Gotoco's role in this was to link Oxford students with the hiring Chinese summer camp, and offer guidance on preparing to visit China – support with visas, vaccinations etc. They also ran an after-programme excursion to the tourist hot-spot of Yangshuo and provided an online TEFL teaching course which will lead to certification.

## Daily Life

We were roomed on the same site as the summer camp, in the international school. This meant there was no commute needed, which made life very easy in the mornings. Breakfast was served in the school canteen until 8:15; normally I would go at 8am and fuel up before teaching started at 8:30. The morning consisted of three lessons, with 10–15-minute breaks in between, which took us up to 11:30. These lessons would generally teach new theory and introduce new vocab, with a mix of games and group discussion. I was also supported by a teaching assistant in the classroom, who was a Chinese student learning English at university. They could help with translation and behaviour management where needed. A logistics team also existed to supply us with resources needed for each lesson.



We would eat lunch with the class, then I would go back to the classroom to look at the camp-supplied PowerPoints for the next day until the mentor briefing at 2pm, which gave us a run-through of the timetable for the next day. Sometimes we would have cultural classes run by the kids over lunch too. Afternoon lessons would go from 2.30 to 4; these put into practice what had been taught in the morning. Then, I would teach touch rugby with another mentor to a different group from 4-5.30, before rejoining my class for dinner. In the evening, we hosted team building activities for the entire camp before leaving the kids at 8.30pm. Evidently there

was not much free time, but in the evenings as well as looking at plans for the next day I managed to get in some time going out for drinks and entertainment with the other mentors, on a couple of occasions this was led by our manager too. The mentors were a close group, and all social activities were with them.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I very much enjoyed the internship. Teaching the children was never a bore, I loved every bit of it. I felt like I made a lasting positive impact on the children; they were all unhappy to see the camp end. I am now able to manage my energy over a long working day and even put on a high-energy mood when really drained. I'm also becoming more adept at figuring what will and won't work in lessons as a teacher. Often, certain games and discussions would run much longer or shorter than planned for in the lesson outlines, so I had to make quick decisions as to which part of each lesson to prioritise and which could go. There was plenty of opportunity to build confidence. Obviously teaching harnesses public speaking skills, and there were some occasions on which I had to speak to the whole summer camp cohort. The experience has confirmed my career ambitions; I know that I would be successful in and enjoy teaching. I would do this internship again.

## **BA History and English, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

The internship itself was primarily focused on us teaching English as a foreign language in China. This meant that I had a placement on a camp in a school in Hangzhou, where I was given a class of around 12 students and a programme to follow to guide them through learning and practising English through aspects of Chinese culture that they were already familiar with. My role was to work through the provided PowerPoints and worksheets, along with the accompanying guided reading book to go through new vocabulary and grammar points. This was then accompanied by an afternoon practical activity which I had to lead as a method of

solidifying what they had learnt, such as making a paper fan. We led an afternoon activity, supported them during the evening competitions and guided the class in creating a final project that they would present to their parents at the end of the camp. I had lots of support from the camp, in the resources that were provided to me, in the TA who was present in all classes for translation where necessary, and even in a group session to complete the reports for the children as a reflection for their time at the camp.

In terms of my own achievements during this camp, I had the opportunity to lead my own class very independently, and at times to teach a wider group of students and lead them in non-academic settings. I also accompanied the children on the three excursion days at the end of the camp, within which I had the responsibility, alongside other mentors and TAs, of ensuring that all students remained present and engaged during the trips, and then overseeing their ending presentation, all advancing my own confidence and experience in an educational setting.



## Daily Life

During the school camp itself, the school's alarm would go off at 7:30 and at 8. We would have breakfast in the canteen, do a first block of lessons from 9-12 then have a 2-hour break to have lunch, have a break or do any necessary lesson preparation for that afternoon or for the following day. From 2-2:30 we had a mentor meeting to discuss any problems or questions we had regarding the schedule or the teaching we were expected to complete. We would then have an additional 1.5-hour teaching block from 2:30-4, normally building on the work in the morning but with a more creative or practical focus. We would then have afternoon activity for an hour, where we led a class in something practical and separate from academics such as

dance, basketball, painting etc. We would then have an hour for dinner before two hours of evening activities, where all the classes across ages were brought together in a kind of competition. The school we were staying at had a curfew of 10pm so we often relaxed or played badminton in the school if our curfew was unable to be extended. At the end of the teaching programme, we had an additional 5 days staying in a hostel where we had complete freedom schedule wise. Although there were activities on offer and planned for us, they were all optional.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I had a fabulous time completing my internship, the experience at the school was incredibly rewarding and working with the children was such a valuable experience. I have gained a much greater understanding of what it would look like to go in to teaching, but I have also gained an understanding of myself and my own abilities regarding the demands of teaching. I really developed my own confidence and independence, not just in the classroom, but also in the overseeing of the children, alongside other mentors, and the individual travel that was built into the end of my trip.

The experience has certainly altered my own potential career ambitions, as although I now feel reassured in knowing that this sector is something I have the capabilities to do, and something that I feel I would enjoy, I am also now aware that there would be qualifications to the age that I would be interested in working with and the nature of the content I would want to teach - I do not feel that I would enjoy teaching English as a foreign language but instead would prefer to teach more conceptual and abstract content matter. It is maybe something that I would look to go back to do as another internship style experience or as a temporary placement, rather than looking to it as a likely permanent career option.



## MMath Mathematics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was an English teacher for a group of 10 students aged 7-10. The students were learning English as their second language. Over the 12-day internship, I taught for 6 hours a day, which included vocabulary, reading, and grammar. Each day, we would have a new focus to learn vocabulary through, for example, hobbies, visiting Beijing, and technology. We would then practice reading using a book with that focus. Finally, we would have a grammar lesson where students learnt tenses, conjugation and sentence formation. In my daily lessons, I also led cultural arts and craft lessons such as sugar art, mask-making and paper-cutting. I also led students on a school trip to a car factory and a tea museum. I also helped plan and organise the team-building activities for the students. These included talent shows, competitions and music nights.

On the final day of the camp, each student prepared a speech to perform in front of their peers and the parents. For each student, I had to prepare a comprehensive progress and evaluation report. I then had to walk through and provide feedback directly to parents for each student. I received training from the camp logistics team I was working at, two days prior to the students arriving. We were also provided with full accommodation and meals throughout the summer camp and training. I also received support from Gotoco, who regularly checked in to ensure I was settling in well and made sure communication between me and the camp logistics team went smoothly. I was taken on an end-of-programme trip following 12 days of teaching at the summer camp.

### Daily Life

For the duration of the camp and camp training, I was provided accommodation in the boarding house of the school I was teaching in. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were also provided every day. I would start the day with breakfast in the school canteen and then start teaching at 8:30 am. I would then teach for 3 lessons: a lesson in vocabulary, then reading and then grammar. There

were 10-minute breaks between each lesson. We would then have a 3-hour lunch break with lunch provided in the school canteen. In the afternoon, we would begin craft lessons, which included sugar art, mask-making and paper cutting. We would also have an active activity time where we did sports like badminton, dodgeball and basketball.

After dinner, there were team-building activities for the students. These included group talent shows and dancing. I had a manager who overlooked our wellbeing and helped us communicate with the rest of the camp team. Each intern had an interpreter teaching assistant. My teaching assistant was also very helpful in facilitating communication between me and the students. Outside of work, I went into Guangzhou town centre with the other interns and teaching assistants, and we went to see popular tourist attractions.



## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed the programme and felt like I learnt a lot from it. It definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone, especially as it was my first time travelling on my own. Being in a completely new environment helped me become more confident and independent. Teaching English every day helped improve my communication and classroom management skills. I also got better at explaining things clearly and adapting lessons to keep students engaged. Writing evaluations and giving feedback to parents was something I hadn't done before, so that was a useful experience and made me feel more confident in taking on responsibility. Outside of lessons, I enjoyed leading creative activities like crafts and team games, which helped me connect with the students in a different way. Exploring Guangzhou with the other interns and assistants was a highlight that gave me a better understanding of the local culture. The experience has made

me think more about working abroad in the future, especially in a teaching role. I hadn't considered it before, but now I see how rewarding it can be to live in a different country and help others learn through cultural exchange.

## **MBiomedsci Biomedical Sciences, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

The main aim was to teach English as a foreign language to Chinese students. Our cohort was divided into groups, and each group went to a different camp, teaching different age groups. The age group that I taught was middle and high school. Within the first few days, we were given orientation sessions, which described and elucidated how our days would look like, as well as giving top tips and practice before we start teaching. Gotoco had provided us with templates for our lessons plans to get us started, and we had the freedom to build the lesson to what we wanted it to look like, as long as it surrounded the lesson topic and was suitable for the class and the school.

Some of my main achievements is improving my fluency in preparing presentations for lessons and becoming more confident in myself. However, what I found most gratifying, was seeing that the students became more confident themselves during my lessons. I had encouraged them to speak as much as they could, including vocabulary games so that they would feel more comfortable around each other as well. I would deliver a couple of lessons per day and, as a team, we would help lead summer camp activities such as the British Sports Day, or setting role-plays where the students practised their English.

### **Daily Life**

I believe that I had settled in quite well as I had thoroughly enjoyed the environment and the goal of the internship. There was a groupchat created prior to the programme, which we used to ask questions as well as communicate with the other Gotocoers. The accommodation was in fact at the school that I had taught, as the school was a boarding school. Thus, getting to the

site of work was easy. In addition, in our free time, after preparing lessons, we were free to explore the city that we were in.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I enjoyed the experience very much and I am extremely happy that I had applied for this. I believe that this internship allowed me to become more independent. It also helped me develop skills such as public speaking and organisation. Therefore, I have gained a lot in terms of personal and professional improvement. Furthermore, this had led me to consider teaching English as a foreign language as something I could do in my extra time when I am not studying my Biomedical Sciences course.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Do not overpack - you will not need many clothes and you will definitely want to buy new things there!

[Lisa Carr, St. Hilda's College, BA History, First Year Undergraduate, in person](#)

## **Work Projects**

I completed a teaching and cultural exchange internship with Gotoco in Changsha, Hunan, China. I'm really glad I had this opportunity to visit this beautiful city, as I would have never visited it before. For the first four days, we had orientation and training. These sessions gave us lots of insights into how to lesson plan and how to teach successfully. We were also told how many students we would be teaching, their age and a rough guide as to how good their English is. During these four days, we also did some sightseeing, such as going to see Mao's Head on Orange Island, visiting the Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum of Hunan and eating at the night market. The next two weeks, we were teaching in a private school. I was teaching with

another intern. One of us would be leading, and the other would act as a TA. We also had a Chinese TA in each classroom to help with translations or any language barrier problems.



At the start of each week, there was an opening ceremony with singing and the principal warmly welcoming us. We taught theme-based lessons – British history and culture, sports, nature and our planet, countries, worldwide cuisine, festivals and celebrations. We also taught a lesson every day dedicated to our performance for the last day's closing ceremony. My

highlights were showing the students the castles I volunteer at, learning about their love for ping-pong, none of my students' eggs breaking during the egg drop, helping the students cut and prepare their fruit for their fruit salads, and dancing and singing to the song 'Monsters' by Katie Sky during our closing ceremony performance. Throughout both weeks, I enjoyed getting to know each student, seeing their confidence grow and discovering their unique personalities.

## Daily Life

During the internship, I made lots of new friends with whom I still keep in contact. As the internship involved a lot of lesson planning and organisation, there were times when I was relying on others, and they were relying on me. Particularly with team teaching, as this meant I was being assisted by my TA to help with wiping the chalkboard or helping to persuade some students to come to the front to give a speech. Also, my suitcase got lost on the journey to Changsha, and I received it a day and a half later. This meant I was relying on my new friends in some cases, such as with borrowing toothpaste.

We all settled in very well as it's a new environment and with that comes many opportunities to explore, such as trying new foods in shopping malls, drinking a ton of milk, bubble and fruit teas and going to bars and singing karaoke late into the night. I was a bit worried about the social

aspect of this internship, as I am an introvert and not very outgoing; however, through this experience, I have made some very good friends (many go to other Oxford colleges, so we can meet up in the future). This internship has helped me with socialising and has taught me a lot about myself. I've gained a lot of independence through getting three planes there and three planes back home but also being in a hotel room with a roomie, teaching with a TA or being the TA, and eating and socialising with the other interns has resulted in me gaining lots of new friends as well as developing my social skills in the process.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship left many lasting impressions on me. In particular, I am more confident in myself and my abilities. From losing my suitcase on my journey to Changsha to giving a speech in the opening ceremony in front of hundreds of people - I have grown as a person. I used to dislike public speaking, but teaching and standing up in front of 30 students every day greatly grows your confidence and teaches you a lot about yourself. I also would love to visit China again, as I only saw a glimpse of the country. On one of my connection flights back home, I stayed a night in Shanghai, and I managed to get into the centre of the city via metro. I was there for about 3 hours on my own, walking about in awe at the architecture, the lights and beauty of the city. I definitely want to visit Shanghai again and go to Beijing and Hong Kong. Many other interns travelled around China before and/or after the internship.

I have gained a lot of experience teaching, and I am thinking of becoming a History Teacher in the future. I'm still not completely sure about my future career plans; however, this experience has helped me overall to think about what type of career I want and in what industry. This experience has improved my soft skills such as communication, public speaking, organisation and socialising skills. I have made some new friends. This internship has also given me the opportunity to discover more about myself, do some things on my own and grow my independence and confidence. I also learnt a lot about Chinese history and culture, which I would like to read and discover more about.



## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Attend the webinar the week before you go so you can ask any last-minute questions. It will be tiring some days and frustrating when your lesson plan doesn't go as you planned it to, but you have to just move on and use your backup games or plans and improvise. Always have games and lesson ideas ready as back-up if needed. Remember to utilise your TAs as fully as you can - write them into



your lesson plans. Take a lot of the advice and help that the Gotoco coordinators give you (if they do give you any, as sometimes they do just leave you to it or tell you last-minute changes, it's usually always last-minute with the coordinators, unfortunately, so plan for one thing but then plan for any other eventualities as they do occur). Be adaptable and have differentiation in your lessons. Differentiation means you have some easy tasks for students who have low English levels and hard tasks for the students that are grasping the concepts easily – this is especially needed when you go into a classroom without being given the ages of any of your students before-hand and then finding out at a break-time that the students are between the ages of 9-12 so all have very different English levels and are taught very differently! There will be many challenges in the teaching, but you will muddle through, and if you have other teachers supporting you and going through the same problems, then you can help each other out, like sharing lesson ideas and power points. But always make sure to look after yourself and take some time out during breaks and evenings.

One evening I just walked around a big park on my own, and then I Facetimed my parents and showed them around the park and the sunset - the views were spectacular. Another time I woke up at 5.15am and walked 2km to the river to see the sunrise – fill your time with enjoyable moments and not just teaching and working. Also, socialise a lot, sometimes even if

you don't want to, as I really enjoyed karaoke even though I have never done karaoke before – it's good to find out people's music tastes. I also went to bars and pubs with other interns as it helped us relax and chill after a busy day teaching (lessons are from 9 to 5 with a 2 1/2-hour lunch break, so it's a long day)! But don't over-socialise as you need to be ready for lessons!

## BA Modern Languages, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

Teaching children in a private school summer camp in Changsha, Hunan province, China. The teaching introduction was helpful, in that we were taught how to plan lessons, what types of activities students would benefit most from. The coordinators were present at the school, although less so as time went on. There was an issue in that we used the same camp schedule in the first week where we taught 13-year-olds as we had used in the second week where we taught 8-year-olds. We were not supported on how to make this more flexible, and as such the second week was organisationally very stressful and resulted in a group dynamic that was far less positive (exhausted, frustrated with these organisational failures), than it could have been.

### Daily Life

We began with a two-day induction in the city and moved between hotels during the placement. Each day we walked to work and spent 9am-5pm on site, with a long lunch break. The work was demanding, and at times it was difficult to raise concerns or suggest changes constructively, as expectations were high and responsibilities greater than we anticipated. This occasionally created a challenging dynamic within the group, though I still managed to explore the city and socialise during my free time.

### Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed being in China, and the experience gave me a deep respect for teachers and the dedication their work requires. Teaching was rewarding, but I found that we could have

definitely done with more support from the coordinators, whose role was unclear during our teaching hours – we seemed to be doing a lot of the work that we would've expected the organisers to be doing: finding resources, making sure that activities that we were told would be planned for us would be running smoothly, making up for unprecedented changes in timetables, etc. It felt as though we were doing a lot more than teaching English as a foreign language. Despite the challenges, it definitely has given me an experience of what it must be like to be a teacher, as I'm sure it is far more testing than even this was. I really enjoyed spending time with the children, and being able to explore the city, and build my confidence in front of a class.

## Dan Wordsworth, The Queen's College, MSt History, Final Year Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My internship project was to teach in China as part of gaining a TEFL qualification with Gotoco. My placement was at the UDream summer camp in Beijing, where I taught English for six weeks with the other participants. At the Speaking Camp, we've focused on helping the children develop their pronunciation and presentation skills, helping them create posters and perform speeches about their favourite fictional characters. Additionally, for 4 out of my 6 weeks I taught the "Diplomacy Camp". We taught a course based around the Model United Nations, so that the students could learn about the world and improve their English at the same time.

At the Model UN we encouraged the students to develop their confidence in performing speeches and debating in English. We also helped them develop long-form writing skills about complex issues like education and climate change. I received a lot of support from Gotoco before arriving in China as they were very helpful in giving information around preparing for the trip and expediting the visa process, however, once we were in Beijing, almost all of the organisation was done by the Chinese organisation that hosted the summer camp. However, Gotoco were still available for contact and did a great job of organising our end-of-program trip.

## Daily Life

On most days of the internship, I'd be teaching from 8:30-11:30 and from 2:30-4:30, with a gym class at 4:30-5:30, and an evening activity at 6:30-7:20. As the participants became more experienced with teaching we were generally able to take each lesson on our own, allowing us to have more free time – though in a usual 5-day week, I would estimate that each participant generally had around 10 hours as the lead teacher, and a similar amount of time as the secondary teacher in the classroom or participating in gym or other supplementary activities.

We stayed in two-bed rooms on a university campus with some rooms having some issues with damp/mould although the food at the campus was decent. Outside of work, the group of 11 participants socialised a lot



together, and we generally built really good relationships throughout the two months we spent in China together. Moreover, every week, when we had our day off, we'd be taken by the Chinese host organisation to some of the main tourist sites in Beijing (Great Wall, Summer Palace etc.) which was an incredible experience.

## Lasting Impressions

Overall, I hugely enjoyed the experience of the internship. I felt that the teaching experience was very fun to go through, and it taught me a lot about presentation and organisation skills. However, the opportunity to spend two months in China was the most enjoyable aspect of the programme, as it was so interesting to be immersed in such a different cultural environment for an extended period – especially, as I was also able to spend a week travelling independently after the programme's end. One of the biggest benefits of the program has been that it has

made me much more confident in my presentation skills – just last weekend I attended a History Conference, and I felt my teaching experiences really helped give me the ability to deliver my paper. Furthermore, the program was hugely beneficial in terms of language skills, as I already had intermediate Mandarin skills, the immersion was really helpful in helping me improve, especially as I was able to have a couple of conversations while out and about in China. Finally, once I get the TEFL qualification, I feel it will be very helpful in opening new career options - whether teaching or tutoring.

## BA History, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I worked as an English teacher for 8–12-year-olds in 2 separate weeklong summer camps in Changsha, Hunan in China. We were given a timetable of what lessons to plan, as well as additional induction sessions and lists of activities that we could do with the students. The main objective of the camps was to get them more comfortable with speaking English. I was able to get the children more confident in speaking English, especially in terms of the grammar nuances of the language and pronunciation. I also helped them work effectively in groups and put together a performance at the end of each camp where the students confidently sang in English in front of an audience. The host organisation, Gotoco, provided us with the timetables and structural overview of how the camps were to run. They also gave us initial training sessions prior to the camp so we were better equipped to teach the students. Food, transport and accommodation were all catered for – though they did make us change accommodation thrice in the same city which was a little exhausting. They also supervised the camps and helped with the larger scale activities that were planned each day, and supported us during the weeks.

### Daily Life

When we arrived in China, we had a couple days of going around Changsha city, so that we could get a feel of the city, cuisine and time zone. We got familiar with using Chinese apps such

as DiDi for taxis and WeChat for payments. In the first week of the camp, we took a bus to the school, where we stayed for most of the day before taking taxis back to the hotel. In the second week we walked to the school as we were only a 5-minute walk away. Lunch was 2.5 hours in the middle of the day, where some people went back to the hotel or outside to get snacks and refreshments, though food was also provided in the school. We generally ate dinner at the school before leaving for the day. Outside of work, we explored the city on our own terms and went around to different malls and pedestrian streets to try food and new experiences. There wasn't much time in the evening however, as the school days were very tiring, and we spent many evenings just lesson planning and relaxing, but the opportunity to go and explore was always available.

## Lasting Impressions

I had a good experience of the internship and found it generally enjoyable. I did find the second week a bit badly planned and exhausting, as we were teaching a very wide range of children from 8-12, which was different from the first week where all my students were 12 years old.



However, the entire experience was definitely worthwhile, and I feel like I gained a lot of useful skills from it, especially in terms of dealing with uncertainty, adapting plans, resilience and thinking on my feet. Especially since after the camp we were taken to Yangzhou for 5 days which was just as an end-of-camp relaxing programme where we explored the town and did a lot of fun activities, a good note to end the experience on. This allowed me to really appreciate my time in China a lot more and take it in without the teaching aspect. I think it helped me understand that teaching, especially



for much younger students, is not what I would go into in the future, but also that I do enjoy a huge part of teaching, just maybe an older age range of students. Therefore, I feel like it was an overall good experience, just a little exhausting when it was nearing the end.

## MChem Chemistry, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

In the Gotoco unpaid teaching internship, I lived with and taught a 12-year-old Chinese child English in a 1:1 tutorial style where we would have 4 hours of defined English lessons a day - 2 hours of which were sit down lessons and 2 hours of which were activity-based lessons. I taught for a month. I designed lesson plans and was provided with some rough itineraries from the homestay agency Gotoco passed us on to. While the teaching days often felt like 8 or more hours on demand, as there were no defined working hours, we were compensated by a paid for dinner once a week. After the initial teaching placement, we were offered a weeklong trip in the mountains of Yangshuo which was fabulous. Additionally, I will be gaining my Level 3 TESOL Certificate through this placement- however this was independent of the in-person teaching placement and will be completed online over the course of the next few months. While Gotoco were not the actual company to host me and the others on my placement, any and all support and advice they could give was helpful and in a timely manner. Unfortunately, the initial internship I signed up for was a camp-based internship which was cancelled extremely close to the beginning of the placement, while Gotoco was adequate in finding alternatives, this felt slightly unprofessional.

### Daily Life

Upon arriving in China for the dates of the placement, I was greeted into the home. My daily life during the weekdays generally started at 10am. After I got ready for the day and had breakfast (provided), I would start teaching my student in a sit-down style of lesson. Depending on her mood and how tired she was from her other daily lessons prior to ours, we would adapt

the lesson length accordingly. Then between 12.30pm and 1am we would both have lunch together before going out for an activity-based lesson for 2 hours (e.g. seeing a museum or other culturally enriching activities). After this we would return and generally take a short break (although this often became a long break as my student would be understandably exhausted and so her parents would continuously say to give her 15 more minutes – during which it was very difficult to perform other activities), before finishing the allotted overall 4 hours of intensive lessons. This could mean, most-often finishing the day anywhere between 6pm and 10pm (after dinner). After which I would then plan the lessons for the next day followed by some down time, a meeting, or dinner with our host agency. Weekends were considered free time, however more than once, the host agency either organised an event for us to take the kids we were teaching to, or a meeting with our manager/co-ordinator and the 3 other people on the placement. Primarily the main socialising was limited to these other placement holders. I did on a few occasions travel on a day off or meet some locals.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The type of teaching was intense and while it was rewarding, it was not what I signed up for, the manager which the agency Gotoco found the placement with was nice but had different expectations of us (e.g. hours and qualifications) than we were told or had. I did enjoy the experience but was often frustrated by the lack of clarity and transparency in the details of the placement. The experience was unique and the memories I made will last a lifetime. The end of program trip was incredible, and I met so many great people. This experience has fundamentally changed me, and while I would not do it a second time and it had its hardships, I would not trade the time I spent doing the placement for anything else.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Make sure this is the experience you want – if you want to go and explore the world, you won't get that during this placement (however I did do so afterwards), but you will have a good and mostly authentic experience (depending on which camp/ homestay you end up in).

## BA History and Politics, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was part of an English cultural exchange programme in China with Gotoco, where I helped teach English to Chinese schoolchildren and received a very memorable cultural experience.



This began with a 1-week induction into English teaching methods and classroom techniques, as well as socialising with other English teachers and visiting cultural sites around the main city. We were then split into smaller groups and sent to different schools where we taught self-designed English lessons and interactive activities across common themes for 6

days. We then repeated this at another school for another 6 days, in which I co-taught with another participant, before reuniting with the other English teachers for a trip to a beautiful mountainous region of China for more cultural experiences. Overall, the placement was key to helping boost my confidence, both in leading classrooms and designing lessons as an educator but also in socialising and working in a cohesive team over the 3 weeks of training and teaching. Throughout the whole time, both the host schools and Gotoco provided very personal, efficient support for any needs we had.

### Daily Life

For the first week, we had organised induction from about 10am-5pm with a mix of cultural visits, group teaching and classroom management practice, and time to work on our own presentations. We also took part in group meals in our hotels to get to know other participants and the Chinese hosts but also had the freedom to explore the city as we wished. It was very

easy to make friends and connections in this first week and acted as a gentle preparation for the teaching portion. Once we had been distributed to the schools, our group travelled and was welcomed warmly by the host schools. From then, each day we were driven to the school and taught from 9-5, with a long 2-hour break for lunch, where we continued with lesson planning. During the teaching time, we were largely expected to lead the classes independently, with the aid of Chinese speaking teaching assistants. After finishing for the day, we joined some of the Chinese teachers for dinner at the school (same as lunch) and returned home where I continued lesson planning and socialising with roommates.

### **Lasting Impressions**

I loved the experience, I feel like although it wasn't necessarily a career-advancing placement, it did provide useful socialising, confidence and teamwork skills and it helped create new connections and friendships. On the cultural side, it was a very unique experience, both being in a country culturally and geographically far from the UK but also being more able to interact with the local people and have more unique experiences outside of a normal tourist one.

## **GUIZHOU EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE (GEAIE)**

[BA English Language and Literature, Second Year Undergraduate, in person](#)

### **Work Projects**

This summer, I completed a two-week internship with the Guizhou Education Association for International Exchange (GEAIE), during which I taught a course I designed on North American Literature to university-age students in Guizhou Province, China. The first week, I taught at Guizhou University (GZU) in Guiyang. The following week, I taught at Guizhou Vocational

College of Economics and Business in Duyun. My first week was more work-intensive than the second: at Guizhou University, I taught daily from 09:00–11:30 and 14:30–17:00, with an extended lunch break between the two sessions. In the second week, teaching hours were spread out, with cultural activities (such as tea-making) and sightseeing incorporated throughout the week.

My course emphasised class discussions, vocabulary practice, creative writing activities, and poetry read-alouds; I chose to focus on a different writer every day, but other interns structured their classes differently depending on their subject. At the end of the week, I had my students present their final projects, brief skits inspired by American landscape paintings. This was the programme's inaugural session, so naturally we encountered a few hurdles over the course of the internship—mainly technical difficulties, which we were generally able to overcome using VPNs. In all honesty, it sometimes appeared as though the colleges were not completely prepared for the teaching element of the programme, but nonetheless we had excellent support from administrators and students alike.

We were wonderfully accommodated—the schools were well-resourced, the meals provided were always delicious, and the hotels we stayed in were comfortable and clean. Staff and students at the universities and colleges were enthusiastic about welcoming us to their institutions and cities. Oxford interns were all assigned student buddies, who helped show us around and facilitate classes; this was immensely helpful, and I became good friends with my student buddies!

## **Daily Life**

On the weekends, GEAIE organised a variety of exciting cultural activities for the interns. The first few days of the trip were a whirlwind, as we tried to pack as much sightseeing as possible into the weekend before teaching began; however, that weekend also served as a nice transitional period, during which the interns got to know each other and were able to begin acclimating to the weather and time difference. Our first weekend was thus spent in and around Beijing (highlights included visiting the Forbidden City and the Great Wall) and then

travelling to Guizhou. The following weekend, we visited Huangguoshu Waterfall (the largest waterfall in Asia) and spent the night in the historic Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village.



Our final weekend, before flying back to London, we visited Balinghe Bridge and enjoyed a night out in Guiyang. I really enjoyed the variety of activities GEAlE organised for us and feel that they helped me bond with the other students on the programme. During the programme's first week, I had little downtime (and was often busy adjusting my teaching plan in free moments) but nonetheless spent some wonderful evenings with our student buddies.

The group teaching at GZU was small (only me and two others), so we grew quite close with our three buddies and explored Guiyang in the evenings; I really

enjoyed seeing the neighbourhood's students and locals frequent in their spare time. In the rare moments when I did not have plans, I usually listened to music or chatted with friends from home—mindless activities were crucial for winding down after a busy day of teaching and practicing Mandarin. In the second week, we had fewer activities planned for the evenings, so I explored the neighbourhoods around our hotel with my fellow interns.

## **Lasting Impressions**

This internship was a truly wonderful experience. I enjoyed both the teaching and sightseeing elements of the programme, and having the costs of food, transportation, and lodging covered by GEAlE meant that everyone was able to appreciate the travel without having to worry too much about budgeting and spending. I began learning Mandarin in high school, so visiting China and immersing myself in the language and culture has always been an aspiration of mine. I feel incredibly fortunate for this opportunity to do so and feel that the programme improved my



spoken skills not only in Mandarin but also in English—communicating with students encouraged me to practice exploring and presenting ideas from different angles.

The most impactful skill I developed by teaching on this programme was that of improvisation—sometimes, I had to adjust my lesson plans halfway through the day because my class was moving slower or faster than anticipated, or because the content was proving too difficult for the students. Teaching forces you to think on your feet; it also requires some creativity when explaining unfamiliar concepts to students or responding to unexpected questions. I was teaching a subject (American literature) which is related to my degree but which I have not had much time to explore at Oxford, and I feel that my students helped me approach the subject from a new and nuanced perspective; this programme did not only teach me crucial professional skills but also allowed me to further develop my academic interests. I had not previously considered teaching as a potential career, but I have found that I really enjoy it and would love to participate in a similar programme in the future. My career ambitions lie in a different field, but I am now considering taking some time to teach after university.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Make sure that you have acquired a Chinese SIM card or e-SIM prior to your departure (they are especially affordable if you are only purchasing a two-week or one-month plan). I would recommend getting an e-SIM with a built-in VPN, which is useful for accessing apps or websites not available in China. If your SIM card



doesn't include a VPN, you can get a short-term VPN plan for relatively cheap (or even sign up for a 30-day free trial). Do your research before selecting a SIM card and VPN—many services

(e.g. LetsVPN) function well in China, but some popular VPNs (e.g. ExpressVPN or NordVPN) may be blocked.

Also, research which apps are popular in China! Many interns used social media like WeChat to communicate and coordinate with their student buddies, and other apps like Alipay and DiDi are useful for shopping and getting around. If your course requires specific materials (USB, art supplies, paper, collage materials), bring them to China—don't expect that the schools will necessarily have the supplies you need. Most classrooms simply had an interactive white-board and some markers. Also, don't be afraid to voice any needs or concerns to your programme supervisor—they try to be as accommodating as possible and are eager to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Most importantly, keep an open mind—you might not be accustomed to the food or pace of life, but just take everything in and try to go with the flow. Be friendly and remember that many of the students you'll meet have never encountered someone from the UK before. Finally, you will be very busy for much of the trip, so take advantage of every moment you have to nap, because you'll be in for some early wakeups!

## Lok Ching Fung, St. Hugh's College, MPhys Physics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my two-week internship, I taught English to first-year university students in China over ten days, split equally between two universities. Each day involved approximately four hours of teaching. I designed my own syllabus and had to deliver lessons in simple English. At the end of the program at each university, students completed a project to demonstrate what they had learned. Outside teaching hours, the host organisation arranged cultural visits around the city and allowed free time for city exploration. All costs—including flights, food, accommodation, and daily living expenses—were fully subsidised. Dietary needs were well accommodated, and

the accommodation was excellent, with private rooms with en-suite bathrooms. I felt genuinely welcomed by the organisation, students, and the staff in the universities, all of whom were supportive and readily available to answer questions.

## **Daily Life**

Upon arriving in Beijing, we spent the first two days visiting iconic sites like the Forbidden City and the Great Wall. On the third day, we flew to Guiyang, Guizhou to attend the opening ceremony. The following five days followed a rewarding routine: we taught for approximately four hours each day, usually dining on campus. While local cuisine is often spicy, the school provided milder options for international interns. After teaching, we participated in cultural activities such as museum tours and traditional craft workshops, which were often joined by our students. These interactions were a highlight, allowing me to form meaningful connections and learn about their lives and cultures. During a two-day gap between teaching in two universities, we toured Guizhou's natural and cultural landmarks, including a waterfall and a traditional Miao ethnic village. The trip concluded with a visit to a famous tall bridge and a local handicraft market, providing me with a memorable immersion into Chinese heritage.

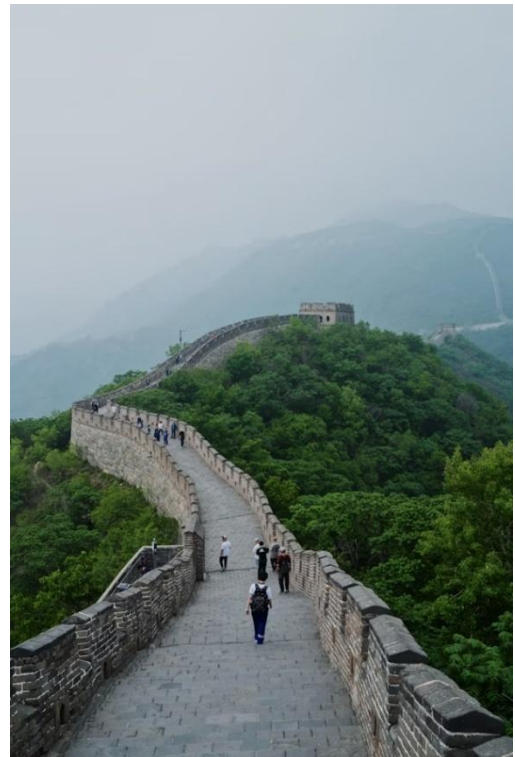
## **Lasting Impressions**

This internship was an incredibly rewarding experience. I greatly appreciated the freedom to design my own course curriculum, which allowed me to tailor lessons to my interests and engage my students. Building genuine friendships with them was also a highlight. They were very active and enthusiastic in class, raising their hands to answer all my questions and always happy to share their perspectives with me. The cultural exploration was equally enriching, with well-planned trips to more than seven iconic sites across Beijing and Guiyang. These visits provided a profound and firsthand understanding of China's vast history and vibrant ethnic traditions to me. This experience solidified my passion for combining education with cultural exchange, strengthening my ambition to pursue a career in this field.

## Jasmine Yang, Mansfield College, BA Human Sciences, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

On my internship, I worked at two different universities in China, each for around five days, teaching a course I had designed. It was fun but definitely challenging as I had to adapt the course significantly from my plan, to best suit the range of students across the universities, but the rewarding experience of teaching and the cultural trips and activities the organisation took us on (as well as the other lovely interns) made the internship a great experience. The host organisation were the universities, which provided different types of support depending on which university an intern was at, as it seemed to be quite different and not standardised between them. In the first university, we had a teacher to accompany us everywhere, eat lunch with us and show us around the university. In the second university, we were given more freedom to return to the hotel early and had a translator to help the students to understand us.



### Daily Life

When we first arrived in Beijing, it was a whirlwind of meeting the other interns, the teachers/organisers, and sight-seeing trips, so we were very busy! It was really fun meeting the other 10 or so interns, most of whom I met in Heathrow Airport, so navigating the airport and flight alone was a bonding experience for us. Once we landed, we enjoyed a range of cultural activities, such as climbing the Great Wall of China and visiting the Summer Palace, as well as delicious dinners experienced altogether as a group. After the weekend, we split into smaller groups to travel to our respective universities. Over two weeks, I worked at two different universities, for about

five days each. Every morning, we were picked up by a teacher affiliated with the university, who would drive us there and drive us home at the end of the day. I personally found it quite easy to enjoy the experience and feel at ease – but due to how much we had to do and how often we were travelling, I didn't feel settled until a few days into working at the first university, which was the first time a real routine was established. The warmth of the other interns, as well as the teachers and organisers, played a huge role in helping me feel relaxed and comfortable.

## **Lasting Impressions**

It was truly an incredible experience, and it only made me wish that I had applied for more international opportunities earlier! Having the chance to meet so many other wonderful and friendly students from Oxford, as well as connect with people around the world, was the best part of the experience. The main thing I believe I gained from this experience is the ability to adapt quickly under pressure, which was a skill I quickly had to develop when lecturing in front of a class who clearly could not understand the language I was using, nor the content of my lesson. Although this began as a huge hurdle, I believe overall it was a good challenge, as I feel much more confident in my public speaking skills, as well as my ability to quickly and confidently adapt material to suit a much wider range of audiences than before. This experience has encouraged me to seek more teaching opportunities, particularly teaching abroad, as a fulfilling and exciting way that I might spend this year out from education after finishing my undergraduate degree at Oxford University.

## **BA Human Sciences, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

During this internship, I was teaching different groups of local Chinese university students (between the ages of 18 to 20). The intention of the programme was to exchange cultures and ideas, so although I was teaching in English, I was also directly teaching English. This meant that my lessons covered subject materials that I had covered within my own Human Sciences

degree. The host organisation was very attentive to our needs, providing a local teacher to translate our lessons when necessary, which was helpful. The host organisation also made sure that we were well looked after between teaching lessons, giving us tours around the campuses and helping us to taste the local cuisine.

## Daily Life

We were accommodated in hotels for the duration of our stay in China, so we were always comfortable and well looked after by the host organisation. We were brought to our campuses to teach usually by taxi, and this was arranged for us by our host organisation, which made it very easy for us to get to the universities to do our teaching. Outside of our teaching work, the 12 of us students who were on the programme (who are all students at Oxford) socialised together. This included seeing the local area, going to the local shops etc. On the weekends, the host organisation organised trips so we could experience the local culture in China and more specifically, within the Guizhou province. This allowed us to see the local tourist destinations,



such as the Huangguoshu Falls waterfall and various local markets. We also got to experience the tourist destinations within Beijing, as we spent two nights there immediately after flying into China. Here, we went to the Forbidden Palace, as well as going up a section of the Great Wall of China and

experienced some of the incredible local Chinese cuisine for the first time on the programme.

## Lasting Impressions

The programme was an incredible and culturally enriching experience that was truly one of a kind. I would never have experienced anything like it had I not been a part of this programme.



The teaching work was both challenging and rewarding, and while I hope I was able to help my students to improve their English and cultural awareness of the Western world, I also learnt lots about Chinese culture from both my students and the host organisation. In doing so, I feel I have consolidated my knowledge from my own course at Oxford, from teaching others, and improved my confidence in public speaking.

I feel I have gained valuable teaching experience that can be applied in many spheres of work in the future, irrespective of whether or not I choose to pursue a career in teaching. I truly enjoyed my experience, as well as my time in China, and while I am not sure that I will necessarily pursue a career in teaching, I have learnt valuable skills in public speaking, communication, and cultural inclusivity that I will carry forwards into future spheres of work.

**Samuel Miguel Owen Duch, St. Anne's College, BA Geography, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I applied to my Clash & Click internship in China hoping to gain more experience in education, as well as travel to a new country and experience a new culture. Not only did this internship help me achieve that, but it also gave me so much more – lifelong friends and contacts in China and Oxford, a passion for learning languages and travelling. Our main tasks during this internship were to design a one-week long course, on a topic of our choice, to deliver to students our age (between 18-20) in local universities.

The aim was for these students to learn more about other cultures and broaden their global horizons, as well as learn and practice English whilst learning something interesting. I chose to teach a course on basic Geographical Concepts and Sustainability. Overall, the host organization was incredibly welcoming, generous and helpful, organizing sightseeing itineraries, travel, funding, meals and world-class accommodation.

## Daily Life

Every day, we would wake up and get breakfast at the hotel we were living in and get driven to the university we were teaching at that week. At the first university I taught at, we taught for 2.5 hours in the morning, with small breaks, had lunch with the friends we made at the university cafeteria, went back to the hotel for a short rest, and came back to campus to teach for another 2.5 hours in the afternoon. Afterwards, we would get driven back to our hotel, but most days we would go out and explore the city with our new friends, going to cafes, restaurants, parks, museums and malls. On the weekend, we were taken to view important cultural heritage sites in Guizhou, which were amazing.

## Lasting Impressions

I deeply enjoyed this internship, which not only helped me gain a better understanding of my career interests, but also provided valuable life experiences and lessons that I will treasure forever. Most of all, learning more about Chinese culture helped me think a lot more about my future after university, and has sparked a



curiosity and desire to travel more. Since this internship, I have been looking into options to study abroad or pursue more work experience abroad, so it has really helped direct my career path.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Make sure to buy an Airalo ESIM before you leave - it has a built-in VPN and works fantastically, so you can stay in touch with your family easily as soon as you land. If you do not get this or some form of VPN that works well before you leave, it will be difficult to get access to Western

internet again. Also, get WeChat and set its payment feature up before you leave, as you will need it for everything in China, and it requires an SMS verification during setup that you will not be able to do while you are using your ESIM there.

## **HUAZHONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (HUST) – CLEAN & RENEWABLE ENERGY**



**Bartu Cetindag, Exeter College, MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

Throughout the internship, my focus was on researching complex climate policy and energy system models, the economics of solar PVs and assessing the effects of weather events on solar PVs. My research was dynamic and varied; however, the focus was always on solar PVs and their realistic potential in the future. I learned about online tools which can be used to assess energy systems, conduct scenario analyses and about machine learning tools which can be used to obtain climate and energy related data.

My findings and research laid the foundations of the paper that the PhD student I was working with, was working on. I presented my work in the form of word or excel documents and read more than 30 publications throughout the internship. The work environment was very collaborative; I received feedback on every piece of work I submitted to my supervisor. This allowed me to think critically on some of my work and added depth to my understanding of the topic. Daily discussions with the student I worked with kept my work focused and concise. I hope to apply the skills and methods I learned in the 6 weeks I was at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), in my masters project and later in my professional life.

## Daily Life

My internship took place in a massive university campus in Wuhan, which contained everything I needed from a variety of food options, stores and a gym, to many social grounds. The accommodation offered was inside the campus and a 20-minute walk or a 5-minute cycle from the office I worked at. I enjoyed spending my time during the day in the campus as the abundance of trees and shade provided a great escape from the summer heat of Wuhan. The settling in process was very smooth due to the assistance I got from my assigned student buddy.

My student buddy contacted me before I arrived and provided support throughout the internship. The internship I did had many other Oxford interns; therefore, socializing was very



easy. I met many people from Oxford from different colleges and made good friends which I intend to meet up with again in Oxford, when I am back next year. Besides the work, we explored not only the city of Wuhan but also many other cities in China. The well-connected high-speed rail in Wuhan allowed us to visit many provinces in China on the weekends.

As there was a language barrier between us and the locals, having other interns there from Oxford made the experience smoother and more enjoyable.

## Lasting Impressions

I had an incredible time during this internship. This was because the whole experience was much more than just an internship, but a once in a lifetime opportunity to discover China and make lasting friendships along the way. I would recommend this program to anyone who is

considering it. This experience was my first ever engineering and research focused internship. It gave me a clear idea on how a research-based career would look and made me realize that it is more enjoyable than I thought it was.

Up until now I was not sure if the engineering career path was suitable for me, however, this research internship made me realize that it is too early to rule it out. Besides being part of a professional research team, it taught me how to immerse myself in a foreign culture and overcome challenges that come with it. I think this internship is a great example of how rewarding it is to be part of an international internship and stepping out of your comfort zone.

## MChem Chemistry, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I spent six weeks at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan working on a research project looking at how adding tellurium can change the way certain metal catalysts behave when converting CO<sub>2</sub> into useful chemicals. The aim was to make the reverse water-gas shift reaction more efficient and selective by adjusting the catalyst's structure at the nanoscale. Most of my time was spent in the lab preparing nickel-based catalysts, testing their performance, and analysing the results using different techniques, including spectroscopy and microscopy. Because the lab closed early for cleaning and maintenance, I couldn't collect as much data as I had hoped, so I filled in the gaps using literature research. Even so, I was able to see how tellurium changed the shape of the catalyst particles and improved selectivity, which was exciting to discover.

I felt very supported throughout my time at HUST. Professor Guo Limin guided the project and ensured I understood how my work fitted into the bigger picture. The PhD students and researchers in the group were incredibly kind, showing me how to use the equipment, helping with experiments, and even assisting with practical matters like topping up my dorm electricity. Their generosity and patience made my time in Wuhan both academically rewarding and personally memorable.

## Daily Life

Settling into life in Wuhan was a new and exciting challenge. My accommodation was on campus, so getting to the lab each morning was just a short walk through the University grounds. I quickly got used to the rhythm of starting my experiments in the morning, running tests or analysing data in the afternoon, and chatting with my research group over lunch. The group was incredibly friendly, and I often asked them for their recommendations on the best things to see and eat in Wuhan.

Outside of work, I made the most of my free time to explore both the city and the country. In Wuhan, I visited landmarks such as the Yellow Crane Tower and walked along the Yangtze River, as well as trying local dishes like hot dry noodles.



On weekends and longer breaks, I travelled to cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guilin, and Zhangjiajie, which gave me the chance to experience China's incredible variety of landscapes and cultures. Socially, I spent time with my lab mates, joining them for meals or evening walks, and we shared a lot of laughs despite the language barrier. Their warmth and curiosity about my home country made me feel welcome and turned the internship into a truly memorable experience.

## Lasting Impressions

My internship at Huazhong University of Science and Technology left me with incredibly positive and lasting memories. It was both an academic challenge and a cultural adventure, and I truly enjoyed every aspect of it. The research itself gave me the opportunity to work on a project at the forefront of sustainable chemistry, improving my technical skills in catalyst



preparation, experimental testing, and data analysis. Just as importantly, it taught me how to adapt when plans change, think creatively when faced with constraints, and work collaboratively across language and cultural differences.

Living in Wuhan and travelling to other parts of China broadened my perspective far beyond the laboratory. I gained a deeper appreciation for how science is conducted in different settings, and I left with a stronger sense of independence, resilience, and curiosity. The friendships I formed with my lab group and the generosity they showed made the experience not only professionally valuable but also personally meaningful. This experience has confirmed my interest in pursuing a career where I can combine technical problem-solving with international collaboration. It reinforced my belief that stepping outside my comfort zone is one of the best ways to learn, grow, and discover new opportunities.

## Benjamin Watson, University College, MPhys Physics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My internship was looking at carbon mineralisation - taking carbon dioxide and locking it away in the form of metal carbonates, specifically calcium carbonate. I started by looking into the literature around this topic, reading about the various methods that have been used to optimise this process, to capture the most carbon, but also looking at the phase of crystals produced and where they can be best used in industry. After doing a week of research into papers, I had a week of lab demonstrations, showing me the different equipment used in processes directly for my project, but also giving me a broader perspective on similar topics, like photocatalytic carbon capture, and toxic metal removal. Then we did a couple of experiments, specifically looking at how the use of amino acids (Lysine and Glycine) can support the reaction, both in increasing speed of reaction and the amount of carbon locked away in the product. I finished the internship with a presentation to other interns in the same ICARE group (EU-China

clean energy collaboration) on my work as well as a brief overview of possible further research and development of our results.

## Daily Life

I took a while to get settled into daily life - understanding how and where to get food (ate out in canteens / restaurants most of the time due to limited access to kitchens), the process of work



and working hours, etc. After that, daily life was fairly simple and easy - working in the morning, then a break for a couple of hours in the middle of the day due to excessive heat (most Chinese people stay indoors and go back to work later when it's cooler), then back to work in the afternoon, before having the

evening to myself.

There were lots of other interns from Oxford as well, and we often explored the nightlife around the campus, including a couple bars, malls, and night markets. On weekends, we took the opportunity to use China's fantastic train system to visit other cities, like Beijing and Xi'an to see incredible sights and experiences in China which was incredible and allowed much greater exploration of China as a whole.

## Lasting Impressions

I loved the internship as a whole – I learnt so much about the work I did, and it gave me an invaluable insight into the world of PhD and academic research. I also learnt so much about China as a country and its culture and people - we don't know much in the West and often are given the wrong impression of what it's really like, so it was amazing to learn about it in person and correct those wrong assumptions. The Chinese systems were incredibly efficient and

simple, and while they weren't made for English speakers understandably, there were often translation options and easy ways to get around difficulties.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Plan where you want to visit more – use every opportunity you can. I didn't plan very much so didn't make the most of travel opportunities as I could have.

**Clement Heyd, Lincoln College, MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

The research I did was in depositing a thin film of Tin-Oxide electron transport layer for perovskite solar panels. I was paired with a colleague, and a master's student who led us through the experiments on a daily basis. We got familiar with the equipment, and how to work in the cleanroom. We also often had discussions with the group's leading professor and had weekly meetings where we had to present our progress. We gave a final presentation to all of the other ICARE interns on the last week of the internship. We were working on our individual projects for the first and last two weeks of the six-week program.

During the middle two weeks we attended workshops on Chinese culture and language, as well as visits to local companies and a trip to Nanjing for a company visit. During these two weeks, we also attended a series of lectures and lab visits around Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), centered around green and renewable energy and its development in China. One of my favourite activities was the Kung-Fu and Tai-Chi experience which I think I will be continuing to practice in England. While it's hard to make a meaningful contribution to a research project in such a short amount of time, we still managed to get some meaningful data on the thin films we produced and tested, which was quite satisfying.

## Daily Life

The usual weekday would begin by a quick breakfast and a cleanroom visit to start the morning's experiment. We would then measure the previous day's sample and classify it. The rest of the morning was spent on independent work and data analysis. We would then meet at the canteen for lunch, which had a wide selection of dishes from all around China at a very reasonable price. We would return to the cleanroom in the early afternoon, before spending some time working in our office. We would then relax for a little bit before dinner which was usually at the canteen, local food court or restaurant.

We would often visit places in Wuhan or play football/cycle in the evening, as the temperature was smouldering (up to 40C) during the day. We took the opportunity to travel every weekend. usually from Friday afternoon to Sunday night. China's gaotie high speed train made it quite convenient. There are astonishingly beautiful nature spots to see, and bustling cities on the scale we cannot imagine in the UK. Most light up fully at night, which made seeing a drone show in ChongQing even more impressive. We also got to try many culinary dishes with all sorts of flavours made from ingredients we would not commonly use at home. Despite numerous security checks and special lines, travelling as foreigners in China was surprisingly easy and efficient.



## Lasting Impressions

I will forever remember this trip. This opportunity to live in a country which is so vastly different than what I am used to, was amazing. Despite dealing with the heat being tiring at times, and

having to navigate unfamiliar places a lot, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I had heard a lot about China from the western point of view, yet nothing beats seeing it in person. While some of what I've been told and described is true, there is so much more nuance which is only visible on the ground. I had fantastic conversations with some of my fellow colleagues doing public administration internships about Chinese society and what they had noticed differently. While the research we did is quite niche, and the content I have learned through it might not necessarily be directly useful, being part of a research team gave me valuable insight into the world of academia. I was already pretty set on my career ambitions, but seeing some of the cutting-edge tech of solar panels, made me even more excited about the future of renewable energy. Seeing such a push to design green energy from the future on the other side has given me hope that we will be able to keep up energy production while reducing emissions.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Buy a mattress as soon as you arrive, travel as much as you can during the weekends, try every type of food you can get your hands on, DiDi everywhere, and wander off the beaten tourist path.

## **MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

During my time supported by the William Fung Foundation, I had the opportunity to work in a research lab focused on developing advanced diagnostic technologies. My project involved using the lab group's proprietary sensor technology in combination with machine learning to build a classification model for early lung cancer detection. The lab provided me with access to real-world data collected from breath samples of patients at local universities, which added both depth and authenticity to the experience. My primary role was to preprocess and analyse the sensor data, exploring patterns in volatile organic compounds (VOCs) associated with different stages of lung cancer. I experimented with various classification algorithms, including

support vector machines and random forests, to determine which model offered the best balance of accuracy and interpretability. I also worked closely with the lab's engineers and data scientists to optimize feature extraction from the sensor arrays, which was key to improving predictive performance. This experience not only deepened my technical understanding of biomedical data analysis but also gave me valuable insight into how culturally grounded healthcare challenges are addressed in different regions. Collaborating with local researchers, I was able to appreciate the nuances of community-centered research and the importance of culturally relevant solutions. The project was a rich and rewarding experience that broadened my academic perspective while allowing me to contribute meaningfully to an important area of global health research.

## **Daily Life**

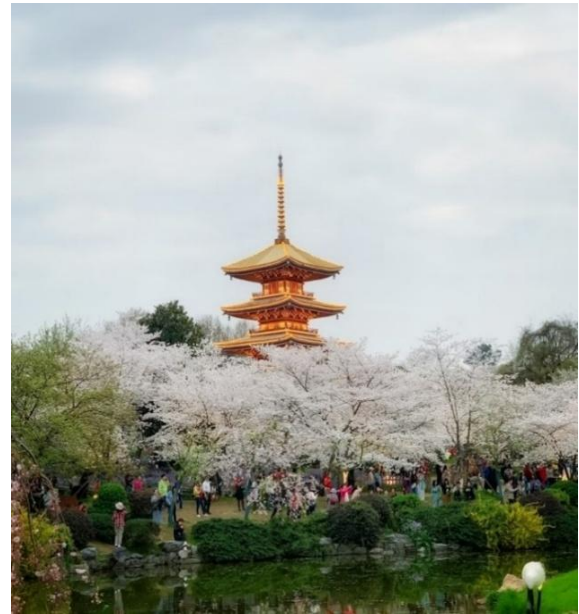
Settling into the internship was a smooth and enjoyable process, thanks in large part to the warm welcome and ongoing support from the University and its students. From the very beginning, we were made to feel at home – especially during the opening ceremony organised to welcome international interns. It was a wonderful way to meet fellow students, faculty members, and other interns, and it really set a positive tone for the rest of the experience. Each day, I would commute to the lab using local public transport, which was efficient and gave me a glimpse into daily life in the city.

At the lab, I spent most of my time working on the lung cancer detection project, but there was also a strong sense of community and collaboration that made the work environment incredibly rewarding. Outside of work, I enjoyed exploring the local culture and cuisine with fellow interns and students from the University. We would often grab dinner together, attend cultural events, or simply relax and talk after a day at the lab. The University community was incredibly welcoming, and many local students went out of their way to help us settle in and explore the area. Overall, my daily life during the internship was a perfect blend of meaningful work, cultural exchange, and personal growth—all made possible by the support and hospitality of the University community.



## Lasting Impressions

My internship experience left a lasting and deeply positive impression on me, both personally and professionally. I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of the experience – from the engaging research to the warm, supportive environment provided by the University and my lab group. Being able to work on a real-world project with direct implications for healthcare, such as early lung cancer detection, was incredibly meaningful and motivating. One of the most valuable aspects of the internship was the opportunity to immerse myself in a research-driven environment. I found the process of exploring complex problems, testing ideas, and collaborating with others in the lab not only intellectually stimulating but also genuinely enjoyable.



This experience has confirmed that research is something I'm passionate about, and it has inspired me to apply for a PhD in the near future. Beyond the technical skills I gained —such as data analysis, machine learning, and working with biomedical sensors—I also developed a greater appreciation for cross-cultural collaboration and the importance of globally-informed research. The experience strengthened my confidence, broadened my perspective, and clarified the path I want to take in my future academic and professional journey. Overall, the internship was a formative experience that has had a profound impact on my ambitions. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity and excited to take the next steps toward a research-focused career.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Talk to people who did the same thing the year before! It is so useful to have their advice and tips.

## Max Salisbury, Jesus College, MEng Engineering Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

Most of my weeks were spent working as part of a lab group in the Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy, where I explored the underlying physics and simulation techniques related to thermoelectric cooling. Working with researchers, I gained valuable hands-on experience with tools like COMSOL Multiphysics to model heat transfer. I was particularly challenged by this as I had never used any similar software, but it was ultimately something I really enjoyed. Moreover, collaborating with local students was a rewarding experience and I learned a lot from them, including the chance to play basketball with my professor and lab group! Both at the end and throughout the internship, I was given the opportunity to showcase what I learned through presentations, which I presented to both my fellow students at Oxford and people in the lab group. My mentors were very knowledgeable (Masters and PhD students), and provided a good balance between helping me with my work, but also allowing me to figure things out for myself sometimes.

### Daily Life

Outside of personal choices for our daily life, we had another section of the program, which was dedicated to cultural exploration, which was something I didn't expect but thoroughly enjoyed. From practicing traditional Chinese calligraphy and symbols, to learning the art of dumpling-making, each activity helped me to further understand China's rich cultural heritage. Highlights of this time include the Kung Fu session, as well as our two-day trip to Nanjing during which we received a fascinating tour of the Nari Group Corporation. In addition to these planned events, during the trip I was lucky to have the chance to do some travelling of my own on the weekend, during which I visited some incredible places such as Yaoli Ancient Town, Shanghai, and Zhangjiajie. As expected, I also had the time to explore Wuhan itself. Outside of the lab, living in Wuhan was a unique and memorable experience. Wuhan is vibrant, busy, and

full of energy. The food in Wuhan was something I had to adapt to, as someone used to English cuisine, but after having countless delicious meals, it was an important part of my cultural immersion. Wuhan felt both historic and boldly forward-looking, and I felt incredibly welcomed by locals everywhere we went. Finally, my friends and I also had the opportunity to stay fit, with an abundance of athletic tracks, gyms, and football fields we could use.

## Lasting Impressions

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) for hosting me, the Fung Foundation and their incredible generosity to help fund my trip, the coordinators for making the program run so smoothly and enjoyably, Professor Luo Xiaobing for welcoming me into the team, and



finally my lab group, including mentors Li Kairan and Deng Chao. Both were incredibly welcoming and supportive, allowing me to settle in nicely and learn from their expertise and experience. As I return home, I leave with a stronger academic foundation and a broader outlook. This experience has strengthened my adaptability and shaped how I approach both learning and collaboration. I'm truly grateful to have been part of this program, and I look forward to applying what I've learned in the future.

## Annika Michael, St. Peter's College, MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was doing a machine learning research project with the China-EU Institute Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE) where I was working on a project to investigate different ML models on energy forecasting prediction for HVAC systems. I was given a detailed briefing of the project and we had weekly meetings that offered both an academic and cultural exchange where both we the foreign interns gave weekly presentations as well as the local students in the research group. My student helper was incredibly helpful when settling in and for any questions we had through all the internship.

### Daily Life

The university campus was brilliant and had a variety of food and drink places where students could relax or study. The sports facilities were also great. Everyone was in the same accommodation building, which made settling in a lot easier and the campus had good metro links close by so you could easily travel around both in Wuhan but also go to other cities.

### Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed the whole experience, everyone at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) made us feel so welcome from start to the end as well as everyone in China. I feel I gained a lot in terms of being able to learn more about my subject as well as a different approach to learning. Being able to travel to different cities on the weekends was such a good experience to be able to learn more about China and the variety of things it had to offer. The internship has confirmed my desire to go down a career path to do with machine learning.

## Traian Rares Tus, Hertford College, MPhys Physics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My research at the Institute focused on nuclear energy analysis and simulations, specifically in the area of coupling of nuclear power plants for the production of clean hydrogen. Under the valuable and insightful guidance of Professor Yang Jun and his research group, I managed to stimulate my engineering-oriented analyticside, as well as my creative mindset, key to tackling the modern issues that we have been dealing with in this project. I learnt advanced concepts in the field of nuclear energy technology, the socio-economic aspects of clean energy and power plants, and complex modelling techniques for the coupling of modern and futuristic technologies.

My work began with reading extensive the literature – scientific publications, reports and simulations – for the relevant topic. I then moved on to the main simulation software, for which I used Python as a programming language. Once the base simulation was in place, I gained



access to analysing real data and adapted the application for realistic considerations. Finally, I developed a graphical user interface, allowing users to select the various parameters of hypothetical or real nuclear power plants, in order to obtain costs, outputs and profiles for many essential measures of such a coupled mechanism. Overall, I can say the research was heavily technical and based on real data, including many physical, engineering and economic aspects alike, and I have vastly expanded my skills and knowledge in this important field.

## Daily Life

Once we got there, everyone was very tired after the long flights and jet lag, but the volunteers at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) were very helpful in showing us around and teaching us what we had to do from day one. We were initially surprised by the rooms but managed to get used to everything rather quickly. We had some trouble with understanding how the university cards work, how electricity and water work, but other than that it turned out that things are managed very efficiently with just a few apps on your phone. After settling in, it was time to start working in the offices and labs, which, apart from a few cases, were quite close to our accommodation and one could walk there or take the scooters (very popular in the campus). The campus itself was huge, the size of a small city, but that meant you would have almost everything you need inside of it.

There was a mall right outside the campus, and various activities you could do in your free time around the place. Some of the activities I tried included going to the gym, playing football, volleyball or badminton, biking around the lakes nearby and trying the local food. The Oxford group was quite big, and everyone was very friendly, so we all got along really well, going on trips together, going out in the evenings and meeting in the most random places at times. We also made friends with people from our work groups and with other STEM students from around the world, through the ICARE Summer Camp around the midpoint of our internship, which was probably the main highlight.

## Lasting Impressions

Besides the research work, I was very pleased with the immersive cultural experience that took place as part of the programme. All the students from Oxford got the chance to experience the Chinese culture and technological developments, from top company visits and lectures on renewable energy, to various traditions, attractions and even exploring the country on some weekends, with their fellow colleagues. The ICARE Summer Camp in the middle of the programme united STEM students from the UK, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Egypt, through



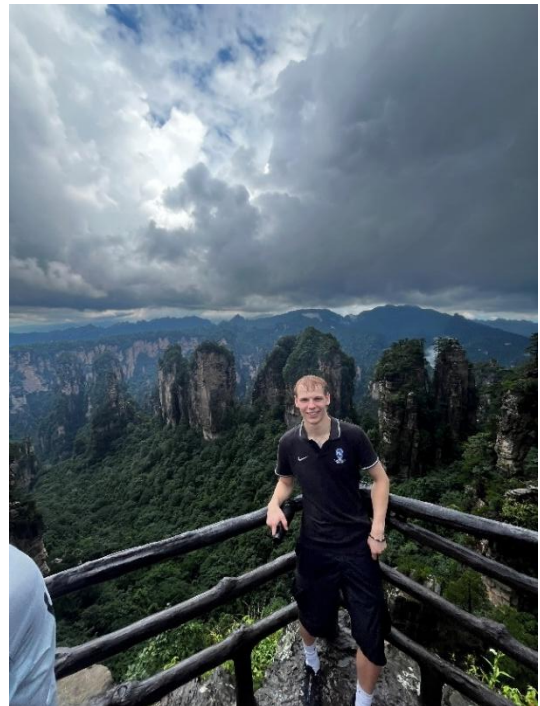
memorable experiences of all kinds. Activities like museum visits, tea ceremonies, dumpling and pastry making classes and traditional arts & crafts enriched everyone's cultural horizons, while trips and leisure outings helped us bond as a team.

On the more technical side, there were a lot of lectures and company visits that made us acquainted with the newest technologies in the field. Breakthrough vehicles and autonomous cars, AI driven translation algorithms, robot operations and manufacturing and the State Grid at NARI were particularly notable. I am certain that the entire internship programme was an amazing choice, extremely helpful in developing on an academic and professional plane, and great for building long-lasting connections across the world and to experience the true essence of China.

## Benjamin Snowden, Jesus College, MEng Engineering Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my six-week internship at the Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan, I worked mainly on assessing the commercial feasibility of a novel process for producing hydrogen gas from biowaste. My project sat at the intersection of engineering and finance, complementing my academic focus on Engineering, Entrepreneurship, and Management at Oxford. My main responsibility was to model the economic potential of the process. This involved estimating capital and operating costs, selecting appropriate



discount rates, and producing financial projections that could be compared with existing hydrogen technologies.

I collaborated closely with my lab partner, who concentrated on technical modelling, while I developed scenarios in MATLAB and Excel that highlighted the commercial risks and opportunities of scaling up the method. Together, we delivered a joint report and presented our findings to the research group. A key achievement was demonstrating that the technology could become competitive under specific market conditions, an insight which I hope the team found valuable for directing future research.

The host organisation provided strong support throughout. Our supervisors introduced us to the broader context of hydrogen research in China, guided us through the modelling process, and offered constructive feedback on our analysis. Outside the lab, staff organised cultural activities such as language classes, Tai Chi sessions, and factory visits, which broadened my understanding of the social and industrial environment. This support ensured that I was not only able to contribute meaningfully to the research but also to develop personally and culturally.

## **Daily Life**

Living in Wuhan during my internship was an immersive experience, both professionally and culturally. I stayed in university accommodation close to the lab, so each morning I would walk or cycle to the Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy. The days were structured around our project work in the lab, but we had a good deal of independence to plan our schedules. My lab partner and I usually worked side by side, alternating between running models on the computer and finding additional research papers to learn from. Settling in was made much easier by the warm welcome from both staff and fellow students.

I built friendships with other interns and local students, and these connections made the experience more enjoyable and rewarding. Balancing work in the lab with exploring the city gave me a rounded sense of life in China and made the internship not only a valuable

professional opportunity but also a memorable personal experience. In the evenings, we would play football with locals once a week, visit bars, night markets or eat in a nearby restaurant.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Looking back, the internship left a very strong impression on me. I thoroughly enjoyed the combination of technical research and cultural immersion, and I feel I gained not only practical skills but also a new perspective on how engineering fits into a broader social and economic context. The work itself challenged me to be more independent and resourceful, while the environment encouraged me to think about how technologies can be implemented at scale in rapidly changing societies.

Beyond the lab, everyday experiences in Wuhan shaped my outlook just as much. The vast local markets, where almost everything seemed to be available at strikingly low prices, gave me a sense of the scale and efficiency of supply chains in China. In contrast, the sweeping boulevards, clusters of high-rise apartments, and grand railway stations reflected a government and society willing to build at pace and on a monumental scale I had never seen before. These impressions have stayed with me and continue to inform how I think about infrastructure, development, and the role of engineering in tackling urgent challenges. Overall, the internship confirmed my interest in pursuing a career where I can apply engineering to large-scale societal needs. It gave me a taste of how technical innovation must connect with culture, policy, and economics if it is to create lasting impact, and that is the kind of work I hope to dedicate myself to after graduation.

**Finbar Percy, Balliol College, MEng Engineering Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

During my time at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) I joined the research group of Prof Liu which focusses on making the coal combustion process more sustainable by

using co-firing techniques. Coal combustion accounts for 60% of China's energy production, the majority being dedicated to electricity generation. So even though to achieve net zero, coal combustion must eventually be stopped, it's imperative to find ways to reduce its negative impact on the climate through short term, quick and effective adjustments to some of China's 1000+ coal power plants (which accounts for more than half of the world's share). This helps achieve China's dual-carbon goals, in which it has pledged to have peak carbon emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060 and agrees with government policy to "strictly control" coal use during their 14th five-year plan period in a bid to balance energy security with climate goals.

In helping to review a soon to be published research paper, I gained insights into how to carry



out and write about comprehensive and detailed state-of-art scientific research. The paper compared ammonia and hydrogen co-firing with coal combustion to provide conclusions on which gas may be better for the process. By utilising high-speed photography and the backlight method, the ignition mode and ignition time of pulverised coal particles under various working conditions was calculated. These different conditions included the amount and composition of the air allowed into the combustion reaction and the feed rate of the pulverised coal and ammonia/hydrogen (which affects the co-firing ratio).

I found it interesting that the research implemented the grayscale to more effectively observe and analyse the characteristics of the flame as this process enhances contrasts and mitigates the effects of both the flame's brightness and the ambient background light. Although I couldn't perfectly understand how the conclusions were reached, as I'm still only halfway through my undergraduate engineering degree, I will take my learnings from the research

process into the research projects I will be doing in the next two years and hopefully beyond. I helped my student buddy and PhD student in the same research group complete a series of experiments he's conducting. His research is on enhancing the accuracy of the sensing of CO<sub>2</sub> using non-dispersive infrared radiation (NDIR). This is important to implement into the coal combustion industry as we'd like to accurately understand which methods reduce emissions of carbon dioxide the most. However, NDIR is affected significantly by changes in temperature, pressure, relative humidity, and particulate matter which, in turn, reduces accuracy of readings. Being involved in the experimental process helped me understand how to set-up a sensitive bench properly whilst also giving me insights into some computational methods used to gather readings. I also learnt a little bit about how NDIR works. Simply put, gas molecules absorb a specific wavelength of infrared light corresponding to its frequency of vibration. Sensors then detect the decrease in intensity of that wavelength of light which gives information on the concentration and quantity of a specific gas in the chamber being used.

## **Daily Life**

I stayed at the international accommodation on campus at HUST. The campus is incredibly big but more importantly green. There are beautiful lily ponds you can go and see and football pitches, basketball courts and shops for daily amenities all on campus, so daily life is quite easy. Most of the time, my fellow Oxford interns and I went back to our accommodation for an hour after lunch because, at the peak of the day, the temperatures were unbearably hot, sometimes reaching heights of over 40 degrees Celsius.

As they also had a 50-metre swimming pool on campus, I challenged myself to try and go for a swim most days as well, to try and keep fit. To get to the lab at the Institute of Clean and Renewable Energy, I got my student buddy to help me hire the e-bikes on campus, meaning I could get there in less than 5 minutes. Apart from socialising with the other Oxford interns, I also went out for dinner a couple of times with my student buddy, a PhD student from HUST – learning about the different Chinese restaurants and cuisines.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Living, working and travelling in a foreign country for an extended period of time was a brand-new experience for me. So, along with gaining a little insight into further academic work past undergraduate level, I mainly learnt about myself, building resilience and self-confidence. I've further strengthened bonds with a couple of my Oxford peers whilst also creating new friendships with some students from HUST. I'd still be interested in pursuing scientific research beyond my undergraduate degree after doing this research internship, but I think I also still want to keep my options open as I may still change my mind by the time I've finished my degree.

**Reece Luke Connolly, Keble College, MChem Chemistry, Third Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

I worked under Professor Zhao Yongchun, completing a project focused on photocatalysis. I designed a novel photocatalyst for the conversion of carbon dioxide to carbon monoxide. These materials have use in carbon capture and utilisation. There are many ways to modify these types of photocatalysts, and one way is to attach hydrophobic molecules to their surface. By reading the literature, I identified two potential molecules to bind to the surface of the catalyst. These were bound to the catalyst using a very simple synthetic method involving stirring and heating for extended periods of time. We then tested the photocatalytic performance of these two catalysts. To summarise how this was done, the catalyst was placed into solution in a reaction vessel. The vessel had CO<sub>2</sub> flowing into it, and a light was shone on it to activate the photocatalyst. The products of this continuous reaction were monitored by a gas chromatography machine.



We identified which molecule was the most effective, and also at which concentration. We then took the most active catalyst, and carried out some characterisation tests, such as X-Ray diffraction, XPS spectroscopy, contact angle measurement, elemental analysis etcetera to find out more about the catalyst we had made. I then produced a written report as well as a presentation, which I gave in front of the intern cohort at the end. I received support from my professor, as well as from the PhD students in my group who taught me and assisted me throughout the programme.



## Daily Life

When we arrived in Wuhan, we were picked up at the airport by a member of our research group. This was great, as pulling a heavy suitcase through the city's public transport late at night after a 10-hour flight would have been really tiring. It was fairly straightforward to get settled in on the first night. My helper set up my electricity and explained how to set up the Wi-Fi and pay for food. The only difficult thing was printing something out for the receptionist, but my volunteer ended up doing this for me anyway.

I rented an e-bike on the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) campus which I used to get around the campus, as well as to and from the office/lab. This was convenient and cheap. Outside of work, I socialised with the other interns. We had dinner in the canteen together, explored Wuhan together, and did sports together. Some highlights were having a BBQ at the lake and going to the waterpark. I also socialised with members of my lab group. We had dinner together a few times, and they also invited me to play games with them, where I learned how to play mahjong. To relax, I would go swimming in the HUST University pool late at night or just rest in my dorm.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I thoroughly enjoyed my internship experience at HUST this summer. I believe this internship has allowed me to gain valuable hands-on experience in the research field, especially as someone who wants to complete a PhD in the future. I also believe the experience I got working independently and learning new techniques in the lab this summer will help me academically for my masters project in the upcoming year. Although the research project I completed at HUST this summer is only tangentially related to the research I want to carry out in the future, I feel as though this experience has confirmed to me that research is something I want to pursue further. I gained a lot from my internship. I was able to refine my lab skills, such as in solid state synthesis, and using different characterisation techniques such as X-ray diffraction, XPS and Scanning Electron Microscopy imaging (SEM). I used XPS for the first time in this internship, so it was great to learn about how this technique worked, and how to interpret the results. I gained confidence working independently in the lab, and in having academic discussions with peers. I also had the chance to give a couple of presentations which was great for improving my confidence in public speaking.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

If your college or department offers extra funding for summer internships or international internships, then engage with this and get it in place early. Additionally, set up your WeChat and Alipay and make sure they both work (these will be used for payment and communication throughout your internship). Ask your professor for pre reading – the internship is relatively short, and you don't want to be wasting that time doing reading that you could have done at home. Also, contact your professor before you go, so he/she knows that you are proactive and wanting to get the most out of your internship experience.

If you have strict dietary requirements, talk to someone knowledgeable about how you can navigate this in China. Dietary requirements aren't common there, and so many peers who were vegetarian had to give this up during their time here, as it was almost impossible to avoid

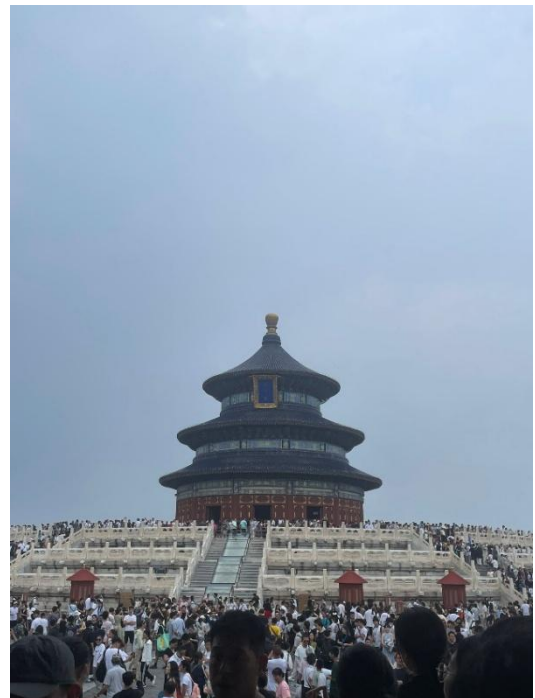
entirely. This goes for allergens too – it was not easy (basically impossible) to guarantee that anything was free from nuts/gluten for example. This includes at the University dining halls, although there were specific dining halls for halal food, and plenty of seafood for pescatarians. Finally, make sure your bank card doesn't charge for using it internationally – use Revolut to avoid the fees.

## Jamie Buxton, St. Anne's College, MEng Engineering Science, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my 6 weeks at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan, China, I worked under the guidance of Professor Chen, alongside a supportive research team to investigate the application of machine learning—specifically transformer models—in forecasting ventilation system performance. Our research explored the effectiveness of various machine learning algorithms, including XGBoost and Random Forest, on a refined dataset created through a feature selection process. My main contribution involved streamlining this feature selection process using Python-based algorithms,

which significantly enhanced my programming skills and deepened my understanding of machine learning techniques. Weekly presentations to the research team formed an integral part of the internship experience. Initially centred around cultural topics—such as introducing our hometowns and universities—these sessions later evolved into platforms where my 2 fellow oxford interns and I could present research updates and reflect on our progress.



As a first-year student with limited prior exposure to machine learning, I greatly benefitted from the support of my dedicated student helper, who not only assisted in developing my technical skills but also helped me navigate daily life at HUST, from explaining WeChat and Alipay, to showing me the best food in the canteen. In parallel with the research, during weeks 3 and 4, I participated in a two-week cultural programme organized by ICARE. The schedule was packed with diverse and engaging activities, including Kung Fu classes, Mandarin lessons, and industry visits. A standout experience was the visit to the Dongfeng Motor Corporation HQ in Hubei, where we had the remarkable opportunity to ride in a driverless car—an exciting and slightly surreal demonstration of cutting-edge technology.

## Daily Life

I stayed in accommodation on campus with 50 other Oxford interns and many students from international universities. Each day I would usually grab breakfast at the local convenient store



and bakery where the food was absurdly cheap. Following this I'd set up in the local library to work on the machine learning forecasting algorithms or my weekly presentation until lunchtime when I would meet friends in one of the 2 local canteens with many options for freshly cooked meals and even a

western chicken burger shop if you were missing home. I'd then head back to the library, maybe even get a drink from the adjacent 'Luckin Coffee' store until around 5 when I'd often go somewhere local for the evening like the local gym, cinema, football pitches or street markets. Getting around Wuhan was incredibly simple thanks to the cheap taxi app, 'Didi'. This was my usual routine apart from during the 3rd and 4th weeks of the 6-week internship, when my days

were packed with site visits or culturally enriching tasks, organised by ICARE. Additionally, I would travel with fellow interns each weekend, leaving on a Friday afternoon.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My 6 weeks at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) was an undeniably enriching experience—professionally and personally. The HUST community and ICARE workers helped to foster an incredibly welcoming environment allowing us international interns to properly immerse ourselves in the local culture and explore the enormous campus. The research I have completed and witnessed has helped further my understanding of a plethora of engineering disciplines, particularly machine learning and its boundless uses. I will undoubtedly be using what I have learnt to help select modules later in my degree and decide what type of engineer I wish to become. This internship was far more than I expected and the exposure to such a unique culture was a truly remarkable opportunity. I'm very grateful to everyone who made this possible, both in China and Oxford, and I would strongly recommend the experience to other students considering it.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Talk to locals (use Hello Chinese if you want to learn Mandarin), travel around (the Didi app is incredibly cheap) and don't pack jeans (it's far too warm).

**Harvey Alexander Wilson, St. Anne's College, MPhys Physics, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

For my research project, I worked in professor Rong Chen's group, focusing on atomic layer deposition for the fabrication of an electron transport layer used in perovskite solar cells. Specifically, we tested different deposition parameters and doping concentrations in order to

produce more efficient TiO<sub>2</sub> doped SnO<sub>2</sub> ETLs. We measured the layers optical and electronic properties to decide on the ideal parameters for best overall performance.

Clean energy, especially solar power, is an area I am passionate about, so I was grateful for this opportunity to learn about cutting-edge technologies in the field. The project itself was very hands on and experimental. We worked in a clean room facility, and I was impressed by the range of equipment available, some familiar, but most I had never seen before. Throughout the project I enjoyed getting to grips with much of this new equipment and learning a variety of experimental techniques which will undoubtedly be valuable in my future. I believe the project went well and I hope that the results we gathered will be useful for the group, and ultimately for the development of more efficient perovskite cells.

## Daily Life

The Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) campus was large and had everything you need for daily life including gyms, sports pitches, shops, and multiple very affordable canteens. There are also many trees providing shade which is nice as it is consistently very hot in Wuhan in the summer. I



mostly got around on hired bikes or e-bikes, which was preferable to walking in the heat.

Outside of work and organized activities, I found the time to explore some more of Wuhan and even the rest of China. Affordable and fast trains make it possible to visit other nearby (or at least nearby on a Chinese scale) cities, and I took the opportunity to do this every weekend. These trips were consistently very fun, and I have found every new city to have many surprises in store. Some highlights were the nature in Zhangjiajie National Park and the three gorges of



Yichang, the lights of Shanghai and Changsha, as well as many beautiful towers and temples, and other unforgettable sights.

Everyone we met was always friendly and welcoming to us, making these trips easy and enjoyable even with limited Chinese language skills. Throughout the six weeks I have also spent a lot of time with the other interns, all of whom have been great. I think the sense of community between us all did a lot to make the whole experience so enjoyable.

### **Lasting Impressions**

Overall, this internship was a very enjoyable experience. The work was interesting, and I gained some new experimental skills and a good insight into a new sector of research, as well as a general view of the state of renewable energy in China. I think the best part about this program for me was the unique opportunity to explore China, and the large number of other interns which meant there were always things to do and people to travel with.

## **HUAZHONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (HUST) – CHINESE GOVERNANCE & SOCIETY**



**Sangeun Noh, Magdalen College, BA Jurisprudence, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

My project was advertised as a research internship on the use of technology in public policy. All interns in the public policy division were tied to Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST)'s Department of Public Administration, which ran four projects under the internship. Each of us in the 4-person project was invited to identify a use of information technology (big data, blockchain, machine learning, etc.) in a megacity, analyse current problems, and propose

solutions. We had weekly progress checks during which we answered questions and received feedback from our supervising professor, two master's students on the same research group, and one another.

Our supervisor gave suggestions for journals to read and played a part in organising study visits, e.g. to Wuhan's public policy museum, City Hall, or an autonomous car warehouse. My personal project was on the use of virtual and augmented reality technology in Seoul, and it was fulfilling to analyse public policy in a city where I had spent much time but never in the academic setting. I designed a survey and analysed the results, and our supervisor suggested new methodologies (e.g. interviewing public officials or developers). Our final deliverable was a 5-minute presentation during the closing ceremony, in front of other interns under the public administration division and our supervisors.

## Daily Life

The Oxford interns on the programme lived in the doctoral student accommodations, which were much more spacious than the regular undergraduate student accommodations. Each student was assigned a room in a flat of five rooms.

Though the roommate situation varied, I was placed in a flat with two other Oxford interns and a Malaysian masters student. The close proximity to other interns meant plenty of opportunities to bond, with card games, charades, or movies in the common room (before we would be kicked out at 10pm!) or the common



space within our flats. Our "office" (really a room with desks in the Department of Public Administration) was a 25-minute walk away, and the library a 15-minute walk. The intense heat in Wuhan meant we typically got there on the bike-sharing bikes. There was also a café and

workspace nearer the accommodations, where many of us chose to work instead. Most of us went on three- or even four-day weekend trips most weeks, capitalising on flexible working hours and affordable transport and other travel costs. These trips were a big change from our routine in Wuhan, where the massive University with 70,000 people on just the main campus meant we rarely had to, or would, step out of campus. Travelling together, we got much closer to one another and struck up friendships with many Chinese people we bumped into either on trains or at our destination cities, who were always friendly and willing to talk.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I definitely enjoyed the internship. Though at times I felt the programme itself could have been better organised (we were notified only a few days before our closing ceremony that our final deliverable, initially meant to be a 15-minute presentation, was cut to five minutes), I learnt much about the field of public policy. The project scope itself invited us to examine exciting new advances in policy, and I was able to delve into technology — and policies — with which I had been unfamiliar. In hindsight, I truly appreciate our supervisor's encouragement to look at our home cities; I gained fresh insight into a place to which I had never taken an academic approach.

Though I remain open to different career paths, I am now much more intrigued by the policy sector. It was also an irreplaceable opportunity to spend six weeks in China with friends. I gained much that cannot be expressed in words. I made precious memories of exploring Wuhan and other cities with people who share my wanderlust and cultural curiosity. I made friends with whom I would probably not have met in my regular life at Oxford. I stepped out of my linguistic comfort zone and came out of the internship a much more confident Mandarin speaker.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Get the Oxford VPN and take note of China's power bank regulations (many of us had our power banks confiscated at connecting airports in China!).

## Msci Psychology and Philosophy, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I joined the Department of Public Administration at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) to research on the implementation of big data and artificial intelligence in cities. Focusing on Wuhan, the city in which the University was located, we assessed these projects in relation to the concept of resilience. The concept is particularly relevant in view of major weather incidents such as flooding, storms, and disruptive earthquakes that often rock China. Historically, particularly in recent years, China has demonstrated remarkable adaptability and responsiveness. We sought to categorise and evaluate the success of emerging AI and big data applications in these shifts. Wuhan was a particularly interesting city to focus on, given its history with the pandemic.

However, even more notable was how much it was besides. In addition to the technical research, the faculty organised weekly structured experiences to showcase Wuhan's innovations and technological presence, for us to appreciate and evaluate. From autonomous cars to translation software, there was much to note. In addition, weekly meetings with the attached professor helped us to refine our presentations, which we delivered at the end of the internship. In the process, we also learnt about their ongoing research projects and considered how they might contribute to our analysis.

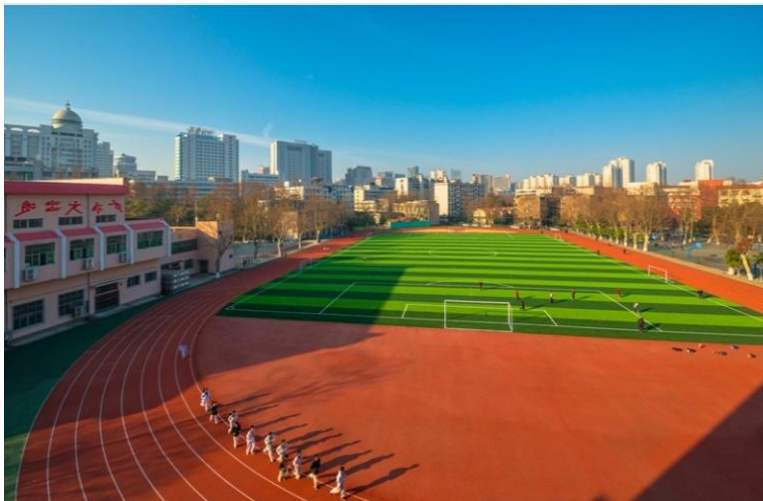
### Daily Life

Settling into China was a bit of an experience. It's incredibly different from the UK, much less Oxford, but passing through the airports on the way into Wuhan meant I had a long approach to acclimatise a little. Beyond the obvious language differences, there are cultural and practical issues that are completely different from what one might expect. Adjusting to basic apps like Alipay and WeChat took a while, but these in particular were essential to survival in a landscape dominated by digital payments. Settling in took a while but improved rapidly once I figured how to exploit the rental bikes, halving travel time in all directions. On the weekends, the internship

cohort scattered to the wind. One Friday, I headed to Guangzhou, and on another I headed to Xi'an. The cadence of work meant we could wholly dedicate ourselves to travel, exploring to see cultural heritage and massive natural landmarks. The scale of China meant this entailed hours on the high-speed rail. For our trouble, we got to see incredible sides of the country that you'd only get from living there for a while, rather than dipping in and out on holidays. I always looked forward to food. From crayfish to a variety of skewers, there was always something new to try, and to compare with foods I was familiar with. Balancing work with exploration was easy with the constant sense of wonder.

## Lasting Impressions

Prior to the internship, I had been hoping to explore the viability of a career in research, as well as to experience a different country's take on university. While the broad strokes remained the



same, there were subtle and explicit differences that made me reevaluate certain things I had taken for granted. Now, I'm even more eager to look into opportunities in research, particularly in different fields or specialties than I experienced on this internship – I would like to

explore how different labs or disciplines approach the same issues, and whether these considerations can be interwoven to facilitate more integrative approaches. More importantly, the experience offered me insight into China, at a time when it is often demonised for differences in approach.

Living in the country helped me to recognise the set of trade-offs it makes, as well as to appreciate the majesty of what it has accomplished. All in all, the experience has sharpened my curiosity in the potential career choices there may be and given me an experience of research.

While it has not given me clarity, it has given me other avenues to explore and an understanding of how varied research roles can be, how different the implications for different fields and faculties.

## Oliver Green, Magdalen College, BA History, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I wrote weekly reports for my professor and supervising PhD students. To complete these, a weekly reading list was read and was supplemented by the occasional lecture and a trip on Thursdays. My PhD student supervisors were very helpful and easy to contact and spoke excellent English. I would like to pass on my thanks to them for their excellent support, whilst also becoming good friends of mine. Their expertise in the Chinese side of the work was invaluable.

My reports, which focused on comparisons between Chinese and English articultural management and land law, culminated in a presentation on this before the whole cohort – a very fulfilling experience. It was fulfilling to complete this work and hear from the work of others as well. Informal interactions, particularly with Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) students and others in Wuhan, also helped me understand the lived experience of the matters I was researching and has affirmed my belief that China must be researched from within China.





## Daily Life

Settling in was hard! Having travelled to China before, I had assumed it would be easier, but living in HUST posted a whole set of new challenges. Navigating the fairly bureaucratic systems for utilities and purchases was initially difficult as was my struggle with mobile data connection – but definitely a learning experience (my PhD student supervisors provided a lot of support in helping me adapt). The workload was very reasonable, with the first half of the week being largely self-driven reading and research, and the second half focusing on trips, lectures, and tutorial-style meetings with Professor Li and my PhD student supervisors. When there were difficulties (which sometimes emerged with technological issues or issues understanding the Chinese context) they were extremely supportive. With the weekends off, brief trips to other areas in China were sometimes possible, and these were extremely fulfilling as well as helping inform my understanding of what the areas I was researching looked like in practice. Meeting so many welcoming people all around China, and conversing with them on all sorts of topics, was both a fun memorable experience and one of great learning which I could not achieve at home!

## Lasting Impressions

I very much enjoyed the experience. Not only was I impressed by the scale and expertise within HUST (a University I had never before heard of) but by how welcoming everyone was, with interest in foreign life and culture. Living and working in a country whose values and systems so differ from those in Britain is an invaluable experience, and I was glad to have seen how different (yet in some ways similar) life can be: it definitely enriched my cultural understanding, particularly of the work culture. Life was easy and convenient, the food delicious, and the infrastructure second to none. I will definitely return to China soon and hopefully reconnect with the people I met there! I would be most interested in a career in China, something strengthened by this experience, and postgraduate programmes like the Schwartzman and Yenching scholarships greatly appeal to me.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

1. Learn some Chinese phrases beforehand, this will enable all sorts of spontaneous interactions which will be some of the highlights of the trip.
2. Get close with your PhD supervisors, they are usually really fun, helpful, and interesting.
3. Plan everything, it is easy to get lost in a foreign country.
4. Try to get as much advice on practical matters before arriving from your advisors, the University itself doesn't provide lots of detail, so you'll need to ask the advisors, and it's best to plan in advance rather than realising you can't set up the shower just before a meeting!
5. Take up every optional opportunity (we got really cool ones like visiting an AI company) and if there's something you want to do, ask for it – they can usually organise it.
6. Travel and talk to as many local people as you can, you will learn so much from this.

## **MCompSciPhil Computer Science and Philosophy, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I was on a research internship at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), my task was a research project on a city and technology of my choice, I chose to look into facial recognition technology in London, which then shifted towards an exploration of cross-cultural attitudes towards privacy and facial recognition technology, comparing between the UK and China. My main achievement was a report on this work and 2 surveys I conducted to investigate this.

I received good support from the host organisation prior to arrival surrounding living arrangements and arrival, I was given a false impression about the presence of a kitchen (there were no communal cooking devices) in the accommodation, but the cafeterias on campus were very good. I did not receive such good support from my supervisor regarding my work – his

feedback was vague and brief, and at times contradicted earlier comments or was infeasible given the time left, however, I did appreciate that he set aside one morning weekly for meetings.

## Daily Life

Settling in was made fairly easy by the fact that we had assigned volunteers who were full-time students at the University and were in our research group. They helped us with electricity bills,



SIM setup, and water bills. The commute to the department for meetings was very easy – a 10–15-minute walk from the accommodation, and we cycled on the easy to rent bikes available everywhere in China if it was too hot. We worked in the library and cafe nearby, though we were provided a classroom in the department we could use too. Outside of work we travelled on the weekends to explore as much of China as we could and explored Wuhan in the evenings. We socialised mostly with the other Oxford interns – our assigned volunteers were too busy to hang out with us, and it was difficult to meet Wuhan locals, but some of us

had international student flatmates who were friendly.

## Lasting Impressions

I enjoyed the experience a lot. I don't think that it improved my academic skills much, but I enjoyed having the time and opportunity to explore a new area I was interested in through the lens of public administration. I really enjoyed meeting and hanging out with the other interns, and life on campus was very pleasant. While I didn't get the chance to explore Wuhan

thoroughly, I enjoyed what I saw of it and felt it has a lot to offer as a city. This internship has maintained my interest in the area, and I would like to keep exploring it in the future.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Be prepared for how exhausting the heat can be, there is a nap culture in China, and you may want to embrace it to manage your energy levels. Be aware that there may be some strange individuals on campus (teachers and professors hanging around and approaching students), they made some students feel uncomfortable, and it's fine to enforce boundaries (declining conversation, reporting problematic behaviour to the programme coordinator). The canteen food is delicious and very cheap, though could be challenging for people with dietary requirements to navigate. Travel by train is different to the UK, but once you figure it out it is very easy to arrange and can be a great way to travel at the weekend.

**Isabella Rulten, Mansfield College, BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

My internship project was done under Professor She Shou, focusing on Emergency Management. Although my original professor was unable to provide an internship this summer, the project that I was moved into was still within an incredibly interesting research area. We were provided with far more freedom than expected, meaning my research ended up centering on China's counter-terrorism policy and, more specifically, how the October 2024 Karachi attack against Chinese nationals shaped the decision to hold the joint Warrior-VIII counter-terrorism exercise with Pakistan later that year. This followed on from a paper I completed in Trinity this year, meaning I was able to expand my knowledge in an area of great interest to me.

The aim was to situate this case study within broader debates about securitisation, legitimacy, and the rhetoric surrounding terrorism. My work involved reviewing official statements by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassy press releases, and UN Security Council

documents, working with the Global Terrorism Index, and doing an in-depth analysis of the official rhetorics of these two countries found within big official media articles. Although the project was incredibly difficult, with an iron curtain over information and official strategies of both governments, the internship provided me with the space to refine my research questions and identify the most viable sources for future analysis. My professor provided us with feedback throughout the internship and put me in contact with an incredibly useful PhD student, who gave me a greater insight into the topic and who inspired me to focus on media articles.

## Daily Life

Living and working in Wuhan quickly became a highlight of the internship experience. The Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) campus was genuinely beautiful, and even in the six weeks I did not get to see the whole thing (although I like to think that had it not been as hot as it was, I would have gone on far longer walks around the whole campus). I signed up to the University gym early on, which became a useful way to balance work and downtime, and I got into a routine of going to a coffee shop a five-minute walk from the accommodation – where coffee was only a pound. I was constantly amazed by the affordability of food on campus, with full meals costing less than a bread roll back home.



Daily life in Wuhan was incredibly rich. My assigned buddy and research group were generous with their time and insights, often sparking thought-provoking conversations about politics, culture, and everyday life in China. Being able to see places in Wuhan with someone who lives here was invaluable, and my buddy never made us feel like a burden. The internship also drew

together a diverse group of interns from different colleges and years. Meeting new people from Oxford on the other side of the world was as great as it was surreal, and I have definitely found people who I will see next year. Having a group of students makes China far less intimidating, and a highlight was being able to see other parts of China together. Those friendships and shared experiences became as important to the internship as the research, giving me a sense of belonging and making the summer genuinely memorable.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Looking back, the internship left a deeper mark than I initially expected. On the academic side, it sharpened my understanding of how terrorism is framed within Chinese discourse, and how such framing intersects with international cooperation and securitisation theory. It confirmed my interest in pursuing research on security and international politics, while also reminding me of the difficulty in pursuing research in sensitive areas and teaching me how to adapt to a new research environment. On the personal side, I will definitely look back on my time in China incredibly fondly. Living in Wuhan introduced me to a part of the country I might not otherwise have encountered, and I grew to appreciate both the pace of daily life and the generosity of the people I met. The conversations with my buddy, supervisors, and fellow interns helped me broaden and challenge my perspective beyond textbooks and lectures. China is an incredibly interesting country to experience, especially in an academic settled way, so as to not just be visiting as a tourist. As difficult as it was to navigate at times, being able to do so with people I can now call friends has made the experience enjoyable and memorable.

## **MCompSciPhil Computer Science and Philosophy, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I spent my internship researching under the theme 'Urban Exhibitions and the Narrative of Resilience', meeting weekly with my supervisor and research group (all of whom had slightly



different themes, under the same general umbrella of Urban Resilience) to discuss and present our findings: what we had learnt, our thoughts, and next steps in developing our presentation. Each week, we also had 1-3 site visits, usually on one or two days of the week: this would either be to a local institution with relevance to the project themes of the Public Administration department, or to a well-known Wuhan tourist attraction, in order to get to know the city itself. The main task I completed was a PowerPoint presentation discussing Urban Exhibitions as a vehicle for shaping cultural values, and this in turn shaping crisis response. I took a comparative



lens, contrasting England and China on the intended values and use of exhibition, and the corresponding response to crisis (with a case-study focus on COVID-19 response). I argued that the UK took a much more cautionary approach to crisis control: highlighting danger and hazards, and using fear-provoking

language (e.g. a stronger narrative of 'keep yourself safe'), whereas China tended to take a very triumphant tone in all scenarios, encouraging community action with a more motivational, patriotic approach (e.g. a stronger narrative of 'serve your community, and keep them safe').

## Daily Life

The internship was mostly self-led, with usually one supervisor meeting a week, and one day of field trips a week. This meant that I had a lot of flexibility day-to-day; I tended to work either in my room or the nearby campus cafe, though many of my peers made more use of the campus library. Outside of work, I made sure to explore the city – and at the weekends, China as a whole.

Usually, on weekdays I would work in the day and then at night go out into Wuhan to explore with other Oxford students also on the internship. I have made some really wonderful friends

through this experience. I also had the joy of meeting several students from other universities around the world, and I hope to keep in contact with them! Evening activities involved visiting local bars, walking around night markets and malls, watching movies or cultural shows, cycling around the East Lake (a very beautiful spot - we did a big group barbecue near the end of the programme, which was quite lovely!), taking the city river cruise, and more!

Through this, we also got to meet a lot of locals and make some very good friends, practicing our Chinese (though often, many people also spoke quite good English!). We also got the opportunity to travel around China at weekends: between us, we organised quite a few trips ranging from only a few people to over 20 of us (thank you Mingyue Mountain Council) travelling to each destination. This experience was truly unforgettable and has given me a much richer understanding of China.

### **Lasting Impressions**

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience! Whilst I cannot say that it was all that I expected, I think it has allowed me a lot of room for personal growth, especially through meeting so many interesting people. I think that the lasting impression has left me with a greater understanding and fondness for travel and cultural exploration. I look forward to seeing China again sometime! I have gained a lot of friends, professional connections, and confidence. I think speaking to students of other disciplines and local people with entirely different lifestyles and situations to my own has broadened my career ambitions and has helped me consider a much wider range of potential career paths.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Don't expect daily labs or structured research and treat it more as a cultural exchange with an academic focus. Make the most of China, travel at weekends, explore Wuhan in the evenings, and maybe try to get some bedding when you arrive (the beds had no mattress, just thin sheets on a wooden plank!).

## BA Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

While on this internship I was assigned to a research group with 4 other students (3 from Oxford and one from Canada). We worked under the guidance of Professor Shea Shou, who works in the College of Public Administration at Huazhong University of Science and



Technology (HUST). Each week we had an hour-long meeting with the professor where we would discuss our work and decide next steps. We were each assigned a research topic under the category of Emergency Management, as this is Prof. Shou's main research topic. I conducted my research on how big data emergency management systems failures affect responses and the possible psychological factors at play. Specifically, I analysed the 2021 Huazhong metro flood; where responses were slower than would be expected. I analysed interviews with survivors to see whether the emergency flood warning system failing to activate affected behaviour as an example of automation bias. At the end of my internship, I presented my findings to the other students in the public administration and received a certificate.

### Daily Life

While at HUST I lived in the visiting student accommodation; I got my own room and shared a bathroom with four others. This meant that I was near other students in the same position as me. I also got to eat in the dining halls on campus which were very affordable and tasty. There

was a large group of Oxford interns at HUST, and we all got on well; in the evenings we would go out to bars or play sports together. It was really nice not to be alone in such an unknown environment. On the weekends, thanks to the generous funding from the University, I was able to afford train tickets to travel around China more widely. I went to Beijing, Xian, Nanjing, Chongqing, and others. As someone who has never left Europe before, it was a very interesting experience to see a culture so different (and one where speaking English will get you nowhere!). Often, all the interns would coordinate to go to the same place, and it was really lovely to travel around China with such a kind group of people! In Wuhan we would also often go cycling together around the East Lake which was really lovely. We found a bar on a secluded corner of the lake and rented BBQs there one evening, which was very fun!

## **Lasting Impressions**

My primary impression of the internship is how much experiencing another culture (especially one so different and often misunderstood in the West) changed my perspective on the world more generally. I had never been to China before but now when I hear stories on the News, my perspective is entirely different. I was also struck by how genuinely friendly the people I met there were. When I arrived, I was assigned a buddy (a PhD student) to help me find my feet. He went out of his way to welcome us to China; he took us out for food, hung out with us in the evenings, and was always there to message when something went wrong. The conversations I had with him were truly eye-opening and something I will always treasure.

My other lasting impression is the lovely friendships I have formed, including those with Chinese students like my assigned buddy. Getting to meet other interns from different colleges, studying different degrees to me was very nice and I can safely say I have some new friends to meet up with back in Oxford! Finally, I was struck by how many biases I had before the internship, and I think I have become more open minded as a result.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Don't wait to be told what to do, take opportunities and just do stuff.

## Alexander Simon Burson, St. Edmund Hall, BA Geography, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### **Work Projects**

I was completing a research project on the use of cloud computing in public transport in mega cities like Hangzhou in London. Each week myself and 3 other interns, as well two students at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) had a meeting with our professor where we delivered presentations updating on our progress. There was an opening ceremony and closing ceremony as well as multiple trips and events run by the host organisation which both brought the interns together and allowed me to experience Chinese life from a different perspective

### **Daily Life**

All the interns were staying in the same block on campus and although living conditions were slightly cramped, it was affordable and well located. Most of my work was independent and there were libraries and workspaces to use around campus. We socialized both with Oxford interns and other people at the university by playing football or doing trips on the weekends to other parts of China

### **Lasting Impressions**

The internship was thoroughly enjoyable but mainly as a cultural experience. The work I was doing was not as extensive as I imagined and although the topic was interesting it was quite a hands off approach for myself and others in the public administration section. What this did provide was an ability to explore more of China and engage more deeply on my own terms.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Make sure you respond to emails promptly and download the necessary apps to navigate China and be prepared for the heat!

Chloe O'Connor, Balliol College, BA English Language and Literature,  
Final Year Undergraduate, in person

## Work Projects

When I applied to conduct research into public policy, I wanted to learn as much as possible



about the workings of China's policy to prepare myself for a future career in diplomacy. Once I arrived at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), I was given the opportunity to pick from a variety of detailed subjects and chose to conduct a project into the role of tourism in rural development through

a comparative lens between the UK and China. Through this project, I gained an appreciation for how much each country can learn from each other, and thus this reinforced my belief that international co-operation benefits every party, from the individual to the highest level of government. I felt this sentiment was embodied by the structure of the internship as a whole, with heavy emphasis placed on the notion of knowledge exchange and connection.

I found that the internship had a good balance of guidance and independence, with enough room in my project to explore my interests, as well as the guidance to produce a rigorous and insightful final presentation. My volunteers organised weekly meetings and were always available online to discuss progress and answer questions. We were given full access to HUST's facilities, including their very large library and our own workspace in the department building.



## Daily Life

All of the other interns on this journey were incredibly friendly and helpful. The Careers Office organised a meeting prior to our departure in which a large group chat was made, allowing us to communicate effectively ahead of time. My volunteer from HUST helped me settle into the University and Wuhan, demonstrating the apps required for daily life. Transport in China is incredibly effective, with bikes readily available for short distances, and very affordable public transportation and taxi services for longer journeys.

Outside of my work, I thoroughly explored the city of Wuhan, making many local friends who helped me practice my Chinese and even cooked some local special dishes for me; I feel sure that we will stay in touch. HUST organised weekly trips for the Public Administration interns, allowing us to explore the local history and development with expert guides. I took a trip to Xi'An one weekend to see the Terracotta Warriors and accompanied an Oxford friend on another weekend to her hometown – these are experiences I will cherish for life. The ability to travel gave me further context on the rapid development of China, and thus these trips not only enriched my life but added value to my work.

## Lasting Impressions

I came away from this internship with a highly positive impression. HUST as an organisation made sure that all our needs were cared for, and acted effectively and sensitively to remedy any issues, taking full regard of our unfamiliarity with the environment. The project and my supervisors gave me unparalleled insight into development policy, both in China, the UK, and international contexts. The



internship reaffirmed my love for policy and cultural interconnection and has confirmed my ambition to be a diplomat while giving me the policy skills to make a confident jump into this line of work. I had a fantastic time exploring China. I have previously lived in northern China but did not travel widely on that occasion as I was under 18. Having the ability to independently explore central China and Wuhan, with a large support network at the University to keep me safe, contributed massively to my growth as a person. I feel I am now more cultured, open-minded, and confident.

## BA Chinese, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

For the academic side of the internship, I got to be involved in an interesting research project. My research project was independently pursued and guided by a professor at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST)'s school of public administration. I'm grateful to have studied under Professor She, whose expertise in domestic tech policy guided my research into how citizens interact with Chinese social media. His grounded perspective on both the benefits and drawbacks of these technologies strengthened the objectivity of my work and helped me consider angles I wouldn't have otherwise explored.

The internship itself was less structured than we expected, and clearer guidance on project expectations would have been helpful. On the first day we were asked to prepare a presentation on a topic related to emergency management, but beyond that there was limited direction. As a result, some of us felt we missed opportunities to develop research skills we had hoped to gain. A few participants also felt that the partnership's benefits were uneven, with the host university appearing to gain more from the collaboration than the interns. It was still very exciting being in China and being able to travel though, and I did really love getting to speak Chinese all the time. Getting to research a project for an extended length of time was also rewarding and I met life-long friends. I don't regret going at all for these reasons.

## Daily Life

We were put in a big international student building for accommodation - the building facilities were really nice, although we received very little help when we arrived in China with setting up WeChat, payment, Alipay, getting electricity for our rooms, paying for hot water, phone numbers etc... In the end it was alright because us interns gradually figured stuff out, but the first three days were quite hectic. There was no need to leave the campus because work, living and facilities (e.g. supermarkets) were all self-contained within the campus. However, I made friends (other interns), and we left all the time to go to shopping malls and to travel to different cities on weekends.

## Lasting Impressions

I did really enjoy the experience. I gained new lifelong friends who I still call every day, and I absolutely loved China. I would recommend an internship there for anyone looking to try new things in a super friendly country.

## BA Human Sciences, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was placed on a research placement based in Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan, China. My research was supposed to align with a specific research project that was being explored by our supervisor who taught in the Department of Public Administration. The project outline was vaguely related to researching the ways governments mobilise technology and the effects of this on public life and attitudes.

Upon arrival, we were informed that we had more freedom over our research topics so long as they were vaguely on theme. I settled on a project that focused on how governments mobilised social media during times of conflict, focusing on a case study-based project. We were initially told to draft a research proposal that we then discussed with our supervisors and received feedback for. The research was largely independent, with weekly meetings to discuss progress.

We were very well supported both academically and culturally; the host organisation arranged for the research groups to be paired with students at HUST who could support us during our time in China. They helped us navigate setting up Alipay and WeChat, as well as the campus, offering us invaluable insight to both life at HUST and more broadly, life in Wuhan.

## Daily Life

My daily life, while participating in this research project, was very similar to that of students at Oxford. With a lot of our research being largely independent, we were able to start and end our days at times that we found suitable. We had several study space options on campus, including our department building, the campus library and a variety of cafes. However, settling into this routine did require a great deal of induction to get used to a completely different country and university.

Priorities included setting up payment and communication channels, like Alipay and WeChat, in order to ensure that the rest of our time goes smoothly. Other priorities included topping up our electricity and hot water, as well as renting bicycles for easy and cheap transportation.

Once settled in, Oxford interns took the initiative to navigate public transport systems like the metro in order to explore Wuhan – the city we were based in. Due to the sheer number of interns in this year's cohort (50) we mainly socialised with one another.

However, we were organized into dorms that were not necessarily Oxford interns only and therefore had the opportunity to interact with other students either on internships or studying long term at HUST. Our department also organised weekly trips to see Wuhan – these included trips to the Yellow Crane Tower, Hubei Museum, Wuhan Department of City Planning. These trips provided both insight into cultural life and provincial governance within Hubei. We were



also able to plan activities and play sports with each other. For example, I organised a BBQ one of the weeks we were there and another week we went to a waterpark. Many evenings were spent playing sports like football, badminton, volleyball and ping pong to name a few.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The research project itself confirmed my interest in policy and government work, leaving me with stronger research, presentation, and communication skills. I also feel I was able to better work independently, ensuring that I held myself accountable to certain deadlines, while maintaining a healthy work life balance that allowed for me to make the most of this opportunity abroad. My project itself gave me insight into international governments through my independent case studies, teaching me about major points of conflict and conflict resolution through policy.

In a digitalised era, governance through technology is becoming increasingly important and my project gave me insight into how this is achieved and to what end. My time on this research internship was incredible. One part of this was just the opportunity to travel to China, supported by the generous Fung Foundation Award. Experiencing a completely different culture within the opportunity to study abroad has been such an enriching experience.

Exploring the history, culture and landscapes of China was such a surreal and intangible experience. The second part to this was more than just the location – it was the people. From meeting other Oxford interns, to speaking to the Chinese locals, these interactions embedded lasting memories. It confirmed my ambitions to work in a career with international opportunities.

Nimrod Ori Peter Morwood, St. John's College, BA Geography, First Year Undergraduate, in person

## Work Projects

During the internship at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), of which I was a part of the research team focusing on AI, IoT and Big Data technologies integration into megacities, there was a healthy balance of directed and guided work, feedback, opportunities for discussion etc., as well as cultural exchanges across trips, and enough free time to make the most of being in China. The work mainly consisted of independent research each week for the duration of the programme, as we gradually got to know the subject matter and build our own research projects in the topic of the professor.



Every week we had guidance and an hour long session in which we presented our findings from the week as well as a few lectures on public policy, all of which culminated in a final presentation with all of the internship participants (as compared to the groups of 5 the previous sessions were in) wherein we presented our final findings, conclusions and results. In my group, which was adjacent to public administration, for the first few weeks it was getting to know the particular area of study, reading journals and looking at case studies, and for the latter half, I finalised my own project, conducted interviews and carried out my own research project. There was a nice balance between freedom, direction and independent and guided work. I was happy with the work-life balance as I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the city of Wuhan alongside the work.



## **Daily Life**

Given the fact that my internship programme had the expressed aim of conducting a research project, my daily life was generally self-directed regarding my own hours, allowing freedom and flexibility in balancing both work and life. A few days a week there were lectures around the subject matter of AI, IoT and Big data technology in public policy as well as meetings between our peers and supervisors relaying and presenting the work in which we had completed during the week (largely mirroring that of my experience in Oxford with tutorials). Thus, in general I spent 2-7 hours a day reading journals, collecting data, conducting interviews, and finding case studies etc., which left plenty of time for socialising with my peers from Oxford and other international and home students at the University.

All the Oxford students and international students are in the same dorm, making socialising easy, as well as the fact there was always a friendly face and somebody to sit with at one of the numerous cafes or canteens across the almost city-sized campus. This was also great for me in being a part of the public administration faculty, as it was only a 5-minute bike or 15-minute walk away. To relax and wind down there are numerous bars, restaurants and shopping centres close to the campus (walking or biking distance) as well as a metro to take you anywhere in the city. At the weekends, sometimes it was nice to travel to other cities in China to make the most of the experience, this was made easy through it's well managed, efficient, navigable and fairly priced public transportation system.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I had an incredible time at HUST and made lifelong friends. I gained new insights about the world, different people, different ways of structuring society and governance, as well as having the opportunity to challenge my own preconceived ideas after seeing a place in reality. I gained new skills and confidence in independent qualitative and quantitative research and built a more well-rounded knowledge on the practical applications of IoT, AI and Big Data technologies in many different contexts. I was also able to engage in many cross disciplinary discussions from

peers and supervisors which gave me new insights to bring into my life, future work and future studies. It provided a great opportunity to see what a research position is like in practice and



confirmed that it is something I want to pursue in the future, alongside opening the door for potentially carrying out work or engaging in future studies in China. In being there for an extended period, I was able to pick up a fair amount of Mandarin, exposing myself to the beauty of the language and myth busting some of the things I had heard and read about

(e.g. the difficulty of learning it), which is definitely something I will continue into the future. I have left the internship a more critical thinker, more developed person, better researcher, student and more confident in my own work.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would say to keep an open mind about all aspects of life, people, work, culture, food etc., so that you can get the most out of this experience. Try new things, whether they be new research methods, new foods or new experiences and you'll be sure to improve your knowledge of your discipline and about yourself.

# HUAZHONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (HUST) – SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



Leili Sabourian, St. Edmund Hall, MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

## Work Projects

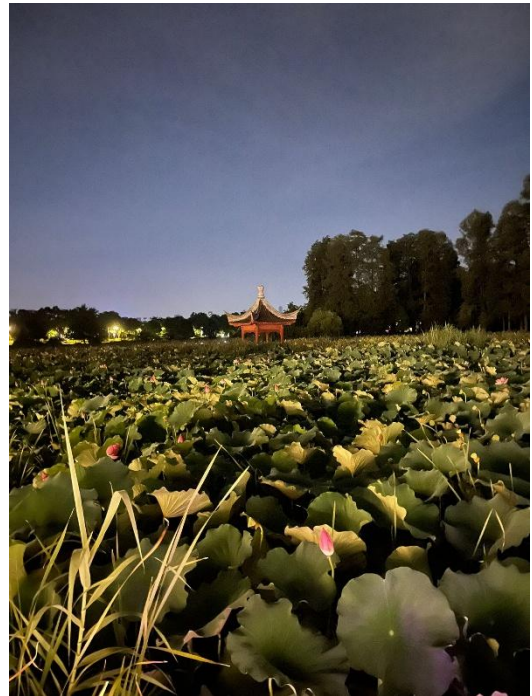
My research focused on the theoretical and mathematical side of machine learning, under the supervision of Professor Zhenyu Liao. My work was not lab centered and I would spend the day either reading papers, running through mathematical proofs, or checking my work empirically using python and synthetic data. To start the internship, I was given the opportunity to read and explore the masses of literature surrounding the applications of random matrix theory to machine learning, specifically in-context learning.

For the rest of the internship, I focused on deriving a closed-form expression for the in-context learning error of a linear transformer as a function of attention weights, input statistics and dimension ratio. I also found that my research questions changed as I read more/investigated the subject further – with a few weeks being spent looking at neural tangent kernels and how they worked. I really liked this dynamic approach to research and I think it gave me a taste of what research is like in the real world.

During the internship, I was especially grateful for the collaborative nature of the research that was emphasised at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) – working with my two group members (other interns from Oxford) helped us all to reach valuable conclusions and to improve individually. My supervisor also gave me the freedom to explore different areas within this field whilst also having a clear direction, which I really appreciated.

## Daily Life

Upon first arriving in Wuhan, we were greeted warmly by students from HUST. I am particularly grateful for my 'buddy' (each of us interns were assigned a postgraduate at HUST who was studying in the same field that would help us to settle in) who answered any questions I had and helped me to move in. I quickly grew to love Wuhan despite the heat! Campus life was lovely, and it was easy to get into a nice routine. We were able to get very cheap and very good food through all the canteens, and I enjoyed discovering multiple different workspaces where me and the other interns could go. I was also



able to join a campus gym in Wuhan. The campus is also located very close to the East Lake where we could go after work for a cycle ride or even a swim.

Moreover, the opportunity to explore such a culturally rich city that I knew little about at the start of the internship, was really interesting. The programme offered flexibility to travel beyond Wuhan and explore more cities and provinces during the weekends. China is such an interesting country and offers a full diversity of places. My favourite weekend was spent visiting the country's old capital – Xi'an. The combination of historic legacy with the Terracotta Warriors and the cultural diversity shown in the Muslim Quarter, epitomises the unique historical blend that China has to offer.

## Lasting Impressions

This internship has given me a flavour of what research can look like, and I'm sure it will shape part of my master's thesis which also has machine learning as a focal point. What really struck me during this internship, was the initiative that was needed to conduct the research. I was

thinking critically and also had to be comfortable with the idea that I wouldn't get straight answers to my questions immediately. This internship has made me surer of applying to graduate school next year and to start doing research more long term. I also really valued this internship as my specific research was slightly different to what I would usually do on my MEng course as it was more theoretical and less applied, which I really appreciated as it was something new to explore. Beyond the academics, completing an internship in China has been such an incredible opportunity. From learning how to pay using WeChat and Alipay, to trying some really amazing food, I felt completely immersed. One particularly memorable moment was going out for dinner in the city centre and trying the famous Wuhan duck dish. It turns out that the spice level was much more than I had accounted for but despite the sweating, it made for a very funny culinary experience.

## MPhys Physics, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my summer internship, I worked on a project in Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) signal processing, where I developed a MATLAB pipeline to process raw Free Induction Decay (FID) signals. My main tasks included implementing baseline and phase corrections, magnetic field correction, frequency calibration, and peak detection/fitting, which together produced corrected and interpretable spectra. This gave me valuable experience in signal processing, coding, and data analysis, and I successfully delivered a functional end-to-end workflow. I received strong support from my supervisor and colleagues, who provided guidance, feedback, and encouragement, enabling me to take initiative and grow both technically and academically.

### Daily Life

During my internship, I settled in quickly and enjoyed the balance between work and daily life. My commute was straightforward, and the work environment was welcoming and supportive, which helped me adapt with ease. Outside of work, I had the chance to explore the local area,

experience the culture, and spend time with both locals and other interns. Socialising with fellow interns created a strong sense of community, and together we shared many enjoyable experiences that made my time abroad both memorable and enriching.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I thoroughly enjoyed my internship and found it to be a transformative experience. I gained valuable technical skills in signal processing and data analysis, as well as greater confidence in applying theoretical knowledge to practical research challenges. The opportunity to work within a supportive and collaborative environment also strengthened my problem-solving and communication abilities. Overall, this experience has confirmed my ambition to pursue a career in scientific research and technology development, and it has inspired me to continue building the skills necessary to contribute meaningfully to my field.



## **MEng Materials Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

Originally, I applied for a project under Professor Tang Jiang, working on building perovskite tandem solar cells. However, once we arrived, me and my lab partner were given some options to choose from. I worked on creating X-ray detectors by growing metal halide perovskites single crystals. The work was based on a dissertation written by Liang Zhao, which gave an insight into the use of perovskite detectors for gamma-ray spectroscopy (and X-rays). We were based in the Wuhan National Laboratory for Optoelectronics, a large complex with eight floors and many



research groups within. By the end of the internship, we had successfully grown our own perovskite crystals and attached electrodes to the surface to create a rudimentary X-ray detector. We verified that the detectors worked by obtaining current-voltage graphs and current-time graphs, which showed changes as we pulsed X-rays onto the sample. We had the opportunity to work in a glove box where we measured out the precursor; used furnaces to grow the crystals; use a thermal evaporator; and X-ray equipment. We were supervised by PhD students working on projects involving the perovskite single crystal detectors, who demonstrated how to use all the apparatus and provided us with support when we performed the tasks ourselves.

## Daily Life

My first impression of living in Wuhan was not great: it was uncomfortably hot, and nothing worked without help from our Chinese student helpers and it also felt awkward meeting so



many new people. However, by the end of the internship we were very independent and could comfortably live in Wuhan and make the most of the cheap food and amenities. There was a group of around 50 Oxford interns in Wuhan, and over the course of the internship I became very close friends with many of them. We would moped to work together, eat together and

explore the city together –whether that was singing karaoke in late night bars or going swimming in the East Lake.

The best part of the internship was our weekend travels. Due to the high-speed trains in China, we were not restricted by distance in where we wanted to go and had an amazing time visiting really scenic villages and megacities. Some notable mentions include Chongqing, Guilin, Beijing,

Nanjing, Yichun and more. In Yichun, one of the interns had relatives working in tourism there, and they arranged a full tour in the hot springs village. We stayed in a 5-star hotel, got to watch an amazing show and had great cultural exchanges with the locals.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The internship offered a memorable experience in China and combined valuable cultural immersion with enjoyable free time to explore the country. Although we had limited laboratory time, we managed to use a wide range of apparatus and learned about the work culture of researchers in China. The PhD and Post Doc helpers were very lovely people and great hosts. We had plenty of free time to explore Wuhan and the rest of China. During the internship I also met a lot of amazing people from Oxford, who had lots of interesting stories to tell and were great to be around. The internship boosted my confidence in exploring new places and meeting new people.

Although, I wouldn't necessarily want to work as a researcher in China, I would want to come again to travel and visit more cities. I enjoyed working in the laboratory, however there are aspects of being a researcher which are not that desirable, such as the uncertainty with progress in research and the amount of work you need to do outside of the laboratory. I gained a lot of experience on how to live in China, such as the multiple ways to get around, whether that is using rentable bicycles and mopeds, or using the high-speed railways. I also got to try of lot new dishes and flavours only found in China.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

It is very beneficial to know some Chinese or have friends who know Chinese on this internship. The language barrier often makes daily activities such as going to the hospital and setting utilities a lot more difficult. Make use of your free time to travel around China and make the most of your Visa. The work on the internship is not that intense, and don't be afraid to miss weekend meetings so you can travel as the supervisors don't mind (most of the meetings are in Chinese and are not that relevant to the interns). It is really useful to have a Chinese number, as

it is used for a lot of apps and is annoying not to have. The Oxford VPN can work, but not reliably. Having an E-sim is very useful and helps to get around firewalls.

## MPhys Physics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was able to conduct a series of self-led literature reviews into the research field of Optical Computing. By the end of the research programme, I was able to overcome the gap between



research interns and undergraduate students due to limited technical knowledge. Hence, I became familiar with the theoretical basis of Optical Computing and its engineering conventions. I was able to summarise the outline of past research and the advantages and limitations offered by different cutting-edge research directions.

The host organisation provided access to an enormous number of resources, including their libraries and online database. They also provided a conducive study environment and appropriate welfare to support the learning process. The host organisation also provided opportunities to visit their state-of-the-art laboratories, where I was able to see how theories are realised in practical environments. The experience provided a strong link between abstract work and real-life aspects and served as an important insight to my future considerations.

### Daily Life

The host organisation provided us with an adequate living environment: a single room with just enough space for work and for rest. Accommodation facilities were functional and generally in

line with campus standards, though some students noted that shared areas could have been maintained more thoroughly. The welfare team provided helpful support, though cultural and language differences occasionally made conflict resolution more challenging. I found it difficult to enjoy recess with my batchmates since I had no interest in their planned activities. Fortunately, it remained an option to go out for walks around the campus and city in the summer nights. That did free my mind from stressful and directionless working conditions and made me focus on my existence instead.

## **Lasting Impressions**

What stands out most to me is the profound shift in how I approach learning. More than any single lesson or lecture, the experience has taught me how to take ownership of my own intellectual growth. The ability to self-learn – whether by seeking out resources, asking the right questions, or learning from failed attempts – has become one of the most valuable tools I’ve acquired through this journey.

This program has expanded my intellectual horizons and reshaped how I define progress - not as the accumulation of knowledge, but as the cultivation of curiosity and self-direction. I leave with a deeper sense of purpose and a clearer vision of the kind of learner and researcher I hope to become. I am deeply thankful to everyone who made this experience possible, and I look forward to carrying the lessons from this journey into whatever challenges lie ahead.

**Francesco Straniero, Lincoln College, MPhys Physics, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

My project was about pulsed field Nuclear magnetic resonance in high magnetic fields. It was entirely computational, and it involved learning about NMR techniques and doing simulations. I felt the project lacked a bit of guidance and purpose. I had only one meeting with my supervisor (which I had to ask for) and the goals of the project were too vague and without a clear

timeline. The project involved learning in depth about novel PFNMR techniques, reading some papers about it and then doing some simulations in MATLAB or python of NMR signals. I was given a desk in a shared office, but since the work was computation based, I often worked from the library or cafes.

## Daily Life

I arrived in Wuhan on a Saturday morning. Me and the other Oxford interns were picked up at the airport by volunteers from Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) (every intern has an assigned volunteer) and then brought to the main campus and to our rooms. The main campus is probably larger than Oxford city centre, so it takes a bit of time to learn your way around. The first couple of days are a bit shocking: the campus and city are massive and outside its sweltering hot (30+ degrees every day), the vast majority of people don't speak a word of English and most of the signs are only in Chinese.



During the settling-in process, having a volunteer and being able to hang out with the other Oxford students is invaluable, as it can make the whole process much easier. When the actual internship started on the Monday, I got a tour of the lab from my volunteer. I had an assigned desk in a shared office, but since my project was computational, I ended up working mainly in the library or one of the many coffee shops. I didn't have set hours, but I tried to work a 10-5 schedule. After work, I would usually hang out with the other Oxford interns, either visiting the city or the nearby lake, or playing sports in any of the many facilities on campus. There's plenty of sports courts and everyone uses them after sunset because it's too hot before. Meal wise, I always went to the canteens or restaurants. They are very cheap for UK standards (you can get

a whole meal for £2) and quite good in quality. During weekends I would travel with the other Oxford interns to other locations in China. Trains and planes are really good ways to travel and very cheap, and I definitely recommend traveling to see as much of China as possible.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Overall, I greatly enjoyed my time in China. I loved the culture, the food, the cities and the natural parks there. The best part of the internship was definitely visiting different Chinese cities and places with the other Oxford interns. While from an academic perspective I wish I could have done more for my project, from an overall perspective, I am more than grateful to HUST for this experience and I definitely feel enriched to have seen and tried a different part of the world, which was new to me. I was already set on staying in academia, but after this experience I am considering China for another work or research experience.

I would love to live in a large Chinese city again and see more parts of the country which I haven't seen yet. I think China is a marvellous country that is very projected in the future and will become increasingly important in terms of science. I would recommend to anyone to travel and live there for a bit, as I felt my perception was completely changed after my internship. I am also grateful to all the other Oxford interns I have met and who made the experience so much fun, and a final thank you goes to the Fung Foundation for funding this experience.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

There are a few things I'd recommend doing before going: download WeChat and Alipay (both are fundamental) and register yourself on them. Install a VPN on your devices (the Oxford one works great). Ask previous interns if they have any other advice!



## Arya Saranathan, St. Anne's College, MA Mathematics and Computer Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My project was about understanding current ML paradigms at a deeper level, in the hope of using that theoretical knowledge to inform practice. More specifically, the focus was using random matrix techniques to understand attention and in-context learning in transformers. I was supervised by Prof. Zhenyu Liao at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), who is an expert in the area and was also very quick to respond to emails and provide useful guidance. The main outcome was that I developed a much deeper understanding of this specific area of research, and theoretical ML more broadly. I worked on various smaller ideas that didn't lead to anything concrete, but this is the nature of research, and I may continue working on this under my supervisor's guidance.



### Daily Life

Settling into the dorm at HUST, Wuhan and setting up various necessities of daily life (payments, navigating campus, food) took some time at first, but I was assigned a student volunteer from HUST, who was very helpful and made the process a lot easier. My work was purely research and reading, so I did not have a lab or assigned workspace as such: instead, I could choose where to work from every day, and my work was largely independent. Some evenings were occupied by social activities, usually with other Oxford interns – playing cards or exploring interesting places in Wuhan. The weekends were mostly free, and most interns at

HUST took the opportunity to travel around China. I visited Shanghai, Wudangshan, and Zhangjiajie over the weekends.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The experience of living in Wuhan and getting to know China better over 6 weeks was very personally enriching. I think I am better off for the cultural understanding I gained, but I'm especially glad I was able to get to know many fellow interns from Oxford whom I would not have met otherwise. These are the main reasons I consider the internship a success.

Academically, I did manage to get a taste of a specific kind of research and develop my knowledge in the field. The experience hasn't had a significant impact on my career goals – it was more of an excursion into a flavour of research I probably would not try otherwise.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

You may have many small questions about preparing to travel, food, accommodation, etc. I'd recommend asking your HUST volunteer if you are already in touch with them, or a past intern. The main thing to note, is to setup WeChat and Alipay in advance!

## **Amelia Bolla, The Queen's College, Materials Science, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

My internship focused on computational materials and condensed matter physics, with particular emphasis on topological materials and states such as Chern semimetals, quantum Hall effects, and topological superconductivity. My day-to-day tasks involved gaining proficiency with Linux commands in order to run density functional theory (DFT), Wannier90, and WannierTools calculations on materials including  $\text{Bi}_2\text{Se}_3$ ,  $\text{Na}_3\text{Bi}$ , and  $\text{EuCd}_2\text{As}_2$ . These calculations aimed to replicate results from published papers, which required me to self-study the theoretical foundations of DFT, topological insulators, Dirac semimetals, and topological

conductors. This combination of practical computation and theoretical study enabled me to engage deeply with cutting-edge topics in condensed matter research. Towards the end of the internship, I presented my findings to the research group. This included results such as band gap calculations, electronic structure analysis, and surface state plots, all of which were benchmarked against existing literature. Beyond technical knowledge, the internship strengthened my ability to use Linux effectively, enhanced my research skills, and improved my communication across language and cultural barriers.

The host organisation provided excellent support throughout my stay. I was paired with a dedicated student volunteer who guided me through both academic and practical matters, and who remained accessible whenever I needed advice or clarification. I also felt comfortable approaching other members of the research group for help, which created a collaborative and supportive environment. Professor Gang Xu was approachable and generous with his time, offering both academic guidance and thoughtful hospitality. The welcome and farewell dinners he hosted were especially valuable in fostering a sense of belonging within the group.



## Daily Life

My daily routine in Wuhan was structured but enjoyable. Each morning, I cycled for around five minutes to the research building, which was a simple and convenient way to get to work. Most of the day was spent in the laboratory, where I focused on running Linux-based calculations and improving my understanding of the related theory. The work required independent learning, but I also felt supported by the research group whenever I had questions. Outside of research, I made good use of the facilities on campus. I often played basketball with local students in the

evenings, which provided a break from academic work and gave me the chance to practise my basic Mandarin in an informal setting. Meals were usually eaten in the canteens, which offered a variety of affordable and healthy options.

During weekends, I explored more of Wuhan, visiting landmarks such as the Yellow Crane Tower. These visits gave me a better understanding of both the history of the city and the scale of its modern development. Social support played an important role in my daily life. My assigned student volunteer, helped me to settle in, answered questions, and provided useful resources for my learning. I also benefited from the friendliness of the wider research group, who created a welcoming environment. Overall, my daily life combined focused academic work, with opportunities to exercise, socialise, and experience the local culture.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The internship at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) has been an extremely positive and memorable experience. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, both in the research group and in daily life on campus. Settling into a new environment came with challenges, but the support of my supervisor, student volunteer, and fellow students made the transition smooth and enjoyable. I found the balance between focused work during the day and opportunities to explore Wuhan and meet new people outside the lab to be very rewarding. I feel I gained a great deal from this experience. Living and working in a different cultural and academic setting, improved my adaptability and communication skills, while also helping me to build confidence in new situations.

I particularly valued the friendships I made with local students and the chance to learn more about Chinese culture through shared meals, sports, and travel. These aspects of the internship have left me with lasting memories as well as skills that will be useful in many areas of life. Most importantly, the internship confirmed my desire to work in a research environment. Experiencing first-hand the collaborative nature of academic life, has motivated me to continue along this path. I leave the internship with a stronger sense of direction and a great appreciation for the opportunity.

## Jamie Wright, St. Edmund Hall, MPhysPhil Physics and Philosophy, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I spoke to my student volunteer about what project I was going to complete, and he put me in contact with the professor running his research group. I met the professor and was given a postdoc supervisor. The project was on 3D Gaussian Splatting. The supervisor was very helpful and gave me lots to do. The main aim was to get a technique in the foundational paper to use less memory. I didn't make any publishable improvements to the memory but understand it much better now.

### Daily Life

The first few days were really tough. A lot of us struggled to operate the basic functions of the accommodation block, such as getting hot water, Wi-Fi and other amenities to work. A lot of amenities were built for Chinese people with Chinese ID cards, with QR codes and websites in Chinese, and it was hard to use them initially. I think having a student volunteer to help us with that was indispensable for us

being able to live there. Without a student volunteer, the project would totally not have been viable. I mainly worked in the University library and in the office of the lab I was assigned



to. I met with the supervisor weekly and had all communication with everyone via WeChat. It seems they barely use email in China. I socialised almost exclusively with the other Oxford students on the programme, of which there were many, about 50. Outside of work, I did tons of activities. There were so many of us on the programme, it really changed the experience and made it really busy and fun. If I was by myself, it would have been really different and much

harder. Every weekend, I would go on a trip to another city, mainly to the Yangtze River in the south of China, but we were free to go anywhere.

I really enjoyed the cultural aspect of the trip. I got a lot out of my project personally, but others on the trip were slightly at a loss of not having that much of a project to do. You could easily have had no contact with your supervisor if you didn't want to, and a couple of people were given uninterested supervisors and had to try hard to even get a project from someone at all. I think this was due to the nature of the cultural barrier. I got to know the other Oxford interns on the project very well and hope to keep in touch with them lots going forwards. I made some good friends on the programme. The campus at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) made the experience a lot easier and more fun. It was like a small town geared around the University we could live in. Overall, the experience was better than I expected.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The experience hasn't really changed my career ambitions too much. I still have the same thoughts about working in a software-heavy job. I'd done a project not too different in subject to this before. I do feel like the project was quite valuable and the work they were doing in the lab I was at, is productive, despite the cultural barriers. I really enjoyed being in another country and I think I'm going to take that experience with me. It's hard to get to spend time in China like that without a program like this, and I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to do this.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

It's going to be really hard to settle in but use your student volunteer a lot to help you because it's much easier for them. One thing I would really recommend which a couple of people did on my program and would be super helpful, is to rent an electric moped for six weeks from a place by the East Lake. This is just going to be so useful for getting around the place because it is



quite big and some people were really grateful that they found it out and wished they'd done it earlier.

Also be prepared to put in a lot of effort to find a good project and remember that you're going to get out what you put in from it. If you don't want to do work, you can easily get away with that, but I think you'll have less of a good experience as a result. So really try at the start to make sure you have a good project description and you have good contact with your supervisor. If you don't like your supervisor, just ask your student volunteer or Vivian to get another one. That way you'll get more out of the project.

## Adam Thomas, St. Catherine's College, MPhys Physics, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My internship was with an ultra-fast optics lab. Over my six weeks there were three main phases. At first, I was mainly reading papers related to the experiments in the lab and doing



background reading. After this I started working with a PhD student on his experiment. Initially I worked on an improved MATLAB simulation of the main optical effect in the experiment. Once this was

finished, I spent the rest of the internship helping to set up the experiment and take measurements. I was quite proud of the accuracy of my simulation and gained a lot of experience with the high-power laser that was used in the experiment. The host organisation was somewhat passive, but they put me in touch with everyone I needed to speak to, allowing me to organise the details with the researchers myself.

## Daily Life

Weekdays would depend a lot on what work I was doing. When coding or reading, I would split my time around different parts of the campus (e.g. the café, library, the office at the lab and my room). I had most meals at one of the many affordable campus canteens. When in the lab, there was a bit less flexibility and I would usually start work earlier. I sometimes ate dinner with some guys from the lab after we finished. We also sometimes worked into the night. In the evenings I would hang out with the other Oxford interns on campus or somewhere in the city. Each weekend I went on a trip to another part of China with some of the other interns.

## Lasting Impressions

I think I gained quite a lot. I got an introduction and gained experience in an area of physics that I really enjoy and hope to do more research in in the future. I got to experience a whole new culture and make lots of new friends from Oxford and even some in China.

[Finlay Thomas, St. Catherine's College, MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person](#)

## Work Projects

I was involved with a lab group in the Optoelectronics Department working on infrared detector chips in a novel way. These have many applications, from LiDAR to meteorology etc. These chips are at the forefront of the semiconductor market, and working on them was incredibly insightful and inspiring. Producing this chip had many steps in manufacturing, such as Atomic Layer Deposition steps, crystal growth in solutions, and bonding onto the chip. I was introduced to all the laboratories, the staff and operations by my supervisor. I then helped with the manufacturing steps and additionally gained insights into the electrical design and research path for these chips. This was after researching the market beforehand through research papers my supervisor recommended, giving a background to the work being done. My supervisor also had his research article which was to be submitted soon, and so I worked on

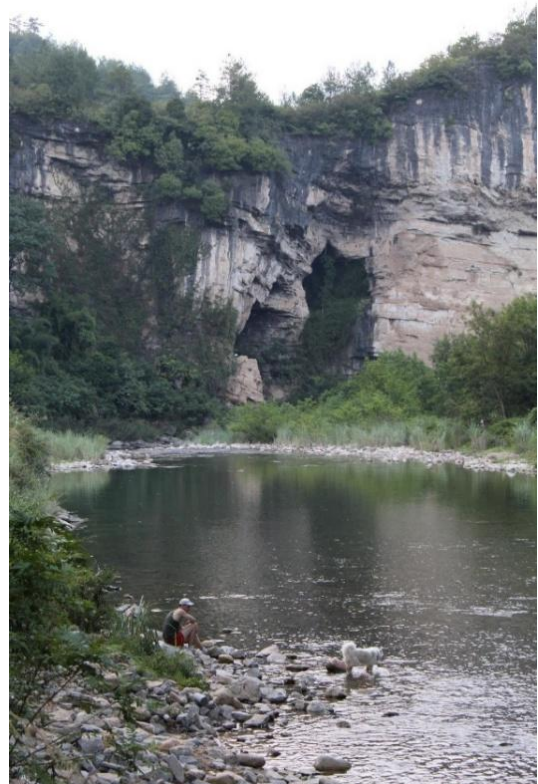
editing and adding to this article. This involved some drafts, and comparing with other papers. By the end of the internship, it was complete and submitted, and I even helped draft a cover letter for the journal. I then undertook more hands-on lab work and worked on producing one of these chips myself. I eventually got to keep this as a memento of my work.

## Daily Life

I managed, through the aid of my helper, to hire mopeds on campus to get to work each day. The helpers proved to be massively helpful in getting everything set up, including payment methods and other needed applications. Outside of work, I found it amazing to use rented bikes to cycle to the East Lake and explore all the spots. This included hillside pagodas, campsites and street food. It was at one of these campsites in which we planned a barbeque and had a great evening towards the end of the internship.

Testing different street food stalls outside the campus was also a great activity outside of work. With other people, some regular activities included

cheap massages, football with locals, and exploring the city. Other socialising activities included local bars, and many funky card games. The amount of Oxford students on the internship provided a great base for meeting people, and there was never an evening wasted. The canteens were an amazing spot to meet for food. It was not only cheap, but some of the better food in China. It always gave easy and reliable meals, and then when in a massive rush the local supermarket could provide some bao buns or other light eats



## **Lasting Impressions**

The internship gave an incredible introduction to China. Wuhan was the perfect base for visiting other places, and the helpers support was invaluable for recommendations and for settling-in. The experience offered so much more than would've been possible in a similar position in the UK and gave such a rewarding cultural insight. It was an overwhelming experience to begin with, with difficulties in setting up SIM cards and payment methods. Past this point, it was an incredible mix of exploration and adventure.

On weekends, we often travelled to different cities or natural attractions. This was most effective when travelling on sleeper trains and getting a full few days to take in all China has to offer. Highlights included Zhangjiajie (Avatar mountains) and Yangshou, some of the most beautiful areas I have visited. Exploring after the internship was immense, and something very valuable about an international internship. We took a road trip for 10 days exploring Xinjiang, something immensely unique and it provided some lasting memories. The work was insightful, with a comprehensive guide in working in this sector. This was from the extensive look into all the processes shown to me by my supervisor, and the introduction to many of the key employees.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

To engage with your student helpers and build a good relationship with them. They provide so much cultural insight and help in a place like China, where payment and administration is so initially tough for tourists. Be adventurous, it may seem like a daunting place, but in my view, it is one of the safest in the world for tourists and there is so much to see. The 6 weeks will end up passing very quickly!

## MPhys Physics, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

Our task was using density functional theory to calculate the band structure of various materials and then calculate their topological properties. This was a computational task, and we were provided with all the tools and software by the host so we could run programs on their high-performance computing cluster. Much of the tasks required setting up various input files then leaving them to run on the computing cluster for times ranging from 2 to 40 minutes depending on the task.

At the start, we were given an induction talk by the professor of the research group giving an overview of the theory of topics we were learning about and laying out all the calculations we



should have performed by the end of each week. This was followed by weekly lectures given by different students of the research group going into more depth on individual topics and even included a special online lecture from Professor Biao Lian of Princeton University. We were provided with various lecture slides prepared by the students on how to do each calculation and was helped by the students of the group when we were in the office performing the calculations. At the end we were tasked with creating a presentation to showcase all the work we had done during the internship to the professor, mainly

presenting the final results we had obtained from each calculation.

### Daily Life

Daily life included going into the office to work with other students in the research group. In the evenings there were a wide range of social activities to take part in. The University was

equipped with a wide range of sporting activities to do on campus, such as football, basketball and tennis, the courts of which were only a couple minutes from our accommodation, as well as a swimming pool which was further away. This meant many evenings involved playing sports with fellow interns, or on some occasions, members of our research group and other Chinese or international students that were also studying at the University. There were lots of malls nearby and various sights within the city to go and visit, such as the yellow crane tower or the Wuhan sky rail. Weekends included going on trips to a nearby city. Trips involved visiting various historic Chinese sites, visiting Buddhist temples and pagodas, climbing mountains, biking around cities and rural areas, all whilst meeting new and friendly Chinese people along the way.

## **Lasting Impressions**

This internship was an enjoyable experience. I gained a lot of insight into the style of work in a different country. I learnt how to work with a variety of people and overcome a language barrier to communicate. It also gave me an insight into an area of physics I was interested in going into and has made me keener to go into it now.

**Vivek Aggala, New College, MEng Engineering Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

I was working with a research group at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) that focuses on machine learning and communications. The main tasks were to do extensive background reading, focusing on distributed learning techniques and optimizing the cost of communication and computation when training a model. This was done by reading research papers on the topic and having regular discussions with master's and PhD students in the research group. After this, I would start coding to help with bug fixes and issues with code that other people who are researching new ideas in the group then moved on to, recreating whole papers by coding their core ideas. I finished by coming up with novel ideas that could be



researched in the future by extending current papers and then giving a presentation in front of my supervisor and the research group detailing my experience and things I had learnt.

## **Daily Life**

There was a weekend before the work started to settle in. I was living in the international dorms at the University with fellow Oxford interns. I was also assigned a Chinese student volunteer who introduced me to the University, all the sign-ups and steps I needed to do whilst settling in. My volunteer was extremely helpful and patient and helped me with whatever problems I had while I settled into living in a new country. Work was in a research lab also in the University, and I biked to work every working day. I socialised with the members of my research group and the other Oxford interns that were at HUST. On the weekends, I also had time to travel around China with the other Oxford interns, which was a very enriching experience.

## **Lasting Impressions**

It was a very enjoyable experience on the whole. Exploring a new working lifestyle, culture and country was something I will cherish and remember for a long time. All the people related to the internship that I met were very welcoming and happy to help. There was a bit of a language barrier, which took some getting used to at first, but nothing Google translate couldn't fix. The internship didn't really change my career ambitions as I didn't actually do much research but was a fun experience overall (more of a cultural immersion than an internship).

## **MEng Engineering Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

The internship was advertised as investigating the behaviour and energy consumption of transistor circuits. However, on Monday of Week 1, when I and the master's student assigned to be my helper, met the professor, the professor asked: "What is your plan for the next six

weeks?” The professor seemed unprepared for my internship. After the meeting, the helper gathered some of his postgraduate friends, and we managed to figure out what could be modelled and investigated and this is what I focused on. I would like to emphasise that during the internship, I had no “main tasks and achievements” and little to no “support” from the host department. I had to come up with a research goal myself, I decided myself that I was going to write a report to give to the professor (I saw the professor only 3 times, in total only about 60 minutes). While the PhD student gave me a good number of resources to spark an idea, he wasn’t able to mentor me much (through no fault of his own – he has his own research to do and was never meant to be a part of the internship). Moreover, the master’s student helper studies a different field to the internship I applied for, so he would not be able to help me much even if he wanted to. The student population in the lab group was also bound to go on summer holiday at the end of the 4th week, which meant no one was in-office to help me during the last two weeks. I tried contacting the professor to inform him when I was leaving and to send him a scientific report, however I never received a reply.



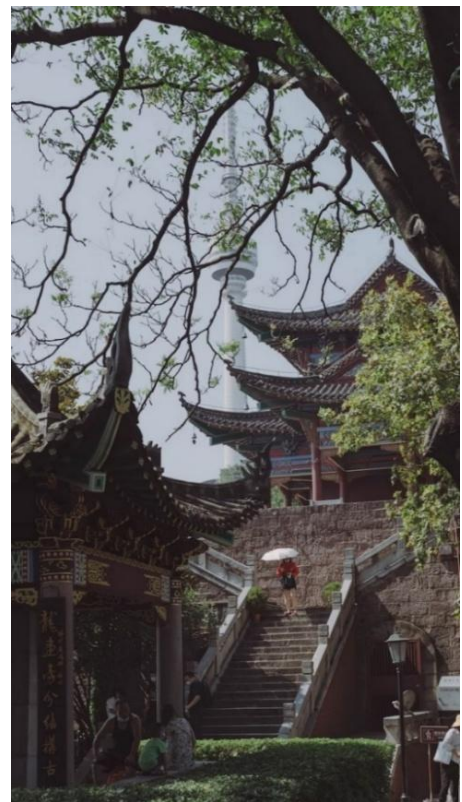
## Daily Life

The master’s student helper helped me settle in quite well. He told me about the payment system both in-campus and outside and showed me the nearby canteens and stores. He brought me to the office that we would be working in, so I knew where to go the next time. The office was a 10-minute walk from the dorms, so I would usually walk there. Sometimes I would use the WeChat/Alipay rental bikes. However, I know some others had their workplace at least a 40-minute walk/15-minute bike from dorms.

My lab group was really gracious. I was the only Oxford student in the group but the students in the lab group would invite me to have lunch with them (and dinner if we were still there). I got to help them practice English and they helped me practice Chinese. Outside of work hours, I would meet up with the other Oxford interns to hang out, and during the weekends different groups of us would go on trips to visit other cities and towns in China via the high-speed train. These and the friends I made were certainly the highlights of the internship

## **Lasting Impressions**

I feel like I gained from the internship, but not as much as I wanted. My main aim was to get work experience and learn more about transistor technology and circuitry. But the only thing I gained from Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) was simply an idea of what I could research. This is something I could have done myself; being at HUST just accelerated that process. The actual reading of papers, writing pieces of code, and writing the report was almost purely independent and something I could have done at home. The experience has confirmed my career ambition because I was researching something that was of interest to me. I just wished I had more support and a more defined structure to the internship because I think I could have made much faster progress if I did.



## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

To interns applying for this particular internship at this organisation, I would suggest getting the contact details of the professor you are assigned to soon after you have been confirmed to be

accepted. This way you can ensure the professor is ready for your arrival with the appropriate project that you have applied to.

## **OXFORD UNIVERSITY INNOVATION CHANGZHOU**

Frederick Bowyer, St. Peter's College, MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### **Work Projects**

For the first two weeks of my 8-week internship, my supervisors looked for a task that I could complete, so in the meantime, they sent me papers to read on the topic. The task that they decided on was to analyse a time series data set of thermal error in a machine tool spindle using machine learning techniques. In practice, this meant that I was given Excel spreadsheets of data which I fed into Python and analysed using the methods that I had read about in the papers that were sent. We also looked around the labs that they had on the ground floor and discussed that I could potentially help, but due to the timings of the experiments planned, this was never arranged. I had a supervisor who I would communicate with over WeChat (I don't speak Chinese, and he didn't speak English well, so this was necessary for communication). I would send him summaries of what I had done, and he would respond with suggestions for how it could be improved.

### **Daily Life**

The hosts, primarily Elena, did a really good job of settling us in. We were provided with an apartment, bikes, Chinese SIM cards and tours around the office. At the beginning of the internship, I would get there by bike or on foot at 8:30, have lunch in their canteen and leave the office at 5pm. As the internship progressed, I realized that since the work was independent, I could be more flexible with the times. There were meant to be 4 interns on the course but one never showed up and another left after a few weeks, so most of my socialisation was with my

fellow intern and roommate. We would have lunch together and talk throughout the day and at home.

On the weekends sometimes I would meet up with friends in Oxford who were doing a similar internship in Wuhan. My family visited me in China at one point and my girlfriend visited at another point. I think compared to my roommate; I didn't really make any Chinese friends as I had the option of meeting up with Oxford interns in Wuhan who I already knew. In hindsight, I should probably have tried a bit harder on that front. In the last week I went to a dance class with my roommate and visited a theme park.

## Lasting Impressions

I think there was definitely a lasting cultural impression from spending 9 weeks in China. You get to see a wide array of small differences, from how people don't walk up escalators, and you need your passport to take a train, to the cultural ubiquity of the villain from Toy Story 3. It also gave me a sense of the scale of China's construction and manufacturing capabilities. The speed of building work was quite striking; I could see progress in tower blocks over the duration of my stay.

I definitely enjoyed large parts of the experience, being able to visit and live in a place very different from where you are from, was often exciting and interesting.

I think that whilst I expanded my understanding of machine learning, I could have learnt more if the course was more structured. This internship didn't change my career ambitions, as I don't want to work in a lab in the future, but I think that it has helped me form a perspective and learn skills that would be helpful for the career that I have in mind, or at the very least, is something I can talk about in a job interview.



## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would say for China specifically, try to download all the relevant apps such as WeChat and Alipay before you land and try to get a Chinese SIM card when you are there. Having a Chinese phone number is very helpful for things like booking trains and you can get an eSIM card through Alipay. Another thing would be making sure you are packed for the weather; it was exceptionally hot when I got there, and I had packed trousers which I never wore. Also maybe try to learn some basics of the language before you get there, when I arrived, I could only say Nihao. People really appreciate when you can speak even a little Chinese.

## **MEng Materials Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

During my summer 2025 internship at Longcheng Laboratory of Intelligent Manufacturing, I worked on applying machine learning and neural networks to model constitutive relationships in materials for diffusion bonding. Guided by my mentor, I explored how temperature, pressure, and other parameters influence material behaviour, and compared methods such as finite element simulation, empirical models, and physics-informed neural networks (PINNs). I produced a report summarising these approaches and their relative advantages, gaining valuable experience in integrating materials science with computational modelling under close supervision and technical support from the host laboratory.

### **Daily Life**

During my in-person internship at Longcheng Laboratory of Intelligent Manufacturing, I quickly adapted to the lab environment and daily routine. Each morning, I cycled to work, which was a refreshing start to the day, and spent my time conducting simulations, reading literature, and discussing progress with my mentor and team members. I usually had lunch at the canteen with colleagues, where we often exchanged ideas and research experiences. Outside of work, I



explored the local area and relaxed with other interns. The experience was both academically enriching and personally rewarding, giving me a glimpse into life as a researcher.

## Lasting Impressions

My internship at Longcheng Laboratory of Intelligent Manufacturing was an eye-opening and rewarding experience. I thoroughly enjoyed working in a research environment that combined



materials science and machine learning, and it gave me a deeper appreciation for how computational methods can accelerate materials innovation. Through close mentorship and hands-on learning, I gained not only technical skills but also a clearer understanding of how research is conducted in practice. The experience has strengthened my interest in pursuing

a career in materials research and development, particularly at the intersection of data science and materials engineering.

## TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION FOUNDATION



History and Economics, First Year Undergraduate, in  
person

## Work Projects

I, alongside the other Oxford interns, were responsible for preparing and delivering lessons for various classes from schools associated with Tsinghua University High School Educational Trust.

Many of these lessons were English lessons, sometimes at a very basic level due to the limited English abilities of the students. The students were very attentive and enthusiastic. I also ran table tennis lessons, and another student ran music lessons; there was ample opportunity for creative new lessons and ways to engage and enthuse the students. At the school in Zhengzhou, lessons were focused more on listening to presentations by the students and giving them helpful feedback and comments. This was really valuable as the presentations were often fascinating vignettes into Chinese culture, ancient and modern. We were then instructed to deliver a presentation about our own lives, experiences and journey through Oxford. Teaching schedules ranged widely in intensity, but I always felt like I was helping and making a difference, without being overwhelmed or overworked. Overall, the lessons were a valuable experience that I learnt much from.

## **Daily Life**

The first few days in Beijing were dedicated to sightseeing. When seeing the sights of Beijing, China's capital city, we were supervised by three excellent instructors. These days were full-on, from the morning to the evening, packed with cultural experiences in Beijing, but with enough breaks and long meals. The first school, Zhengzhou, was full of listening to presentations. During breaks, we would either work on our presentations or chill together. At the end of the day, we'd go out as a group to somewhere interesting near to the school. Fuyang, where we were delivering lessons, was a similar level of work but there was more preparation to do between lessons. What made this easier was sharing lesson plans and tips between the Oxford interns and with the translators. In the evenings we would often socialise together and play sports on the amazing school grounds.

Xincai was a more relaxed schedule with less teaching responsibilities. The instructors and translators at Xincai here were both very helpful and a joy to be around. We would play sports, visit the local area (including an amazing shopping mall) and even have a karaoke night. Playing sports and music with the students and helpers at the closing party was a true highlight of the trip. Rongcheng was a challenge since the class sizes were considerably larger. I did table tennis

lessons which worked very well, and I tried to ensure all the students, regardless of sporting ability, were able to enjoy playing. When we didn't have lessons, we relaxed as a group and visited local sites.

## Lasting Impressions

I very much enjoyed the internship and truly appreciated the great opportunity. I have always enjoyed teaching, and I feel my skills have improved greatly due to the internship. Seeing student faces light up when they would learn a new word in English or a new technique in table tennis, was



truly rewarding. I learnt so much about Chinese culture, people and history as well as the differences and similarities with Britain.

The internship was great in making sure we really had ample opportunity to explore the rich culture of China. This included museums, monuments and temples. Connecting with the translators and other helpers was a great way to understand China from the inside. We had some amazing instructors, who made sure our experience was as smooth and enjoyable as possible and I am very grateful to them. I am not sure if the opportunity changes my career ambitions. It would perhaps be more apt to say that that the experience widened my perspective and increased the scope of possibility I can envision for my future career.

## BA History, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Project

The internship I completed was focused on teaching: planning and delivering English lessons to Chinese students with ages ranging from nine to eighteen. The internship was completed across several schools and cities, meaning that I was able to experience different cultures and locations, and engage with a large number of students. Starting at Tsinghua University High School in Beijing, I was introduced to the country and the host organisation by three volunteers, whose support and enthusiasm made it so much easier to settle-in after arriving in China.

We soon travelled to the first school in Zhengzhou to begin teaching. Here, the premise of lessons was to observe presentations produced by the students during which they would discuss an area of Chinese culture which appealed to them, and to provide feedback and advice regarding their oral English. I was also required to produce and deliver a presentation of my own, in which I discussed aspects of my childhood, my interests and my life at Oxford over the past two years.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with the students in Zhengzhou, whom I found to be very engaging, enthusiastic and respectful, and this was typified by their efforts to produce a memorable and profound closing ceremony to commemorate the end of our time together. The closing ceremony in Zhengzhou also provided an opportunity to appreciate the brilliant efforts of the three volunteers working on behalf of Tsinghua University High School, in being so organised, engaging and helpful, both as volunteers but also as friends, and assisting with settling into and embracing unfamiliar surroundings and cultures.

Moving to Fuyang, the nature of the internship altered slightly, and became focused on planning and delivering lessons to school students. This remained the same in Xincai and Rongcheng. Initially, I found it a little more challenging to communicate with the new coordinator as her approach was different from the support we had experienced with previous volunteers; however, she helped us settle into the new school. I also found it difficult to

prepare lessons when organisation and schedules were only provided in the mornings, rather than the day before, and was not always quite sure of what age or level of English I would be teaching.

One particular challenge I encountered whilst teaching occurred in Rongcheng, when I was informed only around half an hour before my scheduled lesson that I would be delivering a lecture-style presentation to around eighty students, whose level of English remained unclear. These factors contributed to my lessons comprising of several interactive activities aimed at engaging the students regardless of their age, and realising that this seemed successful, formed the basis of my lessons for the remainder of the internship. This should not in any way detract from how much I enjoyed teaching all students during the programme.

I felt very lucky to be able to engage with a range of students, with different interests and hobbies, but all of whom were incredibly respectful and enthusiastic, and with many of whom I did feel as if I formed a connection, through trying to be as engaging, personable and fun as possible in my teaching capacity, through both classroom-based lessons as well as other activities. The nature of the tasks I completed during the internship ultimately contributed to it being such a fulfilling experience, and one I felt incredibly privileged to partake in.

## **Daily Life**

Due to the fact that I travelled to several schools and locations during the internship, daily routines and structures tended to vary. Upon arriving at the schools, we were always provided with a warm and genuine welcome from staff and students, who helped us to settle in and provided us with necessary conveniences wherever they could. They were also noticeably enthusiastic to introduce us to the different areas and their cultures which I was very appreciative of, as it provided the opportunity to experience and immerse ourselves in an environment completely unfamiliar from anything we were accustomed to.

Generally, we would teach two or three classes per day, with each class lasting around 45 minutes, and would be left with the evenings to explore the cities in which we were staying.

Typically, once I had eaten breakfast, mornings would be spent initially planning lessons for the day. Often, we would only be provided with the day's schedule in the morning, or late the night before, meaning that lessons perhaps could not be planned completely comprehensively, however that isn't to say that I was unable to plan. We were provided with a space in which we could do this at all the schools we visited, and once I became confident and settled in delivering lessons about hobbies or sport – which fortunately happened relatively quickly – they became more straightforward to plan, and more fun to deliver.

I found the teaching process a thoroughly engaging and rewarding one, and was fortunate to establish positive relations with the students – all of whom were incredibly enthusiastic and



respectful – and the translators – who ensured all lessons ran as smoothly as possible – not only in a teaching capacity but on a more personal level, even though we only spent a matter of days at each school. Initially, we were unable to leave the school campuses unattended in order to explore the local area. For example, in Zhengzhou it was necessary for two volunteers from the host

organisation to accompany us when visiting the city centre, or even just when walking to the nearby convenience store. The volunteers were always incredibly prepared to assist us in this; however it remained slightly unclear as to why this procedure was in place, and it did unfortunately limit the extent to which we were able to explore Beijing in our first few days in China, and then Zhengzhou. Fortunately, as the programme progressed, we were provided with more freedom, which we could subsequently use to explore cities to which we may never return.

These situations led to some of the most unforgettable moments of the programme, from exploring impressive markets in Fuyang, including a boat tour, to the shopping centre of Xincal



and parks and concerts in Rongcheng. This was of course incredibly interesting and enjoyable, and what made it more memorable, was having the opportunity to immerse myself in unfamiliar cultures with the four other interns from Oxford also partaking in the programme, with whom I thoroughly enjoyed spending time, and I have certainly made friendships which will considerably outlast the duration of the internship itself. Ultimately, both the teaching as well as the opportunity to immerse ourselves in local cultures, both independently and with the assistance of the host organiser, meant I looked forward to every day, perhaps even more so because the programme often produced so many surprises and unforeseen circumstances and experiences which I will never forget.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I found the internship a rewarding and fulfilling experience in so many ways and feel incredibly privileged to have participated in the programme. Although I am not entirely sure of my future aspirations once I have completed my degree, teaching is something I have always been interested in, and I have previously delivered lessons at schools as part of work experience. Despite this, teaching abroad represented a completely new challenge, and one which I tried to embrace as much as possible, both in relation to the nature of the internship as well as all other elements of the experience, including the unfamiliar locations and cultures, which I found myself thrust into. In a teaching context, I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with such enthusiastic and engaging groups of students, with whom I often developed positive relations, despite regularly moving between schools.

Throughout the course of the internship, I placed an emphasis on ensuring my lessons, whilst ultimately attempting to provide an exposure to English, which the students were perhaps not used to, were interactive and fun, and an enjoyable experience for all. I quickly realised that the students seemed to gain the most from this approach, and I was increasingly comfortable in teaching in such a manner. Indeed, students attending a programme in addition to their regular curriculum would perhaps not have benefitted from largely or exclusively engaging in written tasks bereft of interaction, so I ensured that this was never the case. As mentioned, I found this

approach to be conducive to engaging with students on a more personal level, beyond a teaching capacity, and this was fully achieved through engaging in activities with them outside of the classroom, for example by playing basketball and experiencing local culture. As such, the closing ceremonies at each school often adopted a sentimental tone, and my own emotions certainly reflected those of the students, who were evidently grateful for the opportunity provided by the programme. I will never take for granted the reception I received from students, who were keen to take photos, present gifts and further discuss sport and Chinese culture.

Moreover, I feel I gained a considerable amount and learned a lot about myself during the programme – I think it would have been very difficult for this not to be the case. I have never considered myself someone who enjoys being the center of attention, and have always thought of myself as relatively reserved, however the nature of teaching required me to adopt a persona which I never had done previously, and one which I didn't realise I would be as comfortable adopting as I was. This extended beyond the classroom, for example as I was required to deliver performances along with the other interns from Oxford during closing



ceremonies. I think that this attitude greatly assisted with the smooth running of my lessons and interactions with the students, and hopefully this was supported by the nature of the tasks and activities that we completed in the classes.

Therefore, I do think the programme helped to develop my confidence, and I think this was accentuated by the sometimes chaotic nature of proceedings. Whilst it was not ideal, for example, that schedules and plans were not always shared in sufficient time before we started teaching, this meant I was required to be very adaptable and flexible, and also confirmed my willingness to adopt an approach whereby I embraced the tasks and challenges provided rather

than ever become frustrated by them. I understood how fortunate I was to have been selected to participate in this programme and was therefore not prepared to allow the opportunity to pass me by in any way. Aside from the teaching, of course, was the opportunity to experience and immerse myself in an entirely new culture. I had never previously visited China, or Asia, and was therefore largely unsure of what to expect. Ultimately, I found Chinese culture to be fascinating, and in fact, appreciated the general absence of any 'western' customs, as this meant our experiences of local cultures and customs were always authentic. Furthermore, a notion of authenticity was accentuated by the nature of the cities we visited. Whilst populous, they were by no means 'mainstream' cities, with inhabitants not appearing used to interacting with people of other nationalities. Again, however, I found this to provide a more genuine account of Chinese culture. Prior to starting the internship, I promised myself that I would immerse myself as much as possible in the local cultures, for example in customs, food and practices.

Ultimately, there wasn't an opportunity to not do this, and this is something that I feel made the programme more memorable and special. Finally, regarding my career ambitions, teaching is very much something I will continue to explore, and teaching abroad now does appear a tangible and viable career path which I will continue to research. Whilst the programme neither confirmed nor denied that I strive to be a teacher, it undeniably confirmed that I do really enjoy it, and I also gained an abundance of skills and experiences throughout the programme which will be of benefit irrespective of what I do in the future, both at university and beyond.

Ultimately, the internship provided so many unforgettable memories and experiences, and I will always remember it with nothing but fondness.

## **BA Human Sciences, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

The internship with Tsinghua University High School Education Foundation involved teaching English and engaging in cultural exchange activities in four high schools across China. In each

one, I was supported by Tsinghua students who were also volunteering as teachers and translators in the educational programmes that we were delivering. The levels of English varied quite substantially between schools and classes: in some, students were eager to learn English by hearing about our experiences in Oxford and sharing with us presentations in English about Chinese culture, ranging from architecture and arts, to clothing, cuisine, and celebrations. This was often interactive, with opportunities to engage in activities such as crafts and cooking with the students, developing their conversational English.

In other schools, the level of English was lower and less versatile, so lessons were simpler and more structured. I undertook the task of planning and delivering these lessons. There were also



opportunities to engage in sports and music with students, which was often a great way to transcend the language barrier. Usually on the last full day at the school, we would go on a cultural trip to museums and universities. This gave me the opportunity to engage with local history and culture, or to gain insight into the research and teaching activities of universities.

This was well-organised by the host organisation, but unfortunately, the teaching was often poorly planned. I was given little information as to the level of English of the students, and there was no even vague guidance as to the kind of curriculum they were expected to be following. Planning was therefore quite difficult to coordinate and make suited to their needs because I was in the dark until I actually entered the class, and I only spent about a week at each school so there was little time to get to know the students. The student volunteers who acted as translators were very eager to help though, and that was very appreciated.

## Daily Life

It was nice to have a mixture of both interns from Oxford and Tsinghua students to socialise with and be on the journey with. Of course, having Chinese students with us was immensely helpful to help navigate the cities and everyone was generally wonderfully hospitable and kind. We had meals and went to food markets together, played sports, and explored local attractions with them, which really helped with settling in. We stayed on-site in dormitories during the internship, which were fine, and it was useful to be based on-site, but sometimes we stayed very close to or sometimes shared facilities with pupils, which didn't always feel like the most appropriate arrangement. There were also varying degrees of freedom; where some schools gave us key cards to come and go freely, others had curfews and required us to be supervised if we left, which was sometimes frustrating if we wanted to just pop to a convenience store to buy water or something.

## Lasting Impressions

I found the international nature of the internship really enjoyable - I am very conscious of the privilege that it is to have gained such an authentic insight into China, meet so many people and talk about their lives there, and experience something very different to a typical tourist experience. I think this has really impacted my global outlook and intercultural understanding. I found China a really interesting place to be and work, and now that I have some understanding of the country on a personal and cultural level, it's sparked an interest in learning more about its global position. I am not particularly sure if teaching is a career for me, which is a bit frustrating because I don't know how useful this will be on a CV for another industry in a very competitive graduate market, but I'm glad that I went and tried something new, somewhere new.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

1. Apply for your visa early.
2. Bring clothes that you can play basketball in.

3. Learning just a few key phrases in Chinese will get you a long, long way, but also get a decent translate app if you can.
4. Get an eSIM for mobile data (I used Airalo which worked very well, but others are available), Wi-Fi was not reliably available.
5. Bring a USB stick!!! They are expensive to buy there, but if you want to use a slideshow for lessons, you'll probably need one.

## MMath Mathematics, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

This internship involved travelling between schools in North-Eastern China and teaching English to kids, from ages 10 to 18, while at the same time fostering cultural exchange via experiences and trips with the students. In class, we played interactive games, quizzes, sports as well as arts and crafts, in combination with an educational element to motivate the kids and raise their confidence in oral English. In addition, the children gave presentations about aspects of life at various cities and wider China, mostly focused on application of their current language knowledge. After class and during the breaks, all of us teachers would work together to plan and deliver engaging lessons for the coming day.

### Daily Life

During our internship, we would often change school every week, so that meant we were living out of suitcases quite often, arriving at our rooms and going straight into our teaching roles. Settling in was sometimes a challenge, because the rooms and facilities were sometimes very basic and required workarounds, such as the lack of washing machines, which necessitated handwashing. We lived on site at every school in previous student dorms, hence the issues, but at least getting to work was a minute-long affair, with classes in neighboring buildings. Outside of teaching, we were invited to interact with the Chinese culture; in the day this would often involve sampling local cuisine, visiting museums (such as the Baiju Distillery or Museum of Arts)



and seeing historical sites (such as the summer palace ruins) while in the evenings, us tutors would relax and enjoy walks in and amongst the city nightlife. The people I socialised with the most were the other Oxford students, but also the Chinese translators and event helpers.

## Lasting Impressions

In terms of a career in teaching, this internship unfortunately didn't quite provide the experiences needed to solidify my views on this trajectory, mainly since the difference between



teaching English as a MFL and mathematics is very large, and because the workday structure was not representative of a regular teaching position.

However, that being said, it did reveal to me that teaching primary school kids is much more fulfilling than teenagers, and it also showed me what a difference showing enthusiasm as a teacher can make to the learning experience for the whole class.

Despite the varied job take-aways, I still deeply enjoyed this internship. Certainly, the friends that I made with the other Oxford helpers and also the Chinese students have persisted through the

summer, and the internship was a great way to get to know those people, working and living with them in close quarters. Finally, the internship also served as a tool that allowed me to focus on and improve my Mandarin, and put it into real life contexts, making it useful for the first time.

# CYPRUS

## CARITAS CYPRUS

Alexander Cooper, Wadham College, BA French and Arabic (EMEL), First Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

Filling out paperwork with beneficiaries – Labour Cards (so they can access work and benefits); passport paperwork; birth certificate paperwork; etc. Running activities and games with children in the Kofinou Refugee Camp two mornings a week. Answering the French line on mornings: processing beneficiaries' requests, giving advice, scheduling appointments, and filling out paperwork. Interpreting/Translating between French and English for French-speaking beneficiaries as part of my colleagues' own casework.

### Daily Life

I walked to work every morning, and from 9am to 11am I was working on the French WhatsApp line, either replying to messages or answering the phone, and then helping the beneficiaries from there. Then I helped walk-ins and appointments until 1pm and continued helping people via WhatsApp if we couldn't respond to their message between 9am and 11am. Lunch was from 1pm-2pm. At 2pm-5pm I would help with more walk-ins and appointments; once a week I ran an activity at the Centre, e.g. science fun/gymnastics etc. Two mornings a week we were dropped off at the Kofinou Refugee Camp where we ran fun sessions with the kids from 10am-12.30pm. Once a week, I worked in Stoa where I sorted donations and food packages and requests for clothes and food etc.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed it, I learnt a lot about the realities of immigration for immigrants themselves, which I think is often ignored. My French proficiency improved. The work I did in this internship is the kind of thing I would like to do in my career.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Don't be embarrassed or scared about asking for help from your colleagues/supervisors – it's supposed to be really difficult.

## **MPhil Modern Middle Eastern Studies, First Year Postgraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

During my internship with Caritas Cyprus, I was involved in projects supporting migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, with a particular focus on casework, translation, and intercultural mediation. The organisation plays a vital role in providing humanitarian assistance and advocacy for vulnerable individuals, and my role allowed me to contribute to both the practical and social dimensions of this mission. My main tasks included assisting with client intake, helping beneficiaries to access services, and translating or interpreting in French, Persian, and Arabic during meetings or document preparation.

One of my achievements was becoming a reliable point of communication between staff and beneficiaries, which helped build trust and improved the efficiency of service provision. I also strengthened my language skills through daily practice and developed greater confidence in working independently in diverse cultural settings. The support from the host organisation was excellent: colleagues provided clear guidance and training, were generous with their expertise, and ensured that I was fully integrated into the team and its projects.

## Daily Life

My daily life during the internship quickly fell into a comfortable rhythm. I lived in a flat about thirty minutes' walk from the office, and I made the journey on foot each day, which allowed me to get to know the city and enjoy the local atmosphere. Settling in was straightforward, and I felt welcomed both by my colleagues at Caritas and by friends outside of work. I often socialised with other interns as well as Cypriot friends I already knew from the UK, which gave me a sense of community and helped me integrate more easily into local life. Outside of work, I took full advantage of the chance to explore Cyprus: I visited different parts of the island, spent time at its beautiful beaches, and tried a wide range of traditional Cypriot food. These experiences gave me a deeper appreciation of the country's culture and lifestyle, complementing the professional side of my placement and making the overall experience both enjoyable and enriching.

## Lasting Impressions

My lasting impression of the internship is overwhelmingly positive, as it was both an enjoyable and highly enriching experience. I gained not only practical skills, such as using French, Persian, and Arabic in real-life humanitarian contexts, but also a deeper understanding of the migration process and the many challenges faced by those navigating asylum systems. The experience confirmed the importance of intercultural mediation and translation in ensuring access to services and highlighted how meaningful small contributions can be in supporting vulnerable communities. It also allowed me to explore potential career pathways in the fields of migration, humanitarian aid, and international organisations, giving me a clearer sense of direction for the future. Above all, what will stay with me is the human dimension of the work: the stories, resilience, and diversity of the people I met, as well as the dedication of colleagues who strive daily to support them. This experience has strengthened my motivation to pursue a career where I can combine my academic background, language skills, and intercultural understanding to contribute to migration and humanitarian work at a professional level.

# CZECH REPUBLIC

## CASTLE BLATNA ESTATE

BA English Language and Literature, Final Year

Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

Tasks were mostly assigned at the beginning of the placement for the entire summer, and then every so often there would be tasks that would crop up weekly – mostly translations. I



translated and did copies for numerous events, as well as the updated tour guides. Apart from this, I was able to suggest any tasks that I saw as gaps in the castle's media, or to pitch any events that I thought had potential to do well. I researched and referenced the castle's Wikipedia in order for it to

finally be published, completed market research to understand how other castles and estates were promoting themselves on social media (and their websites), and organised an event for the next year. Tasks that I pitched and created included creating a map of the castle and its grounds after talking to the cashiers and finding out that many visitors ask for one, and redesigning pamphlets and leaflets to go alongside this, giving visitors a taste of the castle and making them aware of the other events and activities available outside of the park. I also reorganised and redesigned the website, including writing 'about' pages for different activities

available and creating a 'directions' page, in order to make it more user-friendly and encourage foreign visitors.

## **Daily Life**

We lived right on-site in an apartment in the parkland, so it was only a five-minute walk into the café where we worked, making it super simple to hang out after work was over, or to help out at any of the evening events. The town is super small so it's fairly easy to get around – the Penny and Lidl, as well as the high street with 2 restaurants and a kebab shop, are a 7-minute walk away, so you can pick up some fresh bread and be back from lunch super easily. Hours were flexible, especially when there was an event going on, but I tended to start work at 10am. After work, I would often socialise with people who worked in the castle, whether that be helping in locking up the castle (and trying to spook each other), watching films, or going to the local pub.

I was also taken for a bunch of trips in the afternoons by different people – whether to IKEA to help pick up supplies, or just on a biking trip to a neighbouring village to see a festival. Most people working in the café and the tours are aged 17 - 22 and are super chatty, so I found it really easy to make friends (especially with the number of events the castle puts on which means there's always someone about) who were really eager to show me around and introduce me to proper Czech culture. At weekends, staff would organise trips together (to the fair or another castle) or wanted to show me around Prague, and on those rare weekends I didn't have plans I really enjoyed travelling somewhere random and sketching the scenery.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I'm really grateful for this opportunity, and I think I've developed a ton as a person because of it. My fellow intern dropped out a few days into the placement, but I think living abroad by myself and exploring a new culture (in such a safe environment, with really friendly people) has helped me grow a lot in confidence and my outlook on the world has completely changed. I previously never would have seen living abroad as a real potentiality for my life, but this



experience has given me a taste of what it would be like, and I think I would be much more open to it in the future going forward – it doesn't seem like such a far-off impossibility. By the end of the placement, I felt fully comfortable in Czech culture and could speak to anyone outside the castle without worrying. Career-wise, I learnt a lot about the internal workings of the castle and their target demographics. I developed an ability to put myself in visitors' shoes and identify gaps in castle media, and I've realised the potential for creativity in the marketing area. I really enjoyed combining my love for art with ways I could help out in the castle, and this internship has broadened my career ambitions.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Bring your own ideas for work, as the workload can be quite unstructured at times! Make sure to greet the room when you enter it as we don't do that in the UK (dobry den). I also really recommend the IDOS app for planning routes around the country (it covers tram, bus, and train routes) as well as the PID app for tickets and trams around Prague. Cash isn't super necessary except for one bar in the town. There isn't really a dress code, but I'd bring layers as it gets hot outside in the summer, but the café itself can be quite chilly at times as the walls are super thick and cooling.



# EGYPT

## MAGDI YACOUB HEART FOUNDATION

### BMBCh Medicine, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

#### Work Projects

We observed patients in different wards and scenarios and were exposed to how treatment plans work and are developed. We also made a research proposal.

#### Daily Life

We would go in for an early morning ward round and eat breakfast, before doing more clinical observer-ship. We would then eat lunch before either doing clinical work, working on our research proposals, or attending lectures. We would then either go home and return in the evening for dinner or stay in the hospital until dinner.



#### Lasting Impressions

The programme needs more development to ensure it is useful for students, and I would suggest 2 weeks as the ideal period for most Oxford interns. Compared to other placements I have done, this was less useful, but overall, not a bad experience and has taught me life experiences and was a good cultural immersion.

## Waleed Seddiq, Wolfson College, DPhil in Medical Sciences, First Year Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was looking at the journey for HCM patients from our clinic, all the way to post surgery and that observation included the patient treatment plan and surgery details.

### Daily Life

I stayed beside the hospital, started work at 7am and left at 5pm. During the morning sessions, we looked at the clinics and tried to prepare the patients for the afternoon sessions depending on whether we had the surgery or ICU rotation. In the late afternoons, we discussed our feedback on the day.

### Lasting Impressions

We found a lot of difficulties in terms of funding since the funding did not match the city cost, however, the hospital provided a fair overall experience.

### What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Try to manage the funds you're getting with the cost of living. You always have the opportunity to explore beyond your program and talk to physicians.



# GERMANY

## DEUTSCHES LITERATURARCHIV MARBACH

BA English Language and Literature, Final Year

Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

My internship at the DLA was structured in such a way that I could spend half of my working hours doing my own research project in the archive – an excellent opportunity to see some fascinating manuscripts and archival materials of interest to me. The other half was spent in the archive’s Research Department office, working alongside research assistants on various projects and tasks. I had regular meetings with my colleagues to check in on my work and had lots of support from the research assistants. These tasks ranged from small research enquiries (e.g. about publishers, authors, and potential speakers at future conferences), to working more intensively on larger research projects.

One project was about book scouting, and the various roles within publishing sometimes undertaken by writers and translators. Another project was about publishers – especially those whose archives are held at the DLA – and their licenses (or lack thereof) after the Second World War. Other tasks included proofreading academic articles and translations, doing my own translations for some DLA webpages, and re-formatting a project-based website in WordPress. I also helped with the practical coordination of a symposium at the DLA about the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, which was fascinating; I had lots of fun meeting graduate students from across the world as well as academics and literary translators.

## Daily Life

Because I was living in the Marbacher Collegienhaus (designated accommodation for researchers staying at the DLA for extended periods of research), I was a 3-minute walk from my workplace. Usually, I spent mornings working in the office completing the tasks I was given,



from around 9am until lunchtime. Most days I had lunch (as well as coffee breaks) with the student research assistants in my department and/or with other graduate students doing research at the archive. In the afternoons, from around 2–5pm, I worked on my own research project in the spacious library, or (if consulting manuscripts and archival items, definitely the most exciting kind of work) the manuscripts reading room.

Being both an intern within the institution and a researcher/user of the archive meant that I met a range of people and gained insights into their work. I was invited to join several tours of the underground

archives, as well as the Images and Objects department to see some early postcard collections. I was also allowed to sit in on a weekly meeting at the museum, where an upcoming exhibition of Rilke’s archive was being planned for the Museum of Modern Literature.

Every Tuesday afternoon I attended the “Stipendiatencafe”, an opportunity to meet graduate students and researchers, who sometimes also presented their research at informal seminars. After work, I sometimes walked into the Marbach Old Town where there are beautiful medieval buildings and several ice cream shops. It’s a small town with not much to do in the evenings, but the Collegienhaus has a roof terrace overlooking the stunning Schillerhöhe landscapes. I spent many warm evenings sitting on this terrace with the graduate students and researchers I met at the archive. On the weekends, I visited my family who live in Stuttgart; in this regard I

was very lucky that my internship was located in Marbach, only a 25-minute train ride away from Stuttgart.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I came into this internship having studied English literature, not German, but with an interest in German literature and archival collections. In some ways the work was familiar and confirmed that I enjoy working within academia, and with special collections in particular (I had also previously done an internship in Rare Books librarianship). In other ways it was completely new, as I got to see how long-term research projects unfold day by day, collaboratively.

My career plans are not clearly defined, but this internship has confirmed that I enjoy working in a research environment and has made me aware of a wider range of roles that this can entail beyond university faculties. The research project I started here is something I would love to continue working on at some point in the future; working with German literature here has sparked my interest in potentially combining English and German if I were to pursue a PhD. Aside from the insights gained into various careers in research and in the humanities, I think this internship was a fascinating life experience for me, as it was my first time living and working in Germany, let alone doing academic work in German. In this sense I learned and gained a lot and now have much more confidence to apply for roles in Germany in the future.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Future interns should keep in mind that Marbach is a very small town, with not much going on outside of the archive and the academic community surrounding it. I really enjoyed making friends with some of the PhD students staying at the Collegienhaus for a month at the archive, and I was lucky to be surrounded by lovely people in my office, but the activities you can do in the evenings (at least in Marbach) are extremely limited. Getting the train to Stuttgart for an evening is fairly easy, and I would definitely recommend this. Also, I would say that you need to be very proficient in German (more than the required B2 level) to be able to communicate with colleagues and complete the research tasks that this internship involves. I grew up in the UK,



but speaking German with some of my family, and already felt fairly fluent speaking the language. However, I found that doing research tasks entirely in German was quite difficult at first; I improved a lot throughout the 5 weeks.

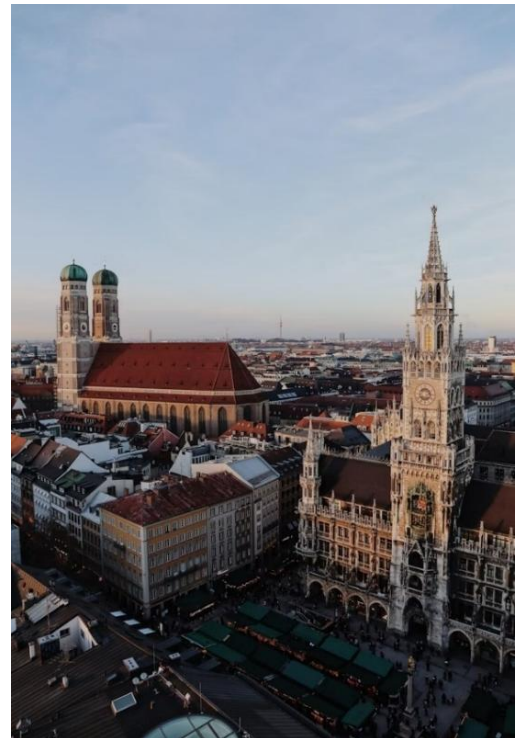
## TNG TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING

### DPhil in Mathematics, Third Year Postgraduate, hybrid



#### Work Projects

Working at a software engineering consultancy, most employees are working on client projects and are contributing to internal software projects on the side. As an intern, I was working full-time on an internal project. To help with the matching of consultants to clients, each consultant can rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 on programming languages and technologies they have used. The software I was working on had different visualizations for personal and company-wide statistics and made it possible to set goals and find learning partners. My main task was to replace the data about the different client projects that were maintained by hand inside the application with more complete and up-to-date data from a different internal application.



This change touched on all aspects of the code: Database changes to accommodate the new data format, backend changes to deliver that data to the frontend, which needed updates to display everything nicely. I also worked on improving the infrastructure, fixing some flaky tests, improving logging and alerting. Throughout, my supervisor was available to answer my

questions and discuss changes with me. They selected the first few projects for me and then got me to choose some myself from the many tasks available.

## **Daily Life**

Since I am German and the company's headquarters are in Munich, it was an easy transition. I stayed at my uncle's place during the time of the internship. Unfortunately, that meant a commute of more than an hour door-to-door. After one full week in which I went into the office every day, I decided to use the mobile work agreement and work from home three days a week and come in when my one of my supervisors was in. On my weekends, I was making full use of the fact that I was back in Germany and visited relatives and friends. The company also hosted a few events to get to know the other newcomers at the company and the other interns and working students.

## **Lasting Impressions**

One of the lasting impressions was the company culture. While the company has more than 900 employees and I was just an intern, I felt valued and taken care of. Between the snacks in the offices, the three days of onboarding software engineering workshops, the company hosted events (including a visit to the Oktoberfest), regular days for personal development and the flat hierarchies, it seems clear that for the company, the main assets are their developers, and they try to put them in the centre. Also, hearing from seasoned software developers about the industry, both the good and the bad projects, was very interesting. It has certainly confirmed my impression of software engineering as a deeply fascinating topic.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

If the company's HQ is in the EU and they have a sub-company in the UK, they can give you a UK contract and then lend you out to the main company (using an A1 form). That way your health insurance and taxes are all done in the UK and you can still go and enjoy your time abroad.

# HONG KONG

## SUMMER INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Alex Massie, Brasenose College, BA Literae Humaniores, Third Year, in person

### Work Projects

We had one week of teacher training, followed by two weeks of teaching (14-year-olds). We were paired with a student from Hong Kong University and given complete freedom in our teaching plan. During the two weeks, we were entirely unsupervised except during activities that had been organised centrally.



### Daily Life

We were on the University campus from 9am-5pm most days, teaching a 3-hour lesson either in the morning or afternoon. At lunchtimes and in the evenings, we would socialise with the other interns from the universities of Hong Kong, Cambridge, Toronto, Manchester, and London

### Lasting Impressions

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the impression of Hong Kong. I felt constantly productive and have me many memories and friends

## Alexander Henry John Barnett, Jesus College, BA History and Politics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### **Work Projects**

I had to create and enact an 8 x 3-hour lesson teaching plan with a partner from Hong Kong University (HKU). We were teaching twenty 17-year-old mainland Chinese children. Reflecting upon the experience, the achievement which I am most proud of is that I encouraged the children out of their shell and to communicate with me in English more confidently. While this was not the primary concern of the program, the children were initially shy and insecure about their English ability, so conversing with them confidently, was all the more rewarding. HKUSI gave us a 5-day induction where the visiting fellows took classes in order to learn more about education and experience good icebreaker/learning activities which we could then implement – while at times this felt basic, aspects were useful, and it came from good intentions.

### **Daily Life**

We were staying in HKU halls in Kennedy Town. Every morning, my roommate from Oxford and I would walk down the hill and take the MTR one stop to HKU. Then we would go to the canteen and have breakfast before going to class at 9.15. Class would start at 9.30 and run for 3 hours. Afterwards we would go for lunch in a different HKU food outlet. Class would reconvene at 2 and either we would teach an afternoon lesson or walk the children to their afternoon activity (e.g. cinema, games, Uni-wide lecture).

The workday would therefore end at either 2.30 or 5. Afterwards we would go off to a different part of the city to explore/sight-see and get some dinner (because we didn't have good kitchen support). It was super easy settling in because I had one other friend doing the role and the other interns from Oxford, Cambridge, University of Toronto, and HKU were all lovely. This meant that after work every day, there were people to do activities with, get food and drinks with, and have a great time.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I loved Hong Kong and the experience of spending time at the University. I had never been to Asia before and immersing myself in a new culture and educational culture was hugely rewarding and definitely an invaluable life experience. I think I gained new confidence in myself being able to teach people who I initially had little in common with and vocalise my topics in understandable and fun ways. I wouldn't necessarily say that the experience has pushed me directly towards a career in teaching or higher education, but it has definitely reopened the doors down the line. The job cemented my dream (if possible) to work abroad.

## **BA Jurisprudence (Law with French Law), Third Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I taught classes to students aged 13-15 for two weeks, spanning topics such as arts appreciation, language exchange and globalisation. The first week was dedicated to teacher training, with those skills being put to practical use over the next two weeks in our lessons. This culminated in a Capstone Project delivered by our students presented to parents and peers.

### **Daily Life**

We were housed in student accommodation, I had my own room, but all interns were on the same floors. We travelled into work together on the metro and after work explored the city as much as we could. We went to nearby islands, socialised with the Hong Kong University (HKU) fellows and enjoyed the city.

## **Lasting Impressions**

It was a great experience; I met really lovely people who I hope I stay in touch with. The experience was hugely rewarding as I'd never done anything like this, nor travelled anywhere in Asia, so it was full of new experiences.

# HUNGARY

## CEEWEB FOR BIODIVERSITY

Hannah Poultney, Keble College, BA Geography, Second Year Undergraduate, hybrid



### Work Projects

My main responsibilities involved writing social media posts and website articles, which at times felt less engaging than I had hoped. I particularly enjoyed analysing the hulladékradar and iNaturalist data and producing a report from it. Communication was sometimes difficult, which made it hard to receive timely feedback, and there were periods when I had to wait before being assigned new tasks.



### Daily Life

I mainly worked from home, usually from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., after which I spent time exploring Budapest. I

made a point of visiting a new part of the city each day and joined a local young adults' group, which helped me meet people and feel part of the community.

### Lasting Impressions

Thanks to Crankstart funding, I was able to take part in the internship without financial risk. The experience was valuable in showing me that the conservation sector may not be the right long-term path for me, particularly given its financial instability. Because the internship involved



limited tasks and remote work, I did not develop as many professional skills as I had hoped, especially in areas such as communication and analysis. However, living abroad alone, without speaking the language, pushed me well outside my comfort zone and helped me grow in confidence and independence.

## **COLD WAR HISTORY RESEARCH CENTRE**

[Holly Cobain, Somerville College, BA Modern Languages \(German and Russian\), Final Year Undergraduate, hybrid](#)

### **Work Projects**

I completed a research internship at the Cold War History Research Centre in Budapest. For the duration of my time there, I was tasked with researching archival material, particularly newspaper clippings and Radio Free Europe reports, in the Open Source Archives. This was for the purpose of further filling out the centre's Cold War history chronology, which attempts to detail all important political, economic, social, and cultural events of the Cold War period, focussing on the Eastern Bloc. I was assigned the period 1988-1991, and was able to choose a country to specialise in. I chose to research East Germany, as this fitted in well with my area of study. The research itself was very interesting, and I had the opportunity to access both German and Russian language sources (as well as lots of English-language material).

I am happy with the progress I made in my research, and hope that my work will be published in the centre's next edition of its Cold War chronology. However, there were some issues with contacting the supervisor of the programme. After arriving in Budapest, she was very slow to respond and provide instructions, which delayed the start of my internship. Despite saying she would provide comments on my work on a weekly basis, she only commented on my work once. After contacting the head of the research centre, we (the other Oxford interns and I) received more clarity on the task at hand. He was extremely supportive and organised an online workshop to discuss Cold War history with a range of other academics and ask any questions

that we had. The staff at the Open Source Archives were extremely helpful and independently provided an induction regarding the use of the archives.

## Daily Life

Despite initial issues with contacting my supervisor, I enjoyed the work in the archives. The schedule is very flexible, allowing for work both in the archives and remotely. For the first few



weeks, most days I spent 4-5 hours in the archives, accessing relevant material and collating important information. However, it must be noted that the archive closes for a period of four weeks every summer, with the exact dates differing each year.

Before I arrived, I was not made aware that the archive would be closing for the month of August. My supervisor informed me of this after arriving. This was a bit of a shame, as for the majority of my internship period, the archive was closed. I was instructed to instead take enough pictures of archival material that I could then work from independently for the rest of my internship. Although this was not ideal, it did not hinder me too much in completing my work. Outside of work, I was able to do some sightseeing and learned a lot about Hungarian history and culture. I lived in a shared flat and enjoyed socialising with my flatmates, and I got on well with the other interns.

## Lasting Impressions

Overall, I enjoyed the internship experience. The work was interesting, related well to my area of study, and it was nice to have a flexible schedule. Budapest is a beautiful city with vibrant nightlife and a rich history, so there was lots to do and see. I have developed my research skills, particularly my ability to read and interpret information from different sources, concisely and

accurately summarising this information in my own words. This internship confirmed that I would like to work in a research role in the future, either in an academic environment or in a business capacity. I think the internship has boosted my CV and given me valuable skills that I will hopefully carry into future employment, as well as further expanding my horizons and giving me a deeper understanding of Central/Eastern European affairs.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would advise future interns to consider living in some sort of shared accommodation. There was not a lot of overlap between my time in Budapest and the other Oxford interns' time here, so it could have been difficult to settle in and make friends, particularly as the internship demands a lot of independent work. I made great friends with some of my flatmates and spent most of my time outside of work socialising with them. I would also advise interns having communication problems with the supervisor to contact the director of the programme directly.

## **BA History and Politics, Second Year Undergraduate, hybrid**

### **Work Projects**

It has helped me gain a more nuanced understanding of the papers I have taken for finals as I had access to primary archive sources in Budapest that I did not see before. These papers were International Relations, International Relations in the era of the Cold War, the revolutions of 1989 and my undergraduate thesis which is on Romania in the aftermath of the 1989 revolution.

### **Daily Life**

I would wake up and work in the archives in the mornings and after lunch until 3. After I would meet friends and explore the city. I became friends with my fellow interns and I made some local friends.

## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed the independent aspect of the internship. I feel like it helped me improve my confidence substantially in my work and social aspects of work.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

It's very important to acclimate to the new city and make friends with people because the internship is 6 weeks long.

## TERRE DES HOMMES FOUNDATION

MPhil International Relations, Final Year Postgraduate,  
hybrid



## Work Projects

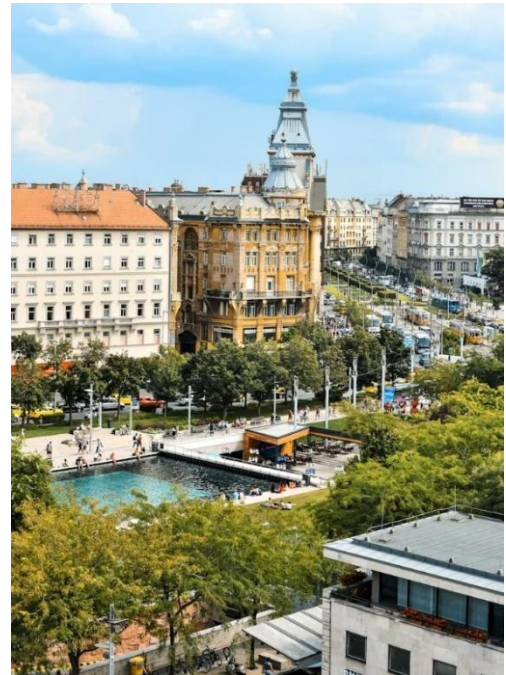
During summer 2025, I undertook an eight-week internship with Terre des hommes (Tdh) Hungary as a Research Assistant within their Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) Programme. The project responded to the increasing vulnerabilities faced by displaced children in Europe and aimed to strengthen Tdh's capacity to embed gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches across its programmes and operations. My main tasks included conducting a comprehensive desk review of literature and existing projects, and engaging in data collection through interviews with regional coordinators and project managers in Europe, Asia, and Africa. I synthesised my findings into a detailed analytical report that not only met the initial objectives but exceeded them.

In addition to mapping stakeholders and reviewing programme practices, I independently proposed and developed three practical tools for implementation: a set of institutional recommendations based on diversity practices across INGOs, a Gender and Diversity Matrix, and a list of practical G&D indicators that can be used for programmatic monitoring and

evaluation. These outputs will support Tdh in ensuring its interventions are child-centred, inclusive, and evidence-based. The host organisation provided comprehensive support throughout the internship.

In the first week I benefited from a structured onboarding process, including safeguarding and organisational training, as well as introductions to Tdh's Theory of Change and Global Strategy. I worked under the supervision of the Regional Migration Coordinator, who provided regular feedback and guidance, while also allowing me autonomy to shape the research.

Opportunities to engage with colleagues across regions further enriched the experience. Overall, the internship enhanced my research, analytical, and report-writing skills, while offering valuable insight into international child protection programming.



## Daily Life

My daily life during the internship in Budapest was both enriching and enjoyable, striking a balance between professional responsibilities and exploring the city. I settled in quickly thanks to the welcoming atmosphere at the Terre des hommes office and the supportive colleagues who made integration smooth. Getting to work was straightforward, as the office was well connected by the metro and was also within comfortable walking distance of where I stayed, making the commute both convenient and stress-free.

Outside of work, I took every opportunity to explore what Budapest had to offer. Colleagues were generous with their recommendations, which allowed me to discover a variety of local landmarks, hidden cafés, and cultural sites that I might otherwise have missed. Weekends were often spent visiting museums, historic thermal baths, or strolling along the Danube, while evenings provided the chance to enjoy the city's vibrant social scene. I also benefitted from spending time with the other intern at Tdh. Together we explored parts of the city, attended

cultural events, and generally shared the experience of living abroad. This sense of companionship, alongside the friendliness of my colleagues, helped make daily life feel more rooted and enjoyable. Overall, the combination of an accessible commute, engaging social opportunities, and the chance to immerse myself in Budapest's rich cultural landscape meant that life outside the office was as rewarding as the professional experience itself.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I enjoyed my internship at Terre des hommes immensely and look back on the experience with a great deal of appreciation. It provided not only the opportunity to deepen my academic interests but also to contribute to a project with practical relevance, which felt especially rewarding. Being trusted to work on research that could inform institutional policy and practice, gave me a genuine sense of purpose and showed me how academic skills can be applied to real-world challenges. The internship also clarified my understanding of the NGO space. By working closely with colleagues in Budapest and engaging with regional coordinators across Asia and Africa, I gained valuable insight into how international NGOs function, the complexities of programme design, and the importance of evidence-based approaches.

I came away with a much more nuanced appreciation of the opportunities and challenges of working in this sector. Most importantly, the experience invigorated my interest in working on gender within the international development sector. Engaging deeply with questions of gender and diversity in the migration context, highlighted both the challenges and the potential for meaningful change when these perspectives are properly integrated into policy and programming. It was very motivating to see how carefully designed research in this field can have tangible effects in shaping more inclusive, child-centred approaches. This has reinforced my ambition to pursue a career where gender analysis is central to advancing equitable outcomes for vulnerable groups. In short, the internship was both professionally formative and personally enjoyable, leaving me with lasting skills, valuable insights, and strengthened ambition for the future.



# INDIA

## AKSHAR FOUNDATION

Natasha Pilkington, St. Catherine's College, BA  
Geography, Second Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

My internship was primarily carried out at the Akshar Forum school in Guwahati and effectively comprised of 2 parts – teaching, as well as working on a project of my own for the school. Each



morning, I worked closely with a group of three students to improve their English skills. Observing a strong tendency toward rote learning through worksheets, I designed lessons to strengthen their foundational grammar and promote deeper understanding. Over 3 hours each day, I integrated Science — already a core part of

Akshar's approach — and Geography, which reflected my own personal interests, into the English curriculum. I also incorporated quizzes, poster-making, and educational games alongside the more traditional exercises, ensuring lessons remained engaging and dynamic.

Every Friday, I set them a short exam covering that week's material. Over the 6 weeks, it was incredibly rewarding to witness the students' rapid improvement — not only in test scores but also in their speaking confidence and sustained ability to grasp and retain difficult grammar rules and scientific concepts. In the afternoons, I focused on my independent project:

revamping the school library. My original plan included reorganising the bookshelves, painting the walls, and creating sustainable soft seating. Whilst I did not complete the seating aspect, I successfully achieved the first two goals and was proud of the transformation. Involving the students in the process made it even more special, for example through inviting them to choose inspiring book quotes to paint on the library walls.

Once a week, we visited a local government school, which offered an invaluable opportunity to observe how the Akshar model was being implemented in different contexts and at varying stages of development. These visits also allowed me to engage with students who were less accustomed to interacting with visitors like us, providing fresh insights into the challenges and potential of education reform. Alongside the practical work, I followed a curated curriculum of weekly readings, lectures, and TEDx talks. These explored the Akshar education model — rooted in the principles of Nai Talim — as well as broader topics such as creativity in education, meta-teaching, and Hans Rosling's work on breaking the cycle of poverty. These materials broadened my perspective on alternative education models, showing me how innovative approaches can nurture not only well-rounded learners but also compassionate, life-ready individuals.

Throughout the 6 weeks, I received regular feedback from the host organisation — both on my lesson plans and my project work. Weekly Zoom calls provided a space to discuss progress, share how we were feeling, and evaluate classroom strengths and areas for improvement. Any challenges were addressed promptly and with care. At the end of the internship, I delivered a final presentation summarising my aims, achievements, and key learnings. This provided a valuable opportunity to reflect holistically on the experience and the many life lessons I emerged with.

## **Daily Life**

For the majority of the internship, I was stationed at a hostel in a shared room with another Oxford intern. Our days began at around 7:30 am with breakfast provided by the hostel, before being driven to the school at 8:30 am by a foundation-appointed driver. From 9:00 am to 12:30

pm, we taught our English classes, with a short break between 9:40 am and 10:00 am for the students' breakfast. Lunch was served from 12:30 pm to about 1:15 pm, after which we worked on our personal projects until the school day ended at 2:10 pm. We were then driven back to the hostel, free to spend the rest of the afternoon and evening as we wished.

I often enjoyed walking around the campus grounds, calling my family/friends, doing some dissertation work, and winding down with either a book or Netflix. Dinner was served at the hostel each night at 8:00 pm. On weekends, we were mainly left to our own devices. We hired private cars for day trips to places such as the Amchong Tea Estate, the Brahmaputra River Heritage Centre, Nehru Park, and various local markets for a rich cultural experience. We also intended to visit Shillong, a nearby hill town known for its lakes and waterfalls, but this was unfortunately cancelled due to poor weather. Occasionally, when available, the foundation driver would take us on shorter outings.



## **Lasting Impressions**

My time at the Akshar Foundation was genuinely life changing. It opened my eyes to the breadth of alternative education models that move beyond traditional Western approaches of rote learning and memorisation towards nurturing well-rounded, compassionate individuals prepared for life. I was deeply impressed by Akshar's innovative initiatives — allowing students to explore their passions at their own pace in a low-pressure environment, accepting plastic as school fees, and even paying older students to teach their peers, keeping them out of what would otherwise be days spent in child labour.

Watching the children's progress over the weeks, and seeing their confidence bloom, was one of the most rewarding aspects of the internship. The same was true during our visits to government schools, where students — often less accustomed to seeing visitors like us — would light up with excitement for photos, autographs, handshakes, and the chance to practise English. These schools embraced creativity and talent, with students performing the most impressive dances for us, making those days some of the most memorable of the internship. The experience also taught me the true importance of Akshar's core values, which I was able to see lived out in the students each day. They embodied kindness and compassion, caring for one another in every way possible and taking responsibility for every aspect of the school as if it were their home and fellow students were their family. Despite their circumstances, the majority of students were extremely ambitious, and it was heartening to see them hold such high aspirations for themselves and approach each day with such remarkable positivity.

Whilst I certainly learnt the importance of perseverance and hard work, this internship was ultimately a lesson in privilege. To see such students so content with life and approaching each day with such enthusiasm was inspirational to me; it truly made me realise what a privilege it is to receive the education I receive and reignited my ambition to be the best version of myself that I can be moving forward. I was really touched by the heartfelt letters and gifts I received from my students on my final day of teaching, and this only made me further realise the lasting impact that teachers can have in these children's lives. I believe it was an incredible opportunity for these students to be able to be taught by us for the 6 weeks, and I hope to be able to visit again in the future. The internship was also a unique opportunity to immerse myself in another culture and unexpectedly sparked a love for teaching — a career path I had never considered prior to this. I am very grateful to Akshar for what was an inspiring, humbling, and truly rewarding experience.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Keep an open mind — things may be very different from what you're used to at home, and the cultural adjustment can be challenging at first, but with perseverance and adaptability it all

comes together in the end. I found the early days particularly difficult, both in figuring out the teaching role and adjusting to life outside of work, but looking back, I realise that it was okay to not have all the answers from the start. The internship is, in many ways, a life lesson in itself, and you quickly discover that you learn just as much from the students as they do from you.

## Zoe Barclay, Hertford College, BA Geography, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My internship at Akshar Foundation ran from August 11<sup>th</sup> to September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and was designed to provide both teaching and community engagement experiences within the organisation's innovative education model. The Akshar Model is grounded in Gandhian Nai Talim philosophy, emphasising learning by doing, student ownership, and the dignity of work. In the classroom, I taught Level 6 students through interactive lessons on science and English. Beyond teaching, I facilitated a student-led Plastic Awareness Session at St. Vivekananda Academy, where pupils developed confidence in public speaking while raising environmental awareness. I also supported Forum Camp, a week of creative, team-building activities such as scavenger hunts, tote bag painting, and engineering challenges, which promoted collaboration and experiential learning.

In addition, I assisted in preparations for the Akshar Mela, a student-run fundraising event. Throughout my placement, I received strong support from the Akshar Foundation team. Teachers and coordinators provided guidance for lesson planning, classroom delivery, and community interactions. Their emphasis on student-centred approaches and community mobilisation helped me understand the importance of teacher ownership and parental involvement in sustaining educational reform. This supportive environment allowed me to grow in confidence, experiment with new teaching methods, and gain valuable insights into education for social change.

## Daily Life

On arrival in Guwahati, the Akshar team provided a warm welcome, complete with guidance on cultural expectations, dress codes, and even practical support such as a local SIM card. Each weekday began with the commute to school, where we were picked up and dropped off by a member of the Akshar team. Days at Akshar Forum or government schools were full and dynamic — from delivering interactive science and English lessons to supporting community projects and engaging in reflective circles with staff. Outside of work, evenings and weekends were opportunities to explore Assam's cultural and natural beauty, often in the company of fellow interns.

Organised trips included visits to Amrit Udyan Park and gardens in Guwahati, a Brahmaputra River cruise, and a traditional Assamese thali dinner. We also explored local culture through



visits to Basistha Temple and Gandhi Mandap, and enjoyed shopping in the lively lanes of Fancy Bazaar. These outings offered a chance to experience the richness of Assamese culture while deepening friendships with peers. Daily life balanced meaningful work with cultural immersion. The supportive

community at Akshar, combined with time spent exploring Guwahati, created an experience that was both personally fulfilling and professionally formative.

## Lasting Impressions

My internship at Akshar Foundation left a lasting impact both personally and professionally. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, not only for the chance to teach and work closely with students, but also for the unique opportunity to see education in action as a driver of social



change. What struck me most was the innovation of the Akshar Model. By grouping children according to skill rather than age, fostering peer-to-peer teaching, and encouraging teachers and parents to take greater ownership, Akshar is reimagining education in a way that is both inclusive and transformative.

Watching students who once lacked confidence grow into mentors for their peers, and seeing parents become active participants through PTA meetings and community engagement, was both inspiring and humbling. It showed me that meaningful change comes not only from classrooms but from building partnerships with families and communities. I gained enormously from this placement — developing practical teaching skills, learning to adapt to varied student needs, and deepening my understanding of educational reform in challenging contexts. It confirmed my belief that education must extend beyond textbooks, nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and social responsibility. More importantly, the experience confirmed my conviction that my career should remain anchored in social impact.

## Madeleine George, Mansfield College, BA Geography, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I completed a 6-week internship with the Akshar Foundation, based in a government school in Dharavi Mumbai. The Akshar Foundation works within government schools to increase students foundational literacy and numeracy skills as well as offering vocational classes to open alternative pathways for students who cannot or do not want to progress in further education. During my time on the internship, my role was to plan and teach daily activity sessions for a group of students in which I covered the foundations of geography through engaging methodologies that deviated from traditional rote learning that continues to characterize the Indian classroom. I also taught daily remedial math and English classes and a more advanced English-speaking class for high aspiration students identified by the Akshar team for extra tuition. Alongside lesson planning and teaching, I was also asked to research and complete an

essay under the topic of Indian pedagogy in which I chose to explore the effects of technology on teaching practices.

My main objectives going into the schools was to increase students confidence when discussing geographical and scientific concepts. Across the 6 weeks whilst teaching, I was able to witness



student's confidence and ability to retain new information grow. Many of the students informed me of their new positive outlook towards geography which was great to see. The Mumbai team were very supportive, and it did not feel like we were interns but rather members of the team ourselves. We attended weekly meetings with advisors who supported us with our project

development and provided support with specific challenges that we faced within the classroom.

## Daily Life

During the weekdays we (2 interns) were expected to be at the Mumbai school for 9am and left the school every day at around 3:30pm. During the day we would teach 3 lessons individually and occasionally assist with FLN classes or vocational classes with the supervision of one of the Akshar team members. Adjusting to Mumbai was difficult as we were met with high temperatures, intense humidity and a lot of noise, however we were given more than enough time to adjust as the first week of the internship was dedicated to project development and familiarizing ourselves with the school's environment. When we were working, we were given independence and part of the learning curve was trying out different ways of teaching to find out how the students learned best, because the Akshar team were not teachers, this was something they could not offer too much guidance on but were always open to discussing our different ideas with us.

Outside of work I became really close friends with both my intern partner and one of the Akshar team members, we spent a lot of our time exploring Mumbai together and trying new foods. I was very lucky to be invited to the home of my new friend and experience the celebration of an Indian festival which was an amazing and unique cultural experience that ended up being one of my highlights of the internship. My intern partner and I even organised a weekend trip away from Mumbai to a more rural destination where we got to visit some popular hiking locations and viewpoints. It was such a special experience and whilst the landmarks and sightseeing were very interesting, the best part of the internship for me was the interactions with different people that I met along the way and the friendships that I have formed.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed the internship and the friendships and memories I made I hope will last a lifetime. It was such a unique experience that allowed me to explore potential opportunities in teaching. This has always been something that I have considered but being able to teach in a school and gain an insight into the demanding nature of the work, was a good way to assess whether this is truly a potential career for me. I have learned that I really enjoy teaching geography because I am so passionate about it and this is definitely something I could see myself doing in the future but more surprisingly, I discovered that I would like to explore the NGO pathway more seriously.

I had the opportunity to meet with the CEO and founder of the Akshar Foundation and seeing the passion that she had for her organisation, and her deep knowledge of the Indian education system, has sparked my interest in gaining that same level of expansive knowledge on a specific social issue. I think it would be a very rewarding experience to take on a leadership role for an NGO that I am very passionate about and the confidence I have gained from this internship has increased my ability to see that this may be possible and enjoyable.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

I would say to future interns that they should not be afraid to plan their own adventures in their free time; Mumbai is a very safe area relative to other areas in India (especially for female



travellers) and so you should make the most of it. Come on the trip with a list of places you aspire to go to and then make it happen; coaches and accommodation can be very cheap whilst also safe, so as long as you inform someone of where you are going, you should be fine.

In the school you have to have an open mind and be ready for a very fast paced and unpredictable environment, when planning lessons give yourself leeway for attendance issues and technology inconsistencies otherwise you will get stuck. Finally, make an effort to learn some Hindi before you arrive at the school, it makes all the difference to the team and the students when you show an openness to learning their first language, even if it is just some basic phrases, this really helped overcome some of the language barriers and build trust between us and the Akshar team.

**Simran Kaler, St. Peter's College, BA Spanish and Portuguese, Third Year Undergraduate, in person**

## Work Projects

The main part of the internship project is the English teaching. We were each given 3-4 students of different ages, who had extremely basic English (it was almost teaching them from scratch). We were told to make 'lesson plans', and we taught them for 3 and a half hours every morning, from Monday to Friday. Then for one to two hours in the afternoon we worked on our

(sustainability) project. The school had a list of things they wanted us to do, and we each chose one as our project. My project was to analyse the vocational classes that were on offer at the school, and create a report based on this. This involved me chatting to the students and trainers in the classes and getting a sense of the kinds of projects they were working on. We also had weekly government school visits where we had to interact with the students there and speak English with them. In terms of the support we received from the host organisation, we had occasional Zoom sessions to discuss how we were finding the internship, and they gave us tips on things such as classroom management. They were also there if we had any questions.

## **Daily Life**

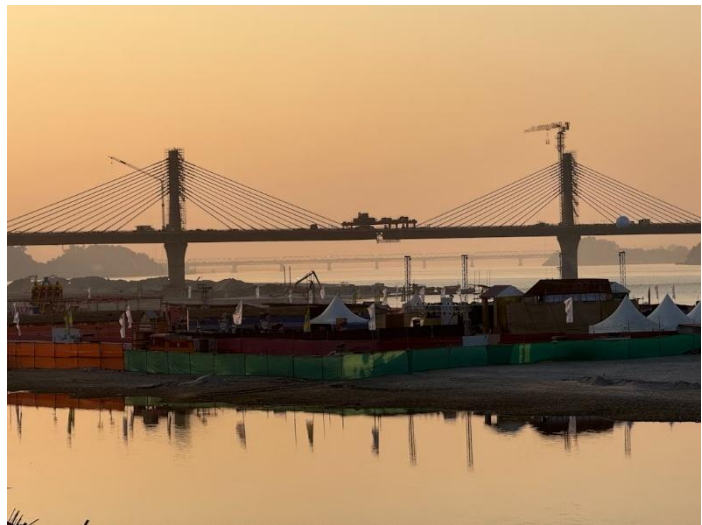
Our daily routine Monday to Friday was breakfast at 8am in the hostel, at 8:30am the driver would take us to school so that we would arrive at 9am, we would teach English to our students (classes of 3-4) from 9 to 9:45, then the kids would have 15 minutes to eat breakfast, and we would continue English classes until 12:30pm (it was a bit too long honestly, the last half hour was unnecessary I think, the kids' concentration struggled.) Then we would have lunch at the school, and then time to work on our projects (because a lot of our projects had to be done in person at the school).

At 2:15pm we would leave and drop a few teachers off at home as well, arrive back at hostel around 3pm. Then we would usually chill in our rooms, lesson plan for the next day maybe, then dinner at 8pm in the hostel. The settling in period was generally good and everything was provided in the hostel. The adjustment was mostly just getting to know the city, it was a bit of culture shock, but that's to be expected with India. Midweek we didn't do much outside of classes, occasionally just getting dinner out or going to the cinema/mall. On the weekends we organised a few day trips which were really nice. There were five of us in total, although the fifth person arrived a bit late and he was put in different accommodation. But generally, most of us did things together on the weekends.

## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed my experience on the internship. The first week was definitely a shock and I think we all needed a lot of time to adjust, but once I'd settled in, I was able to enjoy the city and the work a lot more. It was ideal to be living with the other interns, we could have all our meals together and it meant we got to know each other a lot quicker. The workday was fairly structured, but we also had a lot of free time, and I'd say we got better at filling it as the weeks went on.

I feel I gained a lot from the experience – it was a great way to travel by yourself to a different continent, which can be insanely intimidating but I'll feel a lot more confident about this the next time I do it. The internship didn't change or confirm my career ambitions much, as it didn't provide insight into working for an NGO, although it did confirm that I



don't think I want to teach English as a foreign language. But for me it was less about a career, and less about having a great time, and more about having an interesting experience.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Have a think beforehand about what you want to do with your free time there and where you want to explore (maybe loosely plan a few weekend trips you can do) and bring some university work/reading to keep you busy. Keep in mind that things work differently in India, and the people have different ways of dealing with things. It sounds really obvious, but there might be some frustration or confusion with the staff or the way things are managed on the internship, but they just have their own ways of doing things, and it might not seem like the most efficient



way to you, but it's how it's done. It's important to respect how they run things and not come in with a Western attitude of 'we could do this better'.

## MSci Biochemistry (Molecular and Cellular), Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my internship with the Akshar Foundation in Assam, India, I taught underprivileged children through both English and Biochemistry modules. The Foundation's aim is to provide innovative, activity-based education to students who might otherwise lack access to such opportunities, and I was entrusted with developing and delivering interactive lessons over six weeks. One of my main tasks and achievements was creating game-based activities such as dictation races, taboo-style vocabulary games, debates, and a grammar-themed Jeopardy, in the English classes, which encouraged participation and built students' confidence in speaking. A highlight was integrating cultural role models—such as showing an ISS video with astronaut Sunita Williams—which inspired students to connect language learning with real-world contexts.

Another achievement was designing and running experiments in the Biochemistry summer camp that introduced fundamental concepts in an engaging way. For example, banana DNA extraction, gummy bear osmosis, and mystery molecule modelling helped students grasp abstract ideas through hands-on discovery. I also guided them through the scientific method using simple hypothesis-driven activities, showing how systematic questioning can be applied to everyday phenomena.

In terms of the support received, the Akshar Foundation team provided strong guidance, from aligning lesson objectives with the students' level, to logistically help in sourcing scarce materials. They encouraged flexibility and creativity, which allowed me to improvise when resources were limited and to structure my teaching in weekly thematic blocks. Their support,

along with the enthusiasm of the children, made it possible to turn complex ideas into accessible and lasting learning experiences.

## Daily Life

I lived in a very welcoming hostel during my internship. The food was a highlight; all cooked with great care by the wonderful lady who worked at the hostel. The beds were very hard and not very comfortable, but we got used to it quickly.

Mosquitos were a problem so I would recommend taking mosquito nets to future interns. The hostel housed a group of three of us, and being in a girls-only setting made us feel safe and supported.

Outside of teaching, we often spent time together exploring the area, which helped us settle in quickly.

The school principal even took us on a memorable visit to a local temple, which gave us a deeper connection to the community.



Daily life also came with its surprises. A stray cat once took a keen interest in my socks and scratched me, leading to an urgent round of rabies vaccines. What could have been a stressful experience was softened by the extraordinary kindness of the local pharmacist, who rushed across the city in the heat to ensure I was treated quickly. The Akshar Foundation's HR office also played a key role in helping us feel secure, being very responsive in urgent situations, highly organised, and even arranging trips that enriched our experience beyond the classroom.

## Lasting Impressions

My internship with the Akshar Foundation was both humbling and rewarding. Teaching underprivileged children showed me how quickly curiosity flourishes when lessons are interactive, and how resourcefulness can turn even simple materials into effective teaching

tools. I gained a new perspective on education as a force for empowerment, and the experience confirmed that I want my future academic career to include mentoring and teaching alongside research.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would advise future interns to prepare well for both daily life and unexpected situations. Bring a mosquito net, plenty of repellent, and all recommended vaccinations, including rabies. Basic medicines such as painkillers are very useful, as is carrying your own toilet paper (at least two rolls per person if travelling in a small group). Small gifts from your home country, such as sweets, are a thoughtful way to thank the hostel owner and the HR team for their hospitality and support.

**Joy Naysa Chang, St. Catherine's College, BA English Language and Literature, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

The internship consisted of the following projects: English class series, summer camp, school festival planning, visits to other schools and a final presentation. For the English class series at Akshar Forum, I taught a class of around 8 students in level 5. The main objective was to teach them English language skills. I designed lesson plans and carried them out successfully. At the summer camp, I led a group of around 10 students at various ages and levels. I planned activities and two final projects and guided the class in carrying these out.

In terms of the school festival planning, I was in charge of the products team and assisted them with planning how to sell their products to visitors. For visits to other schools, along with other interns and supervisors, I visited government schools in the local area to observe and learn from teachers and students about their experiences with the Akshar model of education. For the final presentation, I prepared and delivered a presentation summarizing my learnings and achievements. Finally, in terms of support from host organisation, we were given an effective

orientation online and held weekly learning circles. The staff were extremely responsive to questions and concerns.

## Daily Life

At 6:45 I would wake up at the hostel with the other two interns I was staying and working with (all girls) and had breakfast which was provided by host organisation. At 7:40 we would get



picked up by a driver hired by the host organisation who also picked up the other two interns (boys) from their hostel on the way to school. At 8:30 we would teach our respective students/classes or visit a local government school. At 13:00 lunch was provided by the school and at 14:30 we would have weekly

learning circle before driving home. At 15:30 I would complete some more work for the internship at home (e.g. lesson planning) and at 19:30 dinner was provided by the host organisation.

## Lasting Impressions

This internship was an extremely positive experience that gave me incredible insights into many different socioeconomic issues in India, such as casteism, school dropouts, child labour, and plastic pollution. As someone who had previous experience working in the field of education, I found that the Akshar internship was an ideal next step because it pushed me to think about the role of education in society as a whole, rather than just focusing on and managing what happens within the walls of the classroom. I reaffirmed my passion for education but also was challenged to think more broadly about the responsibilities of an educator in terms of intersectionality and social responsibility.

## Tony George Thanickal, Christ Church, BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I worked mostly in a school, where I taught the children English. The internship took place in Guwahati, Assam. I had to design my own lessons and had a lot of independence in what I chose to teach the children. On top of the teaching, I also undertook an extended project in which I wrote a report for the school about the effectiveness of peer learning. The school employed a unique system in which older, more experienced students would tutor younger students. Since the school did not have sufficient resources to provide the students with professional teachers all the time, they heavily relied on this system. I took interest in this system, and I also noticed that there were some ways in which it could be improved, and so I researched peer learning using academic articles (which I accessed via SOLO) as well as conducted research within the school and provided them with an assessment of the effectiveness of the learning methods in the school. Finally, since the school I was working at was operated by a charity, I helped fundraise by speaking to local companies and undergoing interviews to gain publicity for the charity.

### Daily Life

My case was a bit special, because I was delayed in my arrival by some issues with visa processing. And so, I arrived a couple weeks later than expected. For this reason, though I was originally supposed to be placed in Jorhat (a different city in the same state), I instead was placed in Guwahati (the capital of Assam). For the first few



days 16-20th July, I remained in a hotel. I was inducted into the school during the day and would arrive back in the hotel around 2:30-3:00. In the afternoons I would explore the local area, where I found some shops, restaurants and a church. I originally had an issue with trying to exchange my currency – since Indian rupees is a closed currency, I was unable to prepare for this beforehand and so had to exchange my British pounds for rupees in Guwahati. However, I couldn't find a bank or a shop to exchange this currency.

The internship provided me with some cash upon arrival, but it was only sufficient to cover food. However, once I contacted someone from the internship about this issue, they were very helpful and exchanged my currency for me. After a few days at the hotel, I was moved into a hostel further down the same road. I was originally apprehensive since I was sharing a room with a stranger (not a fellow Oxford intern as had been advertised), and the room did not have a desk, or a chair, but only a bed. However, I quickly became friends with the man I was sharing a room with, and I am very grateful for it as he was able to give me an insight into the local culture of the city. He showed me some restaurants and introduced me to some friends and so I began to feel very comfortable in the city.

On a typical day I would wake up at around 7:30am, have breakfast in the hostel, and then be picked up at around 8am. Travelling to the school took around 40 minutes, because of traffic and waiting for the other interns (who stayed at a different hostel to mine). We would arrive at the school around 9am, and from 9-12:30 we would teach our given students individually with a half an hour break for them to have breakfast. We were each allocated 2-3 students, who we remained with throughout the duration of the internship, however, my students were changed several times because there was an issue with absences. There were some challenges with this, firstly, the lessons were quite long, and the students would lose focus after the first hour. Secondly, the language barrier between myself and the students was quite significant, and it was often difficult for us to communicate with one another. The internship helped to remedy this issue by providing us with an older student to help translate.



After the lessons were over, we would have lunch at the school and then work for an hour on the projects before going home. The driver would take us back to our hostels and was very helpful on the first few days stopping at supermarkets so that we could get supplies. I very much enjoyed my afternoons and evenings. I found a couple cafes and restaurants, in which I could get some more work done, read and relax.

The food in these restaurants was very good. In the evenings I would pass time by going to a gaming lounge with my roommate. I also found a gym, to do some exercise in, which was needed since the city is very crowded and polluted, making it difficult to go for a leisurely walk or run. On the weekends I would relax, I met with the other interns, and we went to the city centre, where we went to the zoo and some parks, and ate at restaurants. Breakfast, lunch and dinner was provided every day at the hostel too. About halfway through my internship, I flew to Mumbai to visit my uncle who lives there.

### **Lasting Impressions**

I very much enjoyed the internship and count it as a very positive experience. I think I gained a lot of confidence in travelling, teaching and interacting with a different culture and way of life. I am not yet sure how it has impacted my overall career ambitions, but it certainly gave me an insight into education and international development, and I am keen to explore these options further.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

For future interns doing this same internship, I would advise that they have the confidence to reach out and learn about the culture around them. Of course, it is important to do this in a safe way. I would also recommend that they rely on the organisation as much as possible.

## Joshua James Kelly, Worcester College, Theology and Religion, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

We lived in India for 6 weeks. For the first 2, we were in a more rural area and visited government schools to observe how they operated. During this time, we also taught our own classes which involved maths and English games. For the last 4 weeks we taught in the main Akshar forum. We did a summer camp for 2 weeks which involved teaching about our own interests or subject and making it as fun as possible. While I do theology, my summer camp revolved around plant life.

There is a huge theme around sustainability in the school, so we made plant pots out of plastic bottles, learnt about pollination and plant life-cycles. We also did fun activities in the afternoon like capture the flag and bulldogs. We also helped run the mela for one week supervising the crafts team, tour team, first aid team, finance team etc. The host organization was there to help us with literally any question we had and helped resolve any issues with the placement.

### Daily Life

We would be driven to either a government school or the Akshar forum. The government schools were quite straight forward in that we went into every classroom introduced ourselves



and talked to them about school life. We would then discuss the school with the entire staff over tea. We would observe or teach a class after and have lunch after this too. We would then observe

peer learning and go home after this. The Akshar forum would start the day with an assembly and then we would teach our own respective classes. This would end at 12 when we would have lunch and then have group meetings and discussions until 2/3pm.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I did enjoy the experience. It was sometimes tough acclimatizing to the environment but persevering through this was very rewarding. Seeing the poverty and struggle the children faced was definitely a determining factor in motivating us to teach and interact with the children. The host organization was great and so supportive.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Be prepared for the heat. You will get used to it after a few days if you wear the right clothing. Some areas are very run down, crowded and/or incredibly loud. That sometimes made for a really uncomfortable experience, but this was always in our free time.

**Samuel Miguel Owen Duch, St. Anne's College, BA Geography, First Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

At Akshar Foundation, I hoped to learn more about education and sustainable development. During this internship, we visited government schools in Assam, India to see how they are integrating the Akshar model, as well as spending 4 weeks at the Akshar model school in Guwahati. Of these 4 weeks, two were spent running a summer camp for the children, and two were spent supervising the student organization of a fundraising event for the foundation. Overall, I have learnt so much from this internship – through the government school visits, interactions with students and teachers, and completing readings assigned to us each week about educational and developmental policy.

## Daily Life

At Akshar, we are picked up and driven to school in the morning after having breakfast, where we teach typically from 8:30 until 12:30, with short breaks for the students. At 12:30, we would have lunch and then prepare for the next days until 2:30 pm, when we were driven back to our hostels. Typically, from there, we would not travel too much, especially the girls in our group who were not advised to go out alone.

However, I signed up to a local gym and would make an effort to try nearby restaurants for dinner. On our days off, we would visit important cultural heritage sites like temples, go to shopping areas or even hire a guide to go on a day hike. However, I am also aware of other interns that would take time off to explore other parts of India.



## Lasting Impressions

This internship was really an incredible opportunity for me. As a Geography student, we are constantly learning about sustainability, development and social advancement, and this internship gave me the chance to understand how those concepts are mobilized in practice. Learning about the Akshar model, how it is promoting sustainability and social mobility in rural India was an amazing opportunity and has really helped me discover the potential career paths in fields of international development that are available after I graduate.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

In India, the hostel you'll be staying in has quite basic amenities. There is no hot water, only two electrical outlets, no mirror, no toilet paper and no provided towels. While you can buy an extension cable, towels and toilet paper for quite cheap when you arrive, bringing a small

pocket mirror is a good idea. Furthermore, foreign credit/debit cards tend not to work at most machines here, and only at some ATMs (the best ATMs are SBI- State Bank of India).

Here, everyone pays with QR codes called UPIs, but all the main UPI apps only work with Indian bank accounts. So, it is advisable to download Mony, a UPI app for foreigners that lets you load money onto it with your foreign debit card. Also, get Zomato and/or Swiggy, fantastic food-delivery apps, as well as Blinkit, for delivering groceries (although there are no facilities to cook in your hostel).

## BA Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, Second Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

There were two main projects I worked on during this internship. Firstly, I taught English to three students. Additionally, I conducted an analysis of the school's academic performance and developed a code that would allow teachers to monitor student performance. For teaching, I was given a very high degree of independence on what I would teach and what materials I would use. My three students were at very different levels. One was completely new to English and was learning to pronounce letters. One was able to write paragraphs and short stories. The last student was somewhere in between. In order to meet their diverse needs, I tried to cover a wide range of topics in grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking.

I asked for advice on teaching my students, and I was given the advice to write three personalized lesson plans for each of my students. This was a bit time consuming, but I'm not sure what else could have been more effective given their very different levels. I would have found it helpful if the school gave me an outline of what English skills they expect students to be able to achieve at certain levels or ages. This could have been invaluable while creating lessons. The only resource I was given was a link to an online class on lesson planning. However, I acknowledge that the school takes pride in abandoning a traditional curriculum. Instead of

attending any formal classes with teachers, students are entirely self-taught from memorization-based worksheets.

I tried to use the worksheets to infer what skills the school considered valuable, but I personally struggled to find patterns. From what I gathered, the other interns also struggled with this aspect of lesson planning too – we felt like we were in the dark.

Sometimes, it felt exciting to be able to teach whatever I wanted, but most of the time I felt extremely anxious that I could have been leaving major gaps in their knowledge. The project I did with coding consisted of analysing the grades of students and time spent at each level. I primarily used R to achieve this. Originally, I intended to also use machine learning to predict student outcomes, but due to time constraints, I was unable to achieve this. The school supported me by

providing access to student data – which was extremely helpful. This project concluded with a brief written report as well as a guide to using my code if the school wishes to conduct further analysis.

The work I did was very different than the work I expected to do. Based on the internship description and my interview, I anticipated doing work that was more closely related to sustainability and the environment. In my interview, the foundation expressed interest in having me teach a sewing class and creating reusable menstrual pads. I think I mistakenly got the impression that the organization was focused on environmental education and preservation. However, upon arriving in India, I was asked to switch to teaching English and creating a class over microeconomics and business management.





After developing a curriculum and lesson plans for the microeconomics class, I was then asked to change my project to something involving coding and assessment of the school because microeconomics would be too advanced for students. I'm not sure if there was maybe a mix-up because later in my internship, I was asked by someone in administration how the menstrual pad project was going. To be honest, it felt like I was getting mixed signals from different members of the organization on what I was supposed to be doing. Regardless, I still enjoyed the work I did – even if it was a bit of a surprise.

## **Daily Life**

Most days, my routine would consist of eating breakfast at the hostel before being picked up by a driver from the Akshar Foundation to be taken to the Akshar Forum at 8:30. The three other female interns stayed at the same hostel and would be picked up at the same time. On the way, we would also pick up the male intern who stayed at a different hostel. At work, the first three and a half hours would consist of teaching English to a group of 2-3 students. At 12:30, we would eat lunch provided by the Akshar Forum. Afterwards, we would be given time to independently work on our projects until 2:30 when we would be taken back to the hostel to continue working on our projects. We would usually be driven back by the same driver.

On Fridays, we would not teach, as our students were expected to take their weekly exam. Instead, we would have more time to work on our projects. Once a week, we would observe and teach at a government school instead of going to the Akshar Forum. In theory, we were supposed to attend virtual meetings once a week with Akshar's internship programme coordinator to discuss what we had learned, but in practice, this did not happen after the first week. After being taken back to the hostel, I would create lesson plans and materials for my students until 18:00. I would also complete the assigned readings and lectures we had been given. Then, I would revise for my own degree.

At 20:30, the hostel would serve dinner. In the last week, I learned that we were allowed to eat outside the hostel, so I began to order food in order to eat a bit earlier. After dinner, I would call my family and friends before going to bed. Twice a week, I would wash my clothing in the

sink and hang them to dry. On weekends, I would mostly stay within the hostel, but on one occasion the other interns and I visited a tea garden and shopping mall. I found it relaxing to pet the three dogs that also lived in the hostel.

## Lasting Impressions

Overall, I had a mixed experience with this internship. I feel like this internship has given me many opportunities to work on adaptability and self-advocacy. Furthermore, I found it very



rewarding to complete a project that involved statistical analysis through coding. I also found it meaningful to help educate young students in a new environment. I discovered that I really enjoy teaching. It was also exciting to experience Indian culture! I found people in India to be extremely welcoming and kind. Certainly, the

Akshar Foundation was very generous in providing support to me and the other interns.

However, I wish that the foundation had been a bit clearer about the work they wanted us to do especially as it was unrelated to sustainability. Similarly, I wish that I had set more clear boundaries with the internship provider. I also found the results of my analysis to be somewhat disappointing. It was disheartening to see through the data that the school consistently did not have a positive impact on student achievement, and I was unsure of how to respectfully present these findings to the foundation. Despite this, it was a great learning opportunity, and I'm excited to take the skills I've learned into any future endeavours. In particular, it pushed my creativity and independence to create effective lesson plans and projects using limited resources and guidance.

As a woman, we're brought up in a world that discourages us from taking risks, being assertive, and setting boundaries. I tend to be a very timid person. However, I learned from this

internship that being assertive and confident are essential to helping the entire team flourish. Overall, I would absolutely recommend this internship to other students going forward if changes are made to ensure student safety and better professional support in their projects.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

It is absolutely essential to bring cash that has already been converted into Indian rupees. There are very few places that accept credit/debit cards, and it is extremely difficult to withdraw cash once there. Additionally, get vaccinated well in advance and bring malaria medication and treatment with you. It may also be helpful to take paracetamol, as ibuprofen is not advisable if you contract dengue fever. Oral rehydration solution was also very helpful for me.

If you do become sick, contact your travel insurance provider rather than the internship provider. If you are a woman or gender non-conforming, dress extremely modestly and do not make eye contact with any men. Never go anywhere alone. It can also be useful to bring a battery-operated fan. The power goes out frequently, so it can become very hot very quickly.

**Amber Bebbler, Exeter College, BA English Language and Literature,  
Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I taught English to three students, aged 14-18, for three and a half hours a day. I structured the English classes around animal conservation, understanding sustainability and ocean protection. We received minimal relevant support from the Foundation, so interns having a background in teaching would be helpful. My project was fundraising via a 'Wall of Change' where you could buy a square on the wall and in return the art students would paint a design on it. We completed 62 squares and raised 9730 rupees. I aimed to achieve a significant amount of artwork painted, money raised and involvement, which I was successful in. I enjoyed meeting a new, older group of students who I hadn't interacted with before, and the calm ambience of the classroom as everyone focused on their painting.

We went to government schools around Assam three times, which was very enjoyable. At Hali Korka High School, the students introduced themselves to me individually. The teacher said this was the first time they'd spoken English in class; I was impressed by their confidence and courage around a new person. With the headmaster, I discussed the challenges faced by the school, particularly struggles with parent engagement and student absences, his dedication to tackling these, via home visits and personal relationships with students, was inspiring. At Hengrabari High School, I helped students with their English worksheets and they, very patiently, taught me how to write in Assamese. I enjoyed chatting with the students and being able to learn from them.

The students' confidence and skill during the talent show was a joy to watch – indicating school as a safe environment for them. At JAGI M.V High School, we saw the students take ownership over cleaning their village, how they worked together to explain the harms of burning plastic and their commitment to



improving their community. It was interesting to see a school in a tight-knit community and how this impacts engagement and trust in the school.

## Daily Life

A car would come to pick us up at 8:30am and we would reach the school at 9am. We then taught our students from 9am-12:30pm, then from 1pm to 2:30pm we planned or carried out our projects. After this we were driven back to the hostel, and from 3:30pm we planned our lessons for the rest of the weeks, read or completed university work. I socialised mainly with the three other interns; we went out to dinner a few times and to the cinema. On the weekends we visited a tea garden, some museums and the river. However, given the attention

we received in the city, we frequently felt unsafe going out, so this limited the activities we did outside of the internship. I would recommend future interns bring work to occupy themselves in their free time, as Guwahati has limited tourist activities.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Looking back, it was a valuable experience. I learnt about teaching in different contexts and how to work in difficult situations. Despite external factors, the business of a city, parent disengagement and student insecurity, schools can be shaped into safe places for students to thrive. The natural environment of the Forum Schools and its quietness compared to Guwahati, makes it a haven for learning. The Akshar Foundation shapes environments, creating spaces conducive to learning and allowing children to experience childhood through play, allowing students to advance at their own rate. This is what sets the Akshar model apart, I feel lucky and grateful for the chance to have taught here. I am now confirmed in my desire to pursue a career in educational/social mobility charities. That being said, this internship was an incredibly challenging experience. I frequently felt unsafe in the city/accommodation and unsupported by the Foundation, and I would urge any future interns to consider whether they will be able to handle this before accepting the position.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Bring a mosquito net and DEET repellent with you as these are hard to find in India but make a massive difference. Bring university work with you as there is a lot of free time. Make a weekly routine with things to look forward to (we did cinema nights and dinners).

## A message from Akshar Foundation:

*“At Akshar Foundation, the safety and wellbeing of interns is our top priority. For international students visiting India for the first time, we understand the experience can feel overwhelming. To ensure comfort and security, we provide gendered hostels, local SIM cards on arrival, 24/7 open communication channels, and request interns to keep us informed of their movements after work hours.*

*To make the programme more transparent and supportive, FAQs are updated regularly, and accommodation, facilities, and allowances (if any) are shared 3-4 business days before arrival. Internship adverts will also be updated with clear roles, responsibilities, and a “day in the life” overview so interns know what to expect.*

*Weekly sessions, learning opportunities, and field visits are tailored to interns’ needs and levels of engagement. When interns actively participate, we can create more meaningful and enriching experiences together.”*



# BANASTHALI UNIVERSITY

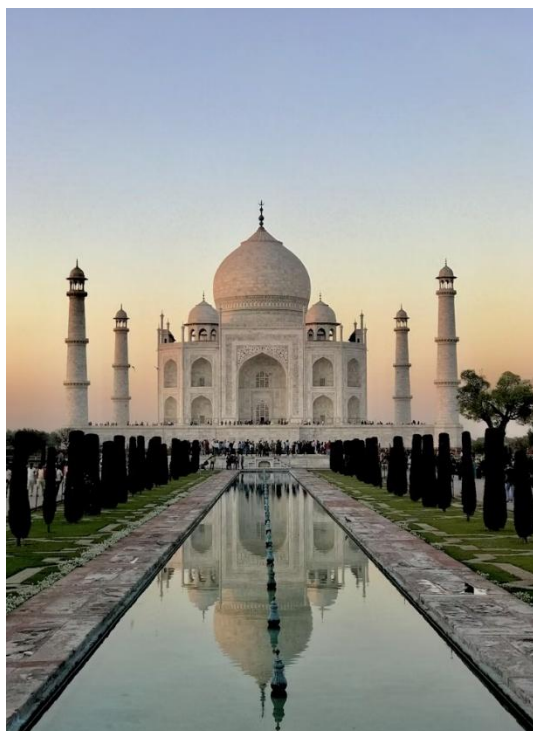
## MSci Psychology and Philosophy, Second Year

### Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

As this month-long internship at the Banasthali University was a study abroad programme, the emphasis was less on tasks/achievements and more so on education and cultural immersion. Our stay involved a range of different classes organised by our intern lead, including Indian society, history, geography, art, yoga, dance, Sanskrit, cooking, meditation and Hindi, to name a few. We were taught much about the diversity of Indian culture, and got to participate in workshops, panels and debates with the students at the University, which was incredibly interesting. Furthermore, the University encouraged and enabled us to travel on our days off; we went to Ranthambore National Park (to see tigers), and the cities of Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Agra! On these trips we were able to visit many monuments, forts, and mausoleums, including the iconic Taj Mahal.



### Daily Life

During our stay at Banasthali, each intern had their own room and bathroom. Three meals a day were provided for free at our accommodation, however, we were able to purchase our own food and snacks from the various markets within the campus. We had the classes listed above

Wednesday-Monday, varying slightly each week, for about 4/5 hours per day between 9am-6pm – with yoga offered every morning at 7am. Furthermore, there was the opportunity to do sports in the evenings if we so wished. We were also provided with bikes to get around the campus for lessons, which made the day much smoother as the grounds are quite vast! There were no mandatory assignments set for us, but we were able to utilise the university libraries for our own interest/use whenever we wanted. Other than our classes, we were often asked to participate in extracurricular activities such as debates organised by student debate clubs, festival celebrations, film nights etc.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I had an amazing time on the Banasthali Vidyapith study-abroad internship! It was a privilege to experience even a small part of Indian culture in such an immersive way, and to meet students just like ourselves approaching education in a different way. It was also very interesting to see the five-fold education system in action – particularly being able to enjoy the arts alongside academic activities. At times, the experience was challenging – navigating language and cultural barriers, and doing things outside of my comfort zone – however it definitely taught me a lot of important life skills, and showed me that I am capable of doing things that I had previously not thought of myself, such as independent travel, public speaking, (and even public singing!). Indian culture is so incredibly vibrant and diverse, that I am sure I will never forget the range of activities, festivals, and events that I was privileged enough to experience.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

1. The VISA process can be very complicated and expensive due to the nature of the internship. Ensure that yours is compatible with the programme, and that you have accounted for its costs.
2. Bring flip flops/sandals – the internship takes place during monsoon season meaning the campus often floods.

3. Bring fairly high-coverage clothes, the internship did not stipulate a dress code, however there were times where it was more comfortable to have shoulders/legs covered, as this is required of the actual students.

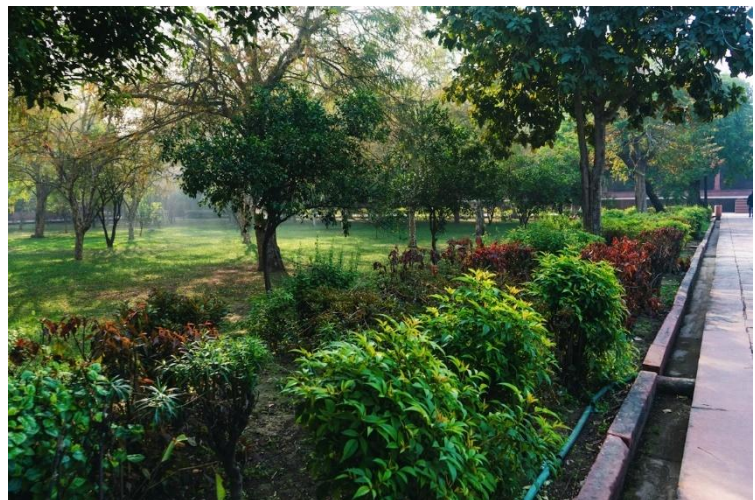
## Millie Waite, University College, BA Classics, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Project

We attended a variety of lessons exploring Indian culture, which we did through a range of academic subjects such as Ancient Indian History, Indian geography, Indian society and more. We also explored Indian culture through traditional dance, learning to cook traditional Indian meals and learning Indian painting techniques. During the internship we were lucky enough to be part of a few seminars and lectures, some of which were of global importance, such as the seminar on Sanskrit for the celebration of the language. During these seminars I was able to gain newfound confidence in my public speaking skills and the host organisation was amazing at pushing us without pressuring us to do activities or events we did not feel comfortable with.

### Daily Life

We stayed on campus in the University guesthouse, where we had all our meals. The day started early, with 7am yoga, followed by breakfast, two/three hours of academic classes, lunch, a language class, art and then dance. We had to cycle between the buildings and the guesthouse due to the size of the campus. We would occasionally go to the market to buy snacks, and dinner was usually around



8pm at night. The students at the University were all really friendly and we spent a lot of time socialising with them. I also spent a lot of time with the other Oxford interns who attended the internship, we went on a couple of trips during the internship, partially organised by the University, which allowed us to explore Rajasthan. We went to Jaipur, Udaipur as well as Agra and we saw many sites, such as the Taj Mahal.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The vibrant nature will stay with me for a long time. It was one of the best experiences I've had so far, and I've definitely learned a lot about Indian culture. This internship has also enabled me to build up my own confidence, particularly when public speaking, or speaking in a foreign language, which I am not very confident in. I have gained a lot of new global friends, as well as new skills including Indian dance!

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Do not be afraid to say no to activities or events if you don't feel comfortable – make sure you stretch yourself during your internship but remember to check in with yourself and see if this is really something you want to do! It is alright not to go exploring or socialising every night.

**Jan Erik Huebel, St. Antony's College, BA History and Economics, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

Banasthali Vidyapith offered us a highly conducive learning and working environment. Our tasks were two-fold. On the one hand, we shared our experiences studying in the UK, and insights from our academic disciplines with Banasthali students. On the other hand, our kind and very welcoming Banasthali hosts Shalini and Manish ensured that we gained a better understanding of local, Rajasthani culture. Having taught before at secondary school level in Assam and Hong Kong, I was thrilled to expand my teaching experience to the Higher Education sector. The

students' eagerness to learn and broaden their horizons was startling, making teaching a real joy. Participating in classes, some of which were specifically organised for us Oxford interns, was an equally rewarding experience.

Whether learning some basic Hindi and Sanskrit, delving into Indian history and contemporary society, or having a go at some simple tunes on the sitar – our classes at Banasthali were highly varied, making for a fascinating contrast with our daily life as a student in Oxford. Throughout the internship, we received plenty of support from all levels of the University's hierarchy. Although some communication was rather short notice, this challenge strengthened our flexibility and improvisation skills. Overall, I tremendously enjoyed engaging with Banasthali students and teaching staff during sessions organised in the context of this internship.

## Daily Life

Settling in at Banasthali proved surprisingly easy. Amongst us interns, we soon forged strong bonds based on our shared experiences of teaching and learning in Banasthali classes.



Organisation was mostly adequate with timetables circulated to us for every week of lessons. Without doubt, our time at Banasthali was greatly enhanced by the comfort and convenience of living on campus. This meant that all classes, events, etc. were only a short walk or cycle ride away. Similarly, returning to the guest house for some rest was very straightforward.

Most of our meals were served at the guest house. The quality and range of dishes served was excellent, introducing us to a variety of local specialities (especially thalis). In our free time, we sought to spend as much time as possible with local Banasthali students, sharing meals, going on sunset walks, or

attending/participating student-run seminars. Moreover, Banasthali generously supported us in

the organisation of weekend trips. Hence, we explored the Land of Kings to the fullest. Over the course of our internship, we admired the tigers of Ranthambore NP, marvelled at the splendour of Jaipur, wandered around the narrow blue lanes of Jodhpur, and were left speechless by the grandeur of the Taj Mahal in Agra. These excursions were absolute highlights of the internship.

## **Lasting Impressions**

As an aspiring academic with a particular interest in various education systems abroad, this internship strengthened my belief that learning can be best achieved through open-mindedness and cooperation. The eagerness of Banasthali students to engage with us interns and our cultural heritage startled me, with their enthusiasm motivating me to approach Indian society and customs with similar openness. Even though I firmly believe that it would take several lifetimes to fully permeate what makes marvellous India tick, I hope that our classes at least provided me with a modicum of background knowledge to be applied in my future travels. By the same token, I trust that the interactions we had with students across the numerous sessions made some impact, spearheading curiosity and a desire to explore hither to mysterious foreign cultures.

I firmly believe that in a world confronting unprecedented crisis, multilateralism, not isolationism is the only way forward. We need to create synergies through fair and equal partnerships to successfully master the challenges of our times – whether climate change, energy security, or global development. Instrumental to this vision are robust education systems which incorporate best practices, regardless of their origins. My experiences at Banasthali Vidypath have reinforced my conviction that attitudes towards education should not stand in competition but rather enrich each other. The dissemination of education and knowledge should not be bound by national boundaries. Lastly, I would like to thank all our teachers, staff at the guest house, and, above all, the Banasthali Vidypath student body for their hospitality, kindness and generosity, and for making the four weeks we spent here truly special.



## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Future interns should try not to be exceedingly intimidated by the sensory overload that tends to be associated with a first time India visit. Students and tutors at Banasthali were overwhelmingly keen to help with any questions at hand and assisted us throughout our travels. Moreover, I'd recommend venturing beyond the campus on days off, to explore all the beauty and architectural heritage Rajasthan has to offer.

**Nana Akosua Seiwaa Boatey, Worcester College, BA English Language and Literature, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

### Work Projects

We were invited to stay at Banasthali University, one of the largest fully residential female universities in the world. They provide education to girls from 1st grade to postgrad and doctorates, so we were among students of all ages from all over India. The internship project consisted of attending classes of our choosing and immersing ourselves into their community for a month. The University emphasises a five-fold education, which meant classes ranged from intellectually stimulating, to physically, socially, spiritually and creatively. We attended daily lessons in various subjects and teachings.



We had classes on Sanskrit, Art, the Science of Happiness, yoga, French, Kathak dance and Hindi language. These classes alternated weekly allowing us interns to explore more cases that Banasthali had to offer, such as sonic meditation, Indian cuisine, design, ancient history, Indian society and geography. Other than daily classes, we also participated in cultural programs,

campus festivities and panel discussions. Our trip coincided with days such as Independence Day, Lord Vishnu's birthday as well as Raksha Bandhan which we felt very included in celebrating. Many students and teachers helped facilitate this by allowing us to be directly in these performances or gifting us as part of traditions. We were also awarded certificates for intellectual participation in panel discussions, a highlight being present for a talk on Indian Cultural Heritage and language, where I was able to share my thoughts and experiences on growing up with a disappearing cultural identity. We were very fortunate to be granted permission to explore parts of the country also. Coordinating between the interns and Banasthali, we were able to organise trips to Jaipur city, Jodhpur, Ranthambore national park, and also Agra. We were able to observe the North Indian wildlife, architecture of various forts and also experience the Taj Mahal. We are very grateful to our facilitators and internship leaders at Banasthali for assisting us and responding to requests which made our visit very memorable. They recommended us places to go and stay, accompanied us on every excursion and regularly requested feedback throughout the month, which they used to improve our schedules.

## **Daily Life**

The University picked us up individually from the airport and accompanied us to the guest house where we stayed for the month. As part of our free accommodation, we were all given individual ensuite rooms, and we would meet for meals in the guest house dining room three times a day. The staff at the guest house were very friendly and accommodating and we enjoyed dining with the kitchen staff. Classes were every day except Tuesdays and often started at 7am with yoga classes, though this was optional as very often we found ourselves too tired to make it. As we were staying on a residential campus it was often quite a distance from the accommodation to the lesson, and we borrowed bikes from the school which were very handy for making our way around.

Within the campus there were many different 'canteens' that sold food and drinks to students. As everyone was so friendly, we often dined there with other students. At the end of every

week, Dr Chandra would hold a feedback meeting where we would share what we thought of our activities so far and how they could be improved. We would chat through our schedule and decide to pursue it the next week or try something else. For excursions, we were accompanied by taxi to our destinations. For example, we were accompanied all the way to Jaipur, Ranthambore and Agra. For Jodhpur, we requested to only be accompanied to and from the train station as we were taking a long train to the next city for an overnight stay.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed the internship for the new experience it gave me, and as it was my first time visiting India, it was a very memorable trip, and I was able to witness so much of the culture.



My favourite highlights were the excursions into the cities, I really enjoyed observing the different architecture and trying different food. The people of the University also left a lasting impression of community, as they were so friendly and helpful. I feel that I had gained a lot of confidence from the experience, specifically in public speaking as we were often requested to introduce ourselves to classes, lecturers doctors and many important people. Also, the experience of staying with other interns improved my confidence and networking skills as we were all initially strangers but became very close throughout the trip.

The experience did not dramatically alter my career ambitions but upon becoming accustomed to the University's routine of classes and five-fold education, I feel motivated to partake in more activities and commitments alongside my education. I feel this has become more important to me as I have been able to witness students maintain impressive and influential personal projects and hold them to the same integrity as their formal education. It proved to be

beneficial to their overall educational experience and a source of personal accomplishment. This cultural difference in education made me want to balance my commitments so that I may feel more fulfilled by my capabilities and interests.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Organise a visa earlier than anything! And if it is your first time visiting that country, opt for a physical tourist visa as you will have less issues.

## **INSTITUTE FOR MIND AND BRAIN (INMIND)**

Hannah Pierce, Worcester College, MSc Experimental Psychology, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### **Work Projects**

My internship was at the Institute for Mind and Brain (InMind), in Kerala. The tasks I was required to complete were creating an educational video surrounding the stigma of mental health and completing either an article or a research project in relation to mental health stigma. For the video, I created a short script, which was then used when a videographer came to film the video. I was able to conduct patient interviews as part of this, which I particularly enjoyed as I was able to have meaningful conversations about patients' diagnoses and experiences within InMind. For the write up, I chose an article in which I discussed what recovery in mental health means, and what factors affect recovery in mental health.

Throughout my internship, I was also able to attend activities that were put on for the patients: for example, Zumba, poetry, yoga, painting and group therapy. I attended many of these sessions, as I found it was a brilliant way to better understand life as a patient, both through interacting with them on a less formal level than an interview, and from joining in with a part of their own daily schedules. From time to time, I was also offered unique experiences, such as

visiting an aryuvedic hospital, or to help the cooks make dinner. My work was fairly varied as a result, and I am grateful that I was able to have such a wide range of experiences at InMind.

## Daily Life

I got to my internship a couple of days before I was due to start work, allowing me to overcome jet lag and settle into my accommodation. The accommodation was a 2-person room, with an ensuite and I had no problems with it. I also had access to a kitchen but could also easily make the 1-minute walk from my accommodation to the dining area of InMind for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I found myself eating at InMind for most meals, as the food was delicious! I worked from 9-5 every Monday to Thursday, meaning I had 3 days off at the weekend. Each weekend, I was able to explore Kerala. Upon recommendations from the hospital staff and previous interns, I visited some amazing places such as Munnar, a tea station in the mountains, and Clayfingers Art Cottage, a family run pottery business where I was able to take 3 days of pottery lessons. This provided a welcome break from work and allowed me to really immerse myself in a completely different culture.

Unfortunately, I ended up being the only intern in my round of internships: though initially disappointing, I ended up really enjoying being on my own as I totally relied on the people of Kerala for any socialising. This was totally out of my comfort zone, but they were all extremely friendly and I had so many interesting conversations that I simply would not have had if I hadn't had a reason to push myself to socialise. By using taxis organised by the hospital to travel on the weekends, and by carefully planning all my trips away, I found travelling solo as a female fairly easy around Kerala.



## **Lasting Impressions**

I am really grateful for my internship as I learnt much about myself and what I want my future career to look like through this experience. For example, the parts of the internship I enjoyed the most were those involving patient interactions. This makes me want to guide my career ideas towards jobs that involve interaction with people. However, on a deeper level I have gained so much confidence and life skills from this experience. I had to trust myself more than I have previously had to with important information like travel plans, and forward planning for travel, money and food. This is something I will take with me as my capacity for high pressure situations and high levels of responsibility are higher than I previously thought they were. I have also developed confidence in being part of a team: I now appreciate better the importance of asking questions and communicating effectively (this was only exaggerated by the language barrier between some staff and myself!)

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Start the visa process early! It took me multiple attempts, due to a slight nuance in my application, and so it took a lot longer than anticipated to get my visa. Once there, I would just advise interns to ask any questions you need to! I found it quite intimidating at first, but once I felt a bit more comfortable, I learnt so much from asking for help or for more opportunities. For example, upon asking about the baseline introductions, I was then shown all the onboarding questionnaires for inpatients, which I found really interesting!

## **BA Medical Sciences, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

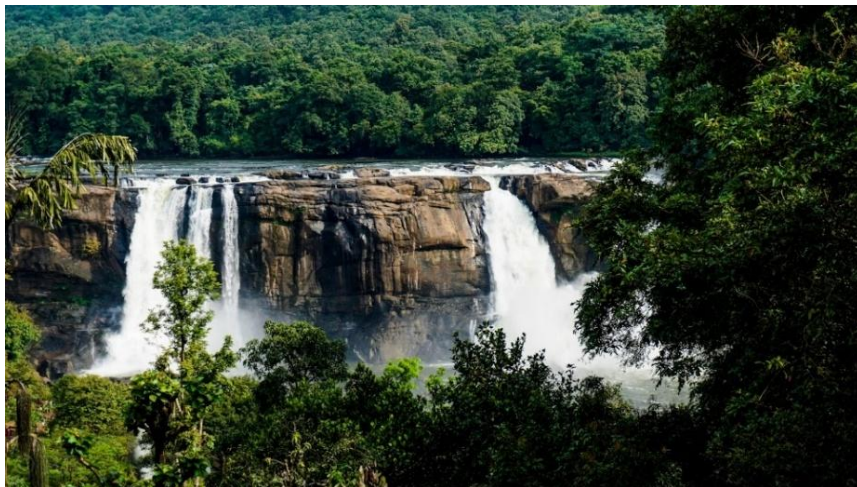
The internship took place in a psychiatric hospital, and the main task was to produce a short informative video on the stigma of mental health by the end of the internship. We spent most of the time in the hospital interviewing patients and shadowing the healthcare professionals. We mainly worked on producing a short informative video on the stigma of mental health. This



involved interviewing patients and participating in patient activities to understand what goes on at the psychiatric hospital. This involved initial scripting, which we discussed with the staff. During the scripting phase, we were mainly getting to know patients and understanding the logistics of the hospital. After this, we moved to recording the video. This was useful because it helped us to think about ways to present ourselves to the target audience (which would be the general public in this instance). Finally, we then edited the videos ourselves.

## Daily Life

To settle in, it was helpful to be with other Oxford interns. We were staying in accommodation provided by the internship host and were also catered by the hospital. This meant that getting



to work and settling in was relatively easy and went smoothly due to the staff at the Institute for Mind and Brain (InMind). Outside of work, we planned trips to various cities and local sites to explore Kerala. This involved going to Kochi,

Munnar and Thrissur and visiting various temples, tea plantations and restaurants. Since there were multiple Oxford interns together, this made socialising quite easy, but the staff and patients were also very friendly.

## Lasting Impressions

I enjoyed the experience and got to learn about how the hospital functioned. While it did feel like the video making aspect of the internship was less organised, I still feel I got to learn from the experience and guide the internship to suit my interests and learning needs. It allowed me to see an alternative perspective on how mental health treatment can look and it was also

interesting to spend a good amount of time researching the stigma of mental health (a much more prevalent issue in India compared to the UK). This experience has informed me about what a medical specialty in psychiatry could look like and will help me to decide what to specialise in beyond graduation.

## Nancy Kate Gittus, Hertford College, BA History and Modern Languages (French), First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My internship was based at the Institute for Mind and Brain (InMind) in Kerala, India. As I am interested in a career in journalism, I applied for the internship as the role required me to produce a video to help combat stigma around mental health and to write an article about my experiences. The research for my video led me to learn about the prevalence of false beliefs about mental illness across the world. Consequently, my video had an education angle as I attempted to combat these false beliefs, through my learning both from research and from my interactions with patients and staff at InMind. My article centred on inclusion at the InMind clinic. I explored how inclusive InMind currently is, devised a system for measuring inclusion at mental healthcare facilities and gave suggestions about how InMind and other clinics could improve their inclusion practices. Naturally, both of these exercises required good research, in-depth interviews with many different patients and staff members and good writing/ editing skills.

Overall, I therefore feel that this internship gave me a great insight into what life as a journalist might look like. By the end of the internship, I also had a video and an article which I could add to my CV, demonstrating my versatility as a journalist and the high standard of the work that I produce to a potential employer. InMind was very helpful, providing me access to data sets about the patients so I could get an understanding of the patient demographic for my inclusion article. Furthermore, any requests I had to interview patients and staff were always quickly

arranged, usually for the next day, which allowed my work to progress smoothly and steadily and for me to complete the internship with two high quality products.

## Daily Life

There was very little structure to my daily life at the clinic. I was not told any expectations about how I should spend my days, other than completing the video and article. Any activities I participated in such as yoga or Zumba (which are provided by the clinic to the patients) and any interviews or data I was given access to, was of my



own accord. I would usually spend a few hours each day, working by myself in the accommodation, either writing/learning the script for the video, researching, examining data sets, or writing/editing my article, and a few hours interacting with the patients, doing activities, playing games, mealtimes etc.

The accommodation was located behind the clinic and so I could pop in and out for meals/activities and socialise with the patients very quickly and easily. In the evenings I would socialise with the other intern, we would often go out to eat at restaurants and at the weekends we did some amazing trips around Kerala. In terms of settling in, both us interns settled-in well. We arrived and were shown to our accommodation, and we began our internship the next day. However, I think I would have appreciated more knowledge about the facilities we were going to be provided with before I arrived, in order to help with the settling-in process. For example, I wasn't aware of the fact there was no hot water until I arrived. We also weren't told what facilities would be provided, consequently it was not until I arrived that I realised the kitchen area had no cutlery.

Furthermore, unaware the clinic provided meals for the interns on the first night, I thought I had to go out and buy food. It was only after coming back from the shop that I learnt from a doctor I bumped into on my way back to my accommodation, that the clinic provides meals for the interns and what the timings of those meals were. Although, ultimately, this was not a problem, being made aware of things like this may have made my arrival at the internship a little more comfortable.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I very much enjoyed my experience. I feel that the work I have come out of the internship with (e.g. the video and article) will be very useful for my career and the experience as a whole will be a great addition to my CV. I also feel that the internship has helped me gain confidence in professional environments and encouraged me to see journalism as a sector that I would very much enjoy working in. I also have certainly gained some unforgettable cultural experiences, and I think that organising trips for myself at the weekends has boosted my confidence and made me into a stronger person.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

In terms of practical advice, I would say to get your visa sorted early, bring an umbrella if its monsoon season, and make sure that your phone has a good eSIM or that you know for sure how it will work when you get to India.

## **BA History, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

Our first task was to make a two-minute video on mental health stigma. This was the task for the first two weeks. Our second task was to write an article on a prescribed topic. We spoke to the director briefly over zoom to discuss the article and what we might do. It was difficult to get access to the clinic's data, and we often had to ask multiple times for data or surveys that we

were told we would be given access to. I did some research into the 2017 MHCA as I am interested in Law and thought it was a good opportunity to do some extra reading about law in a different jurisdiction. There was no timetable or structure, therefore, we spent our time doing self-motivated work and finding patients to talk to, to inform our research. I enjoyed talking to patients who would speak openly about their experience.

## Daily Life

We spent a few hours a day working on the internship tasks in our room or on the table outside our room. We could eat in the clinic's canteen and participate in activities such as yoga and Zumba with the patients. I found that some practical details about the placement, such as



information on facilities, meal times, and laundry arrangements, were not clearly communicated before arrival, which made settling in a bit harder.

The kitchen also needed some extra cleaning, and I bought a few basic items to make it more usable.

The information pack seemed to include some outdated details, and

the language barrier with staff sometimes made it more difficult to get clarification. We could travel on the weekends (and had Friday off) which was amazing, as we went to Munnar, Parambukulam Tiger Reserve and Thrissur. During the weekends, we immersed ourselves in Indian culture and really benefited from being in India.

## Lasting Impressions

I am grateful for the internship experience and college funding that made it possible. It was an amazing opportunity to go to India, experience a mental-health clinic and learn about mental health in Kerala, and research how the law works there. I think I gained a lot from it. We were

there for the Onam (harvest) celebrations and could participate in the clinic's games that day. However, it felt more like I was just staying at the clinic for four weeks, rather than undertaking an actual 'internship', due to the absence of structure or a plan. It didn't feel like the clinic was completely prepared for our arrival, or clear on what they wanted us to do.

## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BANGALORE

### MBiol Biology, Third Year Undergraduate, in person



#### Work Projects

I was working with the college counselling department to aid students with their personal statements, understanding of applying to UK universities and provided talks on studying in the UK. I also helped with administrative work for the department and improved their Oxbridge Programme. I had the opportunity to work within the Biology Department to teach biology 1:1 and shadow class teaching.

#### Daily Life

I stayed on-site for this internship at the school. I would go to work at 7:20am, have lunch at 12:30, then finish at around 2:15pm. I would then have boarding duty in the boarding house to supervise the students whilst they completed homework – this was twice a week for an hour each time. To wind down after work, I was able to play tennis with the other Oxford intern and use the gym, we were also able to take a bit of extra time off at the weekends to go travelling and we visited Goa, Mysore and Kerala.

#### Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed this internship, and my lasting impression is just of how welcoming everyone was and how much of a major life experience travelling and working here has been for me. It has definitely made me consider teaching one day, later down the line in my career.



## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Get extra luggage so that you can bring back lots of Indian sweets and souvenirs.

Sebastian Rohan, Hertford College, MCompSciPhil Computer Science and Philosophy, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

As a College Counselling and Teaching intern, the majority of my work was with the College Counselling team. This involved a mixture of admin work, meetings with various university representatives, and assisting students with their journey towards higher education. In particular, I gave a presentation on studying in the UK and my experience at Oxford to the current Year 12 cohort and met informally with students to answer any questions they had about higher education in the UK. I also worked with Year 13 students who were preparing to apply to Oxbridge and provided guidance and feedback on their personal statements as well as the application process more generally.



Besides my duties with the College Counselling team, I spent my time in the classroom. I shadowed IB computer science and theory of knowledge lessons, often getting involved in discussions and some of the teaching. I taught one lesson from each of those subjects by myself after gaining teaching experience through shadowing. Additionally, I designed and taught an introductory lesson on cryptography to each of the three Year 6 classes. This was on my own initiative but was facilitated by the Year 6 teachers who also prepared the resources that I'd

designed. After school, I had boarding duties twice a week, where I either helped supervise a study session for students or provided academic support where students could ask me to help with any questions that they had, generally in either maths or computer science. Throughout my time, I was supported by the whole staff community at the International School Bangalore (TISB), who were very welcoming. My counselling work largely took place in the office alongside the rest of the department who were thus on hand to help with any queries that I had. With my teaching work, the teachers were able to provide feedback on the lessons that I taught.

## **Daily Life**

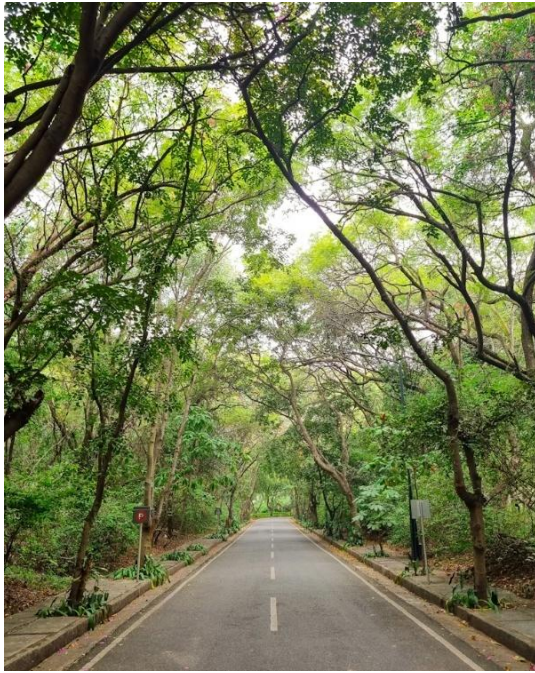
During my time at TISB, I was provided with full room and board on campus. I stayed in a fully furnished apartment, and the canteen food was excellent. When I first arrived, a member of staff gave me a tour of the campus and came with me to my first meals. I started my role a couple of days later and had an induction week. All the staff and students were very welcoming, so I settled in very quickly and easily. A typical day would start with breakfast at the canteen at 7am before the school day from 7:30am until 2:15pm. After school, I had the opportunity to participate in various activities alongside the students.

In my case, I played a lot of football with the students. From 4:30pm, I had access to the school facilities such as the gym and tennis courts. I played a lot of tennis with the other intern from Oxford. Twice weekly I would then have boarding duty from 6:45-7:45pm. On the weekends, I took the opportunity to travel with the other Oxford intern. The school allowed us to take four days off during our time, which we utilised on two occasions to travel from Friday until Monday. During our six-week stay, we visited Mysore, Goa, and Kerala, as well as Bangalore's city centre. We were able to book taxis through the school to help facilitate this and various members of staff offered helpful travel advice.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Overall, I had a fantastic experience, both inside and outside of the campus. I greatly appreciated the opportunities I had to teach, both formally and informally, and I enjoyed the

preparation process for lessons too. Many of the students at TISB were highly motivated and therefore took it upon themselves to come to me with questions, which was refreshing. I also



valued the experience I gained from reviewing personal statements, which I plan to use in the future to mentor current high school students. Over the past year or two, I've been considering academia as an option for the future and my teaching experience at TISB has confirmed that I'd find teaching both fulfilling and enjoyable. I'd say that I'm quite a bit likelier to pursue academia in the future having done this internship.

I gained a huge amount simply by virtue of living in India for six weeks. I'd never been outside of the Western world before, so this was very different to

what I was used to. Most of the life experience I gained was from travelling outside the campus where I could gain glimpses into the lives of ordinary Indians. As a result, I've become especially appreciative of things that we often take for granted in the UK such as easy access to clean water. I also gained an insight into the different perspectives people have in a still developing country. Because of my experiences in India, I've started to consider living abroad in the future; by the end of the six weeks, I felt quite at home in Bangalore.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Be prepared for lots of mosquito bites; mosquito repellent didn't seem particularly effective, so bring cream for bites. The weather was not as hot as I expected in Bangalore. Elsewhere it was more as expected. Regarding the role itself, it's quite flexible. If there's a lesson you want to teach or something you want to get involved with, just ask someone and they'll be keen to make it happen. Make the most of the opportunities you get to travel; the staff will all have recommendations of places to go.

# ITALY

## UWC ADRIATIC

Eunju Choe, Mansfield College, DPhil in Education, First Year Postgraduate, in person



### Work Projects

During my summer internship at UWC Adriatic in Italy, I worked with the Development and Communications team to support alumni engagement, scholarship fundraising, and community events. The internship was timed around the college's 10- and 20-year alumni reunions, which provided a dynamic setting to contribute meaningfully to both event planning and development efforts. My primary responsibilities included coordinating alumni profile research, designing scholarship auction brochures, preparing name cards and materials for guests, managing merchandise and signage, and supporting event logistics on the ground. I also contributed to communications and donor engagement by rewriting automated thank-you emails to make them more personal, impact-driven, and aligned with the college's scholarship mission. Additionally, I created a post-event feedback form and wrote reflection pieces to be shared with the alumni community.

One highlight was helping to organize the UWC Experience for Kids, a daycare for alumni children to experience elements of a UWC education. The Development and Communications team provided consistent and supportive supervision throughout the internship. Amanda Alessandra de Felice, the Communications Manager, offered clear guidance while also giving me the autonomy to take initiative and propose ideas. I was also warmly supported and welcomed by colleagues in the team, who involved me in team discussions and offered insight into the college's mission and culture. This internship gave me hands-on experience in

international education and non-profit fundraising, and affirmed my interest in working with global education and non-profit organizations after my DPhil.

## Daily Life

As an in-person intern at UWC Adriatic, I was based in the town of Duino, a small coastal village in northern Italy. I stayed in the college's student accommodation alongside another Oxford intern and recent UWC alumni, which made it easy to settle in and get to know staff and the wider community. My mornings usually started at 9am in the office, located in



the school's main building. Workdays were varied—some days I worked independently in the library office on communications and event prep, while others were spent running around campus helping with logistics, setting up spaces, and interacting with alumni.

For lunch, I shared meals with the Development and Communications team staff at the local cafe in front of the school. Evenings and after-work hours often involved exploring nearby towns like Trieste and Sistiana, swimming at the local beach, and sharing dinner with alumni and another intern, going on walks, and having pizza and gelato by the beach. The UWC community was incredibly welcoming. During the 10- and 20-year reunion weekends, I was fully involved with all the events and activities for alumni engagement.

Although the preparation for the two weekends was intense, I really got to experience so much about the UWC Adriatic life outside of my internship responsibilities. I was invited to staff gatherings, had coffee chats with staff members across departments, and felt genuinely included in the school's day-to-day rhythm. Living and working on campus made the experience



feel immersive and meaningful—both professionally and personally. It was a lovely balance of productivity, reflection, and connection.

## Lasting Impressions

There's something deeply bonding about this place. UWC Adriatic leaves an imprint on everyone who passes through—students, staff and alumni alike. While my main role was helping with logistics for the 10- and 20-year reunions, this internship ended up teaching me so much more than event planning and fundraising. It taught me about people, purpose, and the quiet power of community. I witnessed how different generations of alumni carry UWCAD with them—sometimes like an anchor, sometimes like a compass.

The 10-year alums felt like my friends: stumbling forward, still figuring life out, full of openness and grit. The 20-year alums, on the other hand, felt like mentors—people who had taken leaps, faced setbacks, found purpose and kept going. And yet, whether they were 28 or 38, they all shared the same sentiment: “Coming back here reminds me of who I was—and who I’m still becoming.” UWC Adriatic holds that mirror up to you. It shows you who you are—and invites you to imagine who you could become.

This internship also shifted something in me about the future. Through my work on scholarship auctions and initiatives that support students from conflict-affected regions, I saw firsthand what access to education and belief can achieve. UWC Adriatic doesn't just talk about peace—it embodies it. Today, 90% of its students are on some form of scholarship. In a world as fractured, in crisis and uncertain, this work felt real, urgent and impactful. And it made me realise that after my PhD, I want to do work that looks like this. I want to help build systems that reach beyond. To support education that isn't rooted in prestige—but in potential. And to





witness, as I did so powerfully during these reunions, what it truly means to invest in people — and in possibility.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Study a bit of Italian before arriving!

**Vishalinne Kumaran, Jesus College, BA Biology, Third Year**

**Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

During the summer, I undertook a videomaking internship at UWC Adriatic, a unique international boarding school that brings together students from a wide range of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. I was selected to support the school's alumni reunions — specifically the 10-year and 20-year gatherings — as part of a small media team. My main responsibilities included filming key moments of both reunion weekends and assisting my supervisor with photography.

Beyond content creation, I played a hands-on role in supporting event logistics, ensuring everything ran smoothly. This involved helping alumni navigate the site, solving ad-hoc issues during their stay, and contributing to the welcoming atmosphere of the events. A key achievement of mine was producing two engaging vlogs that captured the spirit of each reunion weekend. These videos were later shared with the alumni community and received positive feedback.

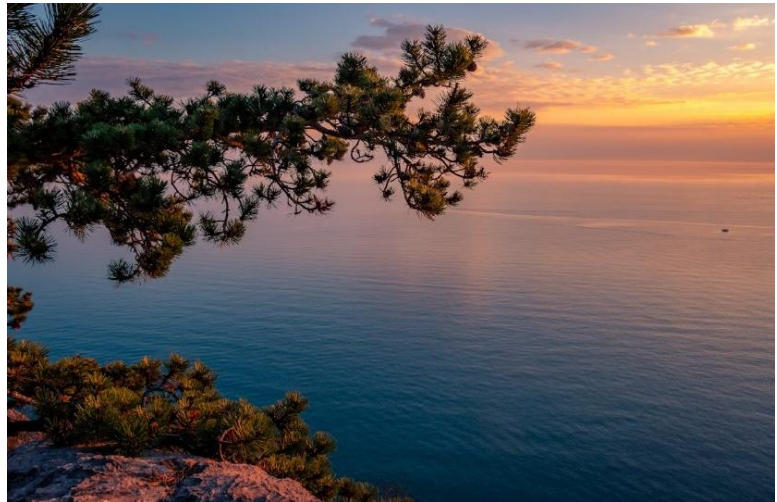
A highlight of the experience was meeting alumni and recent graduates from conflict-affected countries which deepened my understanding of the school's global mission and the powerful role of community. The host organisation was incredibly supportive throughout. They provided a stipend, ensured my fellow intern and I felt settled and included, and regularly took us out for

lunch or coffee. Their encouragement created a comfortable and collaborative working environment, making the internship both professionally and personally enriching.

## Daily Life

My daily life during the internship at UWC Adriatic was both enriching and community oriented. Upon arrival, I was warmly welcomed by the head of the communications team, who picked me up from the airport, introduced me to the team and the other intern, and ensured I had everything I needed to settle in quickly. I lived just five minutes away from the office, which made commuting very convenient, and a nearby supermarket made grocery shopping easy and accessible.

Workdays were structured around preparing for and documenting the alumni reunion weekends, but outside of working hours, I had plenty of opportunities to connect with the people around me. I spent time with the other intern and several recent graduates who were also volunteering for the events. These interactions often extended into the evenings, where we would cook, talk, or explore the nearby area together.



During the reunion weekends, I also had the chance to engage with alumni from different generations, hearing their personal stories and learning about their diverse paths since leaving UWC. Later, I also met individuals involved in a summer programme being hosted at the school, which added another layer to the community feel of the experience. Overall, my time outside of work was marked by meaningful conversations, cultural exchange, and a strong sense of connection – making the internship not only professionally valuable but personally memorable.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The internship at UWC Adriatic left a strong and lasting impression on me. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience – not only because of the work itself, but also because of the people I met and the unique environment I was immersed in. It was a rare opportunity to engage with individuals from across the world, spanning a wide range of ages and experiences. These conversations broadened my worldview and helped me reflect more deeply on my own aspirations.

One of the most valuable things I gained from the experience was the ability to balance multiple responsibilities – filming, photography, logistical support – while still making time to connect meaningfully with others. I developed practical skills in media literacy, interviewing, and video editing, all of which I hope to build on in future creative or communications-focused roles. Networking was another major takeaway: I had the chance to speak with people working in fields adjacent to international development and policy, which helped clarify and reaffirm a growing interest I've had in pursuing International Relations as a career. Overall, the internship gave me both tangible skills and a renewed sense of direction. It reinforced the value of storytelling and human connection in shaping global perspectives – something I now hope to carry forward into a career in policymaking or a related field.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Embrace both the creative and community aspects of the experience. On the practical side, be proactive in asking questions and don't be afraid to experiment - especially if you're producing media content, as the team is supportive and open to new ideas. Time management is also important, since reunion weekends can be fast-paced and involve balancing multiple responsibilities. Equally, make the most of the chance to connect with people. Talking to alumni and recent graduates was one of the most rewarding parts of my internship, and those conversations enriched my work as much as they did my personal perspective. So, I'd encourage future interns to stay curious, engage with the community, and see the internship not just as a role, but as an opportunity to learn from an inspiring network of people.

# JAPAN

## ASO GROUP

Mei Kawagoe, Magdalen College, BA English and Modern Languages (French), Second Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

The first two weeks of the internship were spent teaching intensive English summer camps as part of the company's community outreach scheme for local children. I had the opportunity to



travel a lot for work, commuting to Fukuoka City to teach English summer camps at Aso Group's nursing college, and conduct company tours of their medical properties, including Fukuoka Hospital. After national Obon holiday, during which I had the chance to visit family in the nearby city of Miyazaki, I returned to work to conduct private English lessons for

employees and lead group lessons on invaluable corporate skills of business English. Moreover, I conducted company tours of Aso Group's numerous departments. From this experience I gained fantastic insight into Japanese corporate culture, the workings of a large-scale corporation, and a variety of business sectors.

## Daily Life

For the summer camps, I had to leave each morning at 7:15 and complete an hour and a half commute to Iizuka City. I would then teach all day, leading 3 consecutive 3-day summer camps, which were a very enriching and an enjoyable experience. For company visits, my days were sometimes broken up with travelling to different locations, playing icebreaker games with employees, and leading presentations on a variety of subjects.

## Lasting Impressions

I hugely enjoyed the experience and found it very enriching both professionally and personally. I gained in confidence, especially in high-level business environments, immersed myself in the culture of my paternal heritage, and developed invaluable professional skills.

## BA English Language and Literature, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my internship with Aso Group, I participated in a four-week programme that combined both teaching practice and an insight into the company's diverse operations. For the first two weeks, my fellow intern and I worked with the Aso Global English Program (AGEP), delivering taster sessions designed to



introduce employees to the programme and encourage their future participation. Each session ran for three days, and we were responsible for lesson planning, delivering engaging classes,

and adapting to the different needs and levels of our learners. This was a valuable opportunity to apply my previous CELTA training in a professional context and to build confidence in leading lessons with adult learners. The second half of the internship focused on gaining a broader understanding of the Aso Group's business activities. We toured various departments, including Aso Cement, Aso Shoji, the Aso Humaney Centre, and Iizuka Hospital, where we met with representatives and learnt about their work. Interspersed throughout these visits, we also provided English lessons tailored to employees from different departments.

The internship concluded with a formal presentation of our achievements and reflections, which we delivered directly to the company's chairman during the Global Citizen Committee Meeting. The host organisation offered excellent support throughout the programme. Practical assistance included fully funded travel cards for local transport, airfare subsidies of up to 150,000 yen, and a weekly allowance of 30,000 yen. Staff also provided logistical help with navigating daily life in Japan, ensuring we could focus on our work and learning. This support, combined with the welcoming atmosphere at each department, created an environment where I could grow both professionally and personally.

## **Daily Life**

During the internship I was based in a dormitory near Nishijin Station in Fukuoka. I had my own room, equipped with a shower, toilet, kitchen, desk, and balcony, which gave me both comfort and independence. The dormitory also provided two free meals a day in the cafeteria, usually breakfast and dinner, while lunch was always arranged by the host organisation, whether we were working in Fukuoka or Iizuka. This structure made it very easy to settle into daily life, and I quickly established a routine. Commuting varied depending on where we were placed. For the AGEP teaching sessions in Iizuka, I travelled with my fellow intern by subway to Hakata Station, and from there by train to Shin-Iizuka, with the journey often taking between 90 minutes and 2 hours each way. On days when we were working in the Aso AI building in Nishijin, the experience was different: we walked 25 minutes from our accommodation, which made for a much more relaxed start to the day.



Outside of work, I had many opportunities to experience Japanese culture and social life. I spent much of my free time with my fellow intern but also got to know Aso employees through lunches and social activities. A highlight was attending a baseball game at the PayPay Dome with one employee, which was a great chance to connect outside the office environment. I also explored Kyushu extensively at weekends, visiting Dazaifu, Kitakyushu, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, and Yufuin, among other places. Having already visited Japan before, I adapted quickly to daily life and felt at ease navigating transport, food, and culture. The combination of structured support and personal freedom made the experience both enriching and enjoyable.

## Lasting Impressions

The internship left a lasting impression on me both personally and professionally. I greatly enjoyed the experience, particularly the teaching component. Working with children was a



highlight — they were eager, well-behaved, and receptive, which made each session rewarding and reminded me why I value education so highly. Beyond the classroom, cultural immersion was equally inspiring. I have long admired Japan, and being able to experience its food, nature, history, shrines, and temples

first-hand, deepened my appreciation for the country's rich culture. Meeting and engaging with Aso employees was another constant highlight, as I learned so much from exchanging perspectives on cultural differences and similarities. In terms of skills, the internship helped me grow in several key areas.

I became more adaptable as a teacher, and I strengthened my professional communication skills by liaising with a wide range of employees across the organisation. Presenting our achievements to the chairman significantly boosted my confidence in public speaking, while the cross-cultural environment enhanced my intercultural awareness. These are all skills I will carry into my future career. The experience has also clarified and expanded my career ambitions. It has confirmed my enthusiasm for teaching English and working internationally, but it also gave me an invaluable taste of talent development within a corporate setting. I now see these two strands — education and professional development — as interconnected, and I am keen to explore how I might bring them together in my future work. Overall, the internship not only reinforced my professional goals but also showed me that I am capable of adapting and thriving in global contexts.

## **PASONA GROUP**

[Phoebe Thomas, Hertford College, BA Japanese Studies with Korean,  
Third Year Undergraduate, in person](#)

### **Work Projects**

I was placed in the AJTA (All Japan Tourism Alliance) Office of Pasona Group as a Regional Revitalization Intern. My main responsibilities were to gather information on activities, gourmet, lodgings, and attractions on Awaji Island and compile them into a large database that could be organized according to several factors (such as whether the institution offers English, whether dogs are allowed, price point, area, recommended season, etc.). I then used this database to create and design potential marketing for future tours, in the hopes of attracting more foreign tourists to Awaji Island. I also assisted on guided tours (largely for business and educational groups), attended meetings with colleagues, clients and partners, received guest lectures from colleagues in other departments, assisted in Pasona Group events (such as English workshops and summer homework workshops for local students), and spent time

researching into potential British programmes/organisations that may be open to collaboration with Pasona Group. I also created some promotional content for social media. Finally, I gave two presentations – a summary for the members of my office and a summary to the other interns and department heads.

## Daily Life

We had a thorough orientation and were given a company phone and laptop which were very useful in our navigations of company life. A company shuttle bus took me from my dormitory to the office every morning with some of my fellow interns who were all very lovely and I was lucky to make good friends. I worked from 9.30 to 17.30 on weekdays, and I was the only intern on my team. My team members at AJTA were very warm and welcoming and provided me with appropriate challenges. All my work was undertaken in business Japanese, so I was provided an excellent opportunity to improve my honorific language. I attended the department meeting every morning and then would largely work on my own tasks in collaboration with the team, but I also often had the chance to go out and participate in tours and scouting of potential tourism locations with the team as well.



## Lasting Impressions

This has been a truly invaluable experience for me in terms of deepening my understanding of Japanese workplace culture, formal and honorific Japanese, and most importantly the challenges and focuses of regional revitalization work. I've been able to challenge myself and prove to myself that I can in fact do many things I thought myself incapable of. I personally had

invested interest in Pasona Group before I arrived, due to a research project I did on their company welfare policy last year, so it was also a phenomenal opportunity to witness and experience firsthand the experience of receiving those benefits in real life. The warm welcome from everyone at Pasona and consistent reminders that I now have connections there and it would be a place I would be welcome to return to, have provided me with a level of security and relief when considering my life living and working in Japan in the future. I am also grateful to have had the chance to live and work on the beautiful Awaji Island, and to become part of a community of diverse and kind people, from whom I have learnt so much and have made many lasting friendships!

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Approach everything with an open mind and try to let go of control. If you come in with a strong set of expectations, you will ultimately experience things that are contrary to them, whereas if you go with the flow, you don't know how good things could get!

[Yanglan Smith, Hertford College, Oriental Studies \(Japanese\), Third Year Undergraduate, in person](#)

### **Work Projects**

During my internship I worked for the "Japan Internship Program" which was organized by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). This program aims to support Japanese small to medium-sized enterprises in accepting and utilizing highly skilled foreign talent by improving their working environments and infrastructure, to promote international expansion and drive innovation within these companies. During my internship, I was primarily responsible for conducting first-round interviews with foreign candidates, as well as evaluating and screening their suitability for the program. In addition, I worked on the matching process between companies and candidates, which involves searching for and recommending suitable candidates to companies in relation to their needs and requirements. Throughout the

internship period, I conducted interviews with a total of 102 foreign candidates (excluding those who withdrew or were absent without notice) and carried out evaluations and screenings for each one. Although the matching process is still ongoing, six successful matches have already been confirmed among the candidates I interviewed.

## Daily Life

I have previously lived in Japan for a year, so settling into life in Japan wasn't too much of a



problem. As for my daily life, usually I would wake up an hour before work to get ready and take the company shuttle bus to work. The company provides packed lunches for quite cheap and there is also a 711 next to the office where I could buy lunch or snacks. After work I would take the company shuttle bus back, but as

there is no kitchen in my accommodation I would usually just eat frozen meals for dinner and relax for the night.

However, Awaji is quite a remote place and public transportation on the island is both infrequent and expensive, so it was quite difficult getting to places given the location of my accommodation was also quite remote. Luckily the company I interned with provides shuttle buses which connect our accommodation with our offices, so we did not have issues with commuting on workdays. However, the shuttle buses don't run on weekends, so I usually had to get an expensive bus to the nearest city, Kobe, every weekend to hang out with my intern friends and do some shopping.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Through this internship, I gained a practical understanding of how government-led initiatives—such as the Japan Internship Program—seek to address key challenges faced by Japanese companies, particularly in terms of internationalization and the shortage of foreign labor. The experience also provided valuable insight into the Japanese labor market and what it is like to navigate job opportunities in Japan as a foreign national.

That said, I encountered some initial challenges due to limited training at the beginning of the internship. I was assigned to conduct interviews with candidates quite early on and given the sensitivity of working directly with people—and the potential impact of my evaluations—I would have appreciated more thorough preparation beforehand. Enhanced training would have helped me feel more confident and better equipped to handle the responsibilities with the level of care and professionalism they required. But overall, I still enjoyed my internship and gained very valuable experiences from it.

**Lily Iona Macfarlane, Hertford College, BA Japanese Studies with Chinese, Third Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

My internship culminated in an independent project conducted by myself and a fellow intern from National Taiwan University, focused on sustainability and welfare policy at the company. From the first weeks at the company, we were both fascinated by Pasona Group's concept of 'The Natureverse', a utopian vision of a future in which humans, technology, and the environment live in perfect harmony. We were also very keen to interact with a wide range of employees across the company from different departments. From these two initial interests and goals, we developed a set of interview questions studying Pasona Group's current sustainability and welfare policies, and where the company might still have room to improve.



Over the course of three weeks, we conducted fifteen interviews with employees and fellow interns. Based on the findings of our interviews, we compiled a 17-page written report analysing our interviewees' responses and including our own perspectives as international interns. Furthermore, we created a ten-poster display that represented our findings in an engaging way. We used these posters as the basis for a small event that we organized with support from Pasona's Global HR department. Our event brought together interviewees and wider Pasona employees, creating a relaxed atmosphere in which attendants could discuss our findings and their responses. We also made a short presentation on the findings of our project to the Global HR team, who will use our evidence to drive forward changes to company policy in the coming year.

## Daily Life

I was housed in a company-owned converted hotel with fellow interns, which was comfortable and quiet. I travelled to work each day using the company shuttle bus system, which was free of cost to use. My daily working hours were 9am-5:30pm, and each lunchtime a member of my team would drive myself and the other interns to a Pasona Group-



owned restaurant on the West Coast of Awaji Island, where the internship took place. Not only were these lunches delicious (options included Japanese, Italian, French, and Chinese cuisine) and heavily subsidised for employees and interns (each meal cost only 600yen, or three pounds), but they were also excellent ways to bond with my teammates and learn more about the company and its ongoing projects. After work, I would either call family members, go for walks around the local area with fellow interns, or do grocery shopping in the supermarket. Our

accommodation came with five bicycles that we were able to rent for free, which made daily tasks like grocery shopping far more convenient. I used the weekends as an opportunity to travel for my graduation dissertation research and to explore the area with fellow interns. I went to the World Expo seven times over the course of my time in Japan for my dissertation research and also made a three-day trip to Fukushima for the same purpose.

## Lasting Impressions

Overall, I enjoyed the internship experience, and I feel that it taught me a lot about potential future career paths for myself. Although there were certainly challenging elements to the



internship – such as acclimatizing to a full in-office work day, navigating cultural and linguistic barriers, organizing events within a relatively unknown system, and learning how to operate in very hot temperatures – I learnt enormous amounts about how to deal with different work environments and the planning and steps required to execute a project and plan an event.

The experience has confirmed to me that I would prefer to work in a non-office-centred workplace that offers more day-to-day dynamism, as I struggled with the sedentary nature of office life.

The company with whom I interned is a very large, global company with thousands of

employees. While this undoubtedly has many benefits, it also meant that occasionally I felt that departments and teams were very separated from each other, with each segment of the company tending specifically to its own tasks. Therefore, this experience has taught me that perhaps I would prefer to work in a slightly smaller company, which would facilitate greater collaboration and creativity between departments.

## Theodore Chimedu Nze, The Queen's College, BA Japanese with Chinese, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During this internship, I was assigned to the MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conferences, Events) Relations department of Pasona Group, which was in charge of event planning and management, and which managed two major events during my time there, the "Omatsuri EXPO," and the "Awaji Craft Expo". A distinctive feature of MICE Relation was its hybrid work. In addition to office work, I worked outdoors, preparing the venue for the event and working on-site at events. During the Omatsuri EXPO, in addition to administrative tasks like creating and printing parking tickets, I was also responsible for cutting grass and weeds and directing people to the car park on the day. Particularly memorable was distributing sponsorship items like ice packs and drinks. I was very happy to be able to support the hard-working staff in the scorching heat.

For the Awaji Craft Festival, I was also involved in social media work such as photography, writing promotional captions, and appearing in promotional videos. On the day, I also participated in setting up the venue, drawing lines, driving stakes, and moving tents. The 3-day Awaji Global League project that my cointern's team was in charge of was particularly memorable. Over three days, we researched Expo pavilions and proposed a space that would be suitable for Awaji Island. My team's theme was Taiwan's "Tech World Pavilion," and we were fortunate to win the competition. My final work during my time there was preparing for this month's mobility-related event, MobiWell where I created promotional thumbnails, captions, and zoning maps.

### Daily Life

I settled in quite quickly since I had lived in Kobe, near Awaji Island, for a year during my year abroad. I got about mostly via the shuttle bus by our dorm which took us directly to our

departments and most weekends I took the express bus to the mainland. It was my birthday soon after we arrived, so I used the opportunity to hold a party with the other interns to all get better acquainted and I am happy to say I was able to make great, lasting friendships during this internship. I also socialised with my colleagues as we went out after work, to celebrate different occasions, e.g. completing a project, welcoming a new intern etc. There were also opportunities to socialise provided by Pasona, such as the Awaji Global League, where I got to meet interns from other departments, as well as the Taiko (Japanese drum) experience, which taught me a lot about the local traditions and customs.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I think I learnt a lot from the internship. I learnt a lot about what it's like working at a large Japanese company, the kind of expectations, pressures and rewards of it, especially as a foreigner. One of the first lessons I was told when I arrived at the company that will stick with me, is my coworker telling me "Even if somebody of higher status doesn't greet you, you should always greet them". Another was learning that in a lift, there is a proper position for each person to stand based on their position in the company.

Of course, I was aware of the hierarchical nature of Japanese society and in turn how that bleeds into business practices, however, experiencing it myself was eye opening and has definitely made me think deeply about my future career ambitions. Overall, I would say I really enjoyed the experience -- activities such as the Awaji Global League gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my skills in research, presenting, public speaking and my language ability. However, even aspects which I found challenging, such as navigating the Japanese workplace, I found to be a great opportunity to learn.





# KENYA

## ARIYA FINERGY HOLDINGS LIMITED

Madalyn Mary David, St. Hugh's College, BA Economics & Management,  
First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My internship was with the Ariya Finergy Business Development and Marketing team. They haven't done any SEO projects before, so I focused on that for just over half my internship (total



11 weeks). I was given a WordPress login and did technical and on-page SEO. Additionally, some off-page SEO. Lots of website editing and I also dealt with some cybersecurity issues such as removing URLs on Google search console from when the website was hacked.

I also did lead generation, mostly on Apollo.io, creating new sequences, identifying leads, and automating prospecting. I linked the website and created a new lead pipeline from those viewers. I also conducted extensive A/B email testing and looked a little bit at improving AI visibility. Really, I would say my most meaningful responsibility was being the single point of contact between Ariya & external web-developers, I found issues, detailed the solutions I

wanted to see, and brainstormed improvements, implementing some myself and overseeing the web developers enacted changes that I asked for.

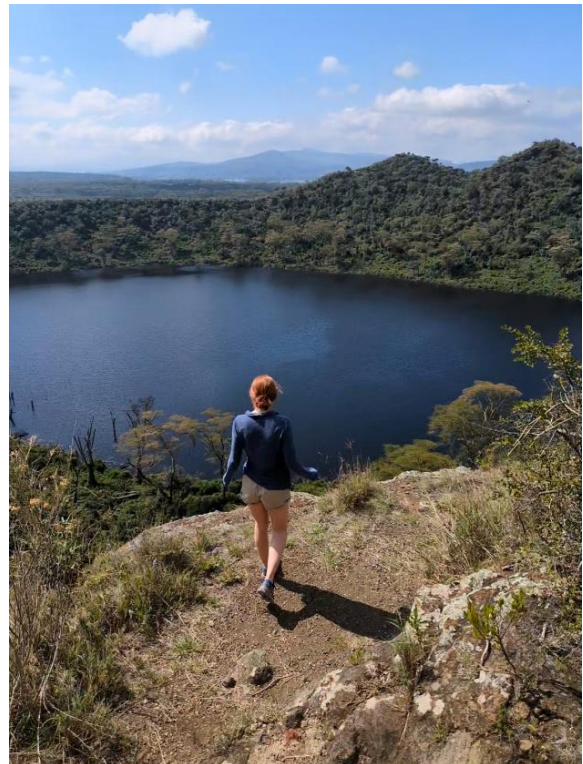
## Daily Life

My internship was very much self-managed, which I liked. I received an 'induction' week which included some small tasks, meeting the team, and lots of background information. From then on, I had regular meetings with my supervisor to discuss directions, but I was very much self-directed and given a huge amount of freedom. I often chose to send update emails and there was very little direction imposed on me- again, I appreciated this as I accomplished a lot and if I needed help, then I knew who to reach out to, meaning I could often sort problems even if I needed help, without bugging my manager unnecessarily. I felt like I had a lot of responsibility and a lot of trust to work how I saw fit.

## Lasting Impressions

It was an absolutely amazing experience, and I am SO GRATEFUL to my employer (Ariya Finergy), they really have been 10/10 in every way. I think I gained a lot of management experience and of course learnt loads of technical things that I would never have otherwise. I also think that by working outside of the UK, you get a more useful experience, as there is less bureaucracy and you get more responsibility. I also got to travel extensively and experience living somewhere very different to the UK.

It has taught me that I definitely want to work in the B2B sector (most likely in sales or operations), that I really like managing and coordinating teams, and that I would like to ideally





do something connected in some way to construction. I would also be interested in global roles. It was also useful to realise that I don't want to do marketing, as this was something I was strongly considering before the internship.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

1. Reach out to people that did that internship before you! It is the most helpful thing as they will know what to tell you.
2. I suppose that the rest is very much dependant on where you are going but check things like your bank account working abroad.
3. Reach out to the company beforehand and ask if there is anything they want you to do prior, and to give you an idea of what you will be doing project-wise so you can start to think about it.

## **NASIO TRUST**

**Zuzanna Hebdzyńska, St. Anne's College, MSc Migration Studies, Final Year Postgraduate, in person**



### **Work Projects**

During my four-week internship with The Nasio Trust—a UK-based charity and Kenyan NGO focused on education, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods—I undertook a research project titled Nasio Connect. This initiative aimed to explore the feasibility of a centralised digital platform to improve communication, data collection, and resource access for the charity's stakeholders in rural Kenya. Prior to my arrival in Musanda, I received a detailed research brief outlining the objectives, expected outcomes, and guiding questions for the project. The charity provided continuous support before, during, and after my arrival. This included guidance on research design, introductions to relevant stakeholders, and prompt answers to any questions I had.

My main tasks included stakeholder mapping, conducting semi-structured interviews, designing and administering a field survey, and assessing community digital readiness. I also carried out comparative research into existing mobile and digital platforms in Kenya, analysing their features, challenges, and applicability to Nasio Connect. Based on my findings, I created detailed user profiles to represent potential platform users, such as rural mothers with feature phones, youth peer educators with smartphones, and community health volunteers.

The culmination of my work was a comprehensive research report containing needs assessment data, a technological feasibility study, feature recommendations, and potential barriers with



mitigation strategies. I also prepared a visual presentation summarising my key findings and recommendations, which I presented directly to the Nasio Trust's Board of Trustees. This presentation marked the completion of a month of targeted research and was well-received as a valuable resource for strategic decision-

making. This internship not only strengthened my research and analytical skills but also demonstrated the power of continuous organisational support in enabling impactful, evidence-based project outcomes.

## Daily Life

Life outside work was simple yet enjoyable. I settled in very quickly and felt comfortable within the compound, where my accommodation was just two minutes from my workspace. Due to safety guidelines, we remained on-site, which meant I spent most of my time with the Kenyan team and fellow international interns. This created a close-knit community, and evenings were often filled with friendly card games and conversations. On some weekends, we organised

short trips, which offered a refreshing change of scenery. With much of life centred around the project, there was a strong sense of shared purpose and camaraderie. This immersive environment not only enriched my cultural experience but also helped me build lasting professional and personal connections.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship with the Nasio Trust has left a strong and lasting impression, both personally and professionally. The experience confirmed that working within the third sector—and specifically in East Africa—is closely aligned with my career aspirations. Immersing myself in the daily realities of a community-focused NGO deepened my understanding of how grassroots development work operates, and it reinforced my belief that I want to build my career in this sector. Especially participating in the Jiggers campaign – where I was cleaning the feet of the community members, sending goosebumps along my spine – I knew: this is the work I want to do for the rest of my life.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, not only because of the meaningful nature of the project but also because of the collaborative and supportive environment. The work challenged me intellectually and practically, giving me the opportunity to apply research skills in a real-world context while adapting to local cultural and logistical considerations. Completing a comprehensive report and presenting my findings to the Board of Trustees gave me a sense of genuine contribution and impact, which was both rewarding and motivating. I have gained valuable skills in stakeholder engagement, cross-cultural communication, and problem-solving—skills that will serve me in any future role. Beyond the technical abilities, I have also developed greater adaptability, resilience, and confidence in my ability to work effectively in diverse and sometimes challenging environments. Perhaps most importantly, I have realised that I am a strong fit for this type of work.

The close-knit, purpose-driven atmosphere, the opportunity to engage directly with communities, and the chance to contribute to long-term change, all resonated deeply with me. This internship has not only confirmed my commitment to pursuing a career in the third sector

but has also given me the confidence to actively seek opportunities in international development, with a particular focus on projects in East Africa.

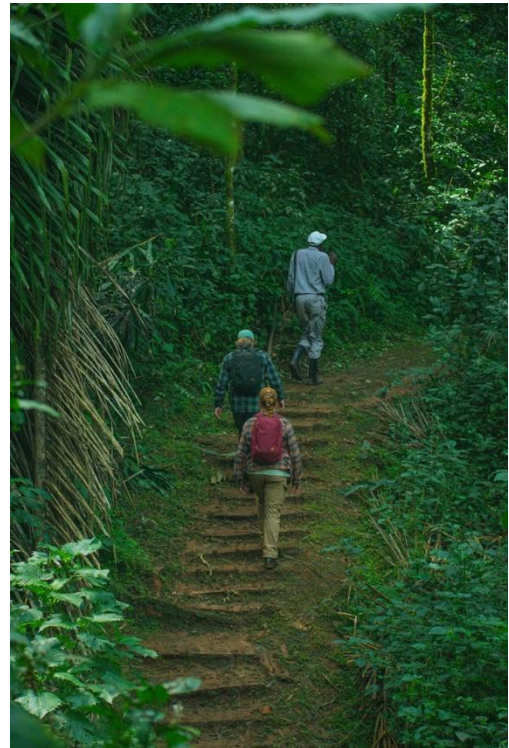
### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Be open-minded and take initiative (it was key in our case)!

## **BA Geography, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I spent 4 weeks researching and developing an app for the Nasio Trust aiming to amplify their outreach and communication with beneficiaries. In a team of 3, we wrote an 85-page report and gave a presentation to the UK and Kenyan team. Nasio was incredibly supportive of our research, facilitating data collection and interviews and happily answering our many, many questions. Everyone was incredibly friendly, kind, and happy to help – I couldn't have asked for a better experience!



### **Daily Life**

I lived in the Nasio Trust guest house, sharing a room with another intern. The facilities and food were great, and I quickly felt at home. We worked in the dining room and/or outside spaces as well as going out into the community for data collection. In the evenings we socialised with other interns, volunteers and employees which was really fun and helped us quickly get to know each other. At the weekends, we went on day trips to places around us – Kisumu, Kakamega rainforest and at the end, spent a night in Nairobi.

## Lasting Impressions

I genuinely couldn't have asked for a better experience – Nasio was such an incredible charity, built and run by incredible people. Everyone I met was so kind and the impact Nasio has in the local community is so clear. I was truly honoured to play a role in Nasio's work.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Just embrace everything – embrace the culture, the research, and the people. Get involved in everything you can, and you will have the most amazing and valuable experience.

## PAMELA STEELE ASSOCIATES

### Mphil Anthropology, MPhil, in person



## Work Projects

The other intern and I wrote 2 conference proposals regarding the use of AI in healthcare supply chains, as well as 2 research papers on the current applications of AI in the field of healthcare supply chain. The host organisation is very helpful in regard of helping us settling in and assisting us adapting into the routine. However, regarding work, because the main manager herself was also involved in many other projects, she was not available most of the time since she had to go to Nairobi for other conferences.

## Daily Life

The host organisation helped us with accommodation and the commute to the company. The manager generously booked us an amazing apartment and had a driver pick us up daily. Outside of work I socialized with the locals whom I met at different occasions



## Lasting Impressions

Although I did learn some aspects of the healthcare supply chain, I feel like this research could have been done remotely. However, I acknowledge that this year is tough since USAIDS pulled funds from many NGOs, including the one I was working at. It seemed that there were not many projects available for us to work on at the time. As a result, I sometimes felt limited in what we could do, and I don't think I gained as much from the experience as I had hoped.

## TEACH A CHILD – AFRICA

Astrid Syvertsen, St. Catherine's College, MSc Evidence Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation, Final Year Postgraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

During my internship, I worked together with another intern as an independent external evaluator for an NGO aiming at alleviating poverty through sponsoring secondary education for



students in the Nyanza Province in Western Kenya. Prior to our arrival, we were briefed by both the UK and Kenya team and provided clear deliverables for a final evaluation report. However, the way in which we decided to collect the data and conduct the analysis, was up to our judgement. Our work involved

conducting interviews with students, guardians, alumni, committee members, and school representatives and gather observations in the field to better understand the NGO's operation, effectiveness, and impact.



Throughout the fieldwork, we were greeted and supported by the local volunteers who allowed us to become part of their "Teach a Child – Africa Family". The volunteers went out of their way to organize the school visits and show us around in the province when we had time off. Returning to Europe, we are interviewing the affiliates in the UK and Switzerland and writing up a 20-page report proposing our recommendations. In October 2025, we will present our findings and recommendations to the board meeting. Overall, I believe we have received a good balance between independently evaluating the organization and support from the local organization, and I feel that the internship has allowed me to apply my academic skills to hands-on and real-world situations.

## **Daily Life**

During our fieldwork in Kenya, each day began with a traditional Kenyan breakfast at the hotel in the town we were staying. From there, we were driven to the first school of the day which was often located in rural areas, meaning that roads were bumpy and drives were long. At each school, we were greeted by the administration team and often formally introduced with tea and "chapatti" (local bread) before embarking on the interviews with the students and the representatives of the school. After that, we typically visited a second school in the afternoon.

When time allowed, we also carried out home visits to guardians with interpreters or interviewed committee members involved in the organization. Our fieldwork usually wrapped up around 6pm. Evenings were more relaxed; sometimes we went on short walks in the village, worked on our fieldwork notes and analyses, or continued with personal studies. Dinner was usually shared with other volunteers at the hotel. Some afternoons, we had the opportunity to visit Lake Victoria and explore local markets, which was very interesting and enjoyable in terms of seeing the region and connecting with the culture on a deeper level.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Being selected for this internship has had a profound impact on not only my academic experience at Oxford but also on a personal level. It gave me the opportunity to apply

evaluation- and implementation science in a real-world setting. With a background in both anthropology and epidemiology, the internship allowed me to see how these disciplines can and should complement each other, particularly in understanding how respect for local history and culture, is essential to responsible and effective evaluation work. On a personal level, I feel that the fieldworker role suited me, and that I was able to adapt to unfamiliar situations and use both my interpersonal strengths and analytical skills in the role as a fieldworker. Engaging with students who were incredibly resilient, bright, and motivated left a lasting impression on me. Their stories were deeply moving and gave a human face to development work. In summary, this experience not only reinforced my belief that development cooperation can have a real and positive impact, but it also strengthened my ambition to pursue similar projects in the future.



# MEXICO

## ANAHUAC MERIDA UNIVERSITY

Tim Auth, University College, BA Philosophy Politics and Economics, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I prepared a sustainability report for the organisation and received guidance from the person heading up the Global Vision and Sustainability Team who introduced me to relevant colleagues, invited me on calls and gave me past reports to read.

### Daily Life

I would get the bus to the University, meet with my supervisor on some days, and then have quite a wide scope to work towards the report, at first just gathering information, then interviewing students or staff and organising the information into categories, before writing it up. In the evenings, I sometimes went out to get something to eat with a couple of students I was living with as it was a student house, and on the weekends, I would visit nearby sites such as Chichen Itza.

### Lasting Impressions

It was a fantastic insight into Mexican, specifically Yucatecan, culture, and I also developed professional skills in sustainability such as the ability to make a time bound strategy.

### What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Be open to new experiences and try to learn the language if in another country, even if it is difficult.

# NETHERLANDS

## INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION



Isabella Crouch, Wadham College, MSc Latin American Studies, Final Year Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my internship I was given a task list with a variety of tasks to complete over the four weeks. The list included building mapping rubrics for three case studies: one on graffiti in Spain, another on an LGBTQ+ monument in Chile and the other on a communist-era statue in Angola. This entailed gathering initial



information, images and writing a summary of the case to begin the research and assist future researchers/writers. Secondly, I was tasked with incorporating reviewer's comments and editing two cases, one on colonial statues in Bolivia and the other on nationalist graffiti in Wales.

My main projects however were two full case studies, one on a church in Boston addressing its links to slavery and the other on the first museum on women's experience of and role in the Colombian armed conflict. I was also involved in creating social media posts and finding relevant news for the project. I thoroughly enjoyed each and every task and had regular check-ins with my supervisor and others who worked on similar cases. My main achievement was

when my former supervisor from the micro-internship said she was 'moved to tears' after reading my case study on King's Chapel. Overall assisting with the Contested Histories Project was a fabulous experience that equally taught me new things and enabled me to apply previous knowledge.

## **Daily Life**

Daily life in the Hague was nice. It was very quiet in the office as most people were on holiday but those who were there were very friendly and supportive. I would arrive at the office at around 9am, leave for lunch at around 1pm, and then return home at about 6pm. Settling in was very easy as I rented a guest room in a colleague's house so he could explain the city, the office, and anything I needed to know! The organisation does two days working from home a week so it would be a bit lonely if you came in on these days, but I quickly adjusted and tried to do the same days from home as others. Outside of the office I went to visit nearby cities like Amsterdam, went to the beach, walked around, and then my boyfriend and best friend came to visit. Otherwise, it was quite hard to meet people out there but I was not bothered by this and really enjoyed myself.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The lasting impression of my internship is without a doubt a positive one. I absolutely loved the work; it was so varied and somehow relevant but new at the same time. I feel I gained new skills in editing, researching and writing in a style different from academic essays/dissertations. I received excellent feedback from the organisation and am grateful for their promise of letters of recommendation. However, I would have loved there to have been more chance of employment after the internship as it has been difficult to have such a great experience in a job I loved, only to go back to the uncertainty of the job search. But this is the reality of internships and the graduate job market! The experience has given me confidence and confirmed my ambitions to work with historical issues and debates, however, because I enjoyed the disputes side of the cases, I am considering going into law.

# PERU

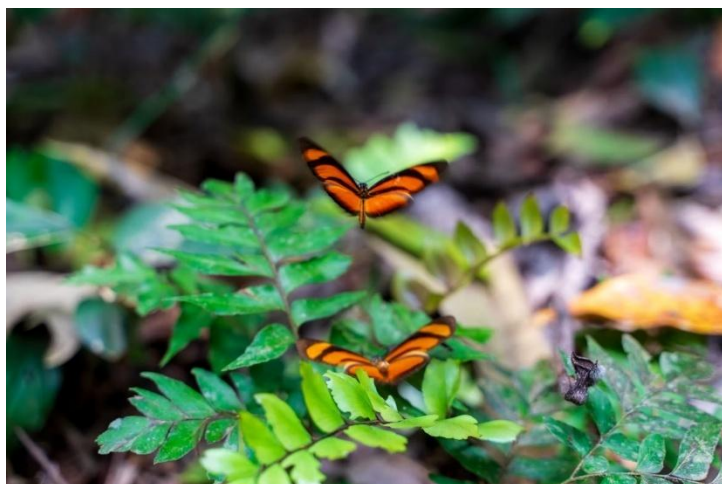
## ALLIANCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE AMAZON

Abbie Wilkins, Wadham College, MBiol Biology, Second Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

I was working as a Lepidoptera Research Intern with Alliance for a Sustainable Amazon. I was living and working at their Finca Las Piedras research centre, located in the Madre de Dios



region of Peru, in the Peruvian Amazon. My role involved working with the lepidoptera team on their existing projects, which aim to catalogue lepidopteran diversity in the region, and understand host plant relationships. My main task was collecting daily data on the caterpillars being raised in the lab. The other

Oxford intern and I would photograph each individual, dorsally and laterally, and record its size, position on the leaf, and whether it was eating and excreting normally. We would also record whether the head capsule was about to be shed, collecting it and providing descriptions when it had been shed. We would record this information in a physical book and a digital database. The photos had to be renamed according to the system in use.

We also assisted in trapping and identifying butterfly species on the ground and in the canopy, and in watching for the migratory butterfly *Panacea prola*. During the internship I had continual



support from members of the Lepidoptera team. They were always present if we needed any clarification or advice and would check the photos and database at the end of each day, giving feedback as needed. This allowed me to improve throughout the internship. On our final day there was an exit meeting, where the team gave me feedback on my performance and advice for the future. It was a great way to end the internship, as I was given some very complimentary feedback that gave me a sense of pride in the work I had done throughout the six weeks.

## **Daily Life**

I really enjoyed the daily life at Finca Las Piedras. On an average day, I would wake up at around 6am, because it got light very quickly. Breakfast would be served at 7am on weekdays, and the food would vary depending on the day. I particularly enjoyed eggs, rice and plantain for breakfast, and sometimes there was porridge or hot chocolate which was a nice treat. When I first arrived, the rainforest was in a *friaje* (a cold spell). It was difficult to stay warm and settle-in because I had packed for very hot weather and hadn't brought many warm clothes. However, it soon returned to normal.

Mealtimes were always enjoyable, because we would all eat together in a large communal dining area, which was a great opportunity to chat to other staff members who were all working on different projects, and had in-depth knowledge of a variety of areas. There were also other interns from different parts of the world, so I was able to engage and make friends with a variety of people and learn about different cultures. In the evening, I would sometimes go on night walks in the forest with some of the other interns, looking for frogs, toads and snakes. We always saw something interesting. I also enjoyed getting an early night and waking up very early the next day to go bird watching.

On my days off, I would take the opportunity to go on longer walks through the forest independently and enjoy the nature. Sometimes I would visit the local town, Puerto Maldonado; other times I would relax in a hammock and read. From the hammock you could see into the trees, so I still ended up seeing butterflies and hummingbirds.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My lasting impressions of my internship are very positive. I had never experienced the rainforest or South America before, so everything was new to me, making for an incredibly exciting and unforgettable experience. I think the most enjoyable aspect was being able to see a huge variety of nature. I always got such a thrill when I saw a species I had never seen before, which has ignited my desire to travel more in order to explore and learn about new ecosystems. From a biological and career perspective, this internship gave me an excellent insight into what living and working in the field would be like.

I believe I have gained significant experience in data collection and identification of host plants and adult butterflies. I found the lepidopteran lifecycle to be fascinating, particularly the shedding of the head capsule and the process of pupation. These are areas I may be interested in studying in the future. Additionally, seeing independent projects being designed and carried out by other interns was inspiring, and reinforced my desire to carry out field research projects in the future.

Additionally, I feel like I have really developed as a person throughout the internship. I suffer from anxiety, so I found many aspects of the travel and adjusting to life in Peru difficult and a bit scary. It was definitely not an experience I would have been able to undertake even just a year or two ago. I feel that managing the challenges of an international internship has made me much less anxious and more sure of myself. I feel a lot of pride in my achievements, and I know that I can undertake similar opportunities in the future with confidence.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

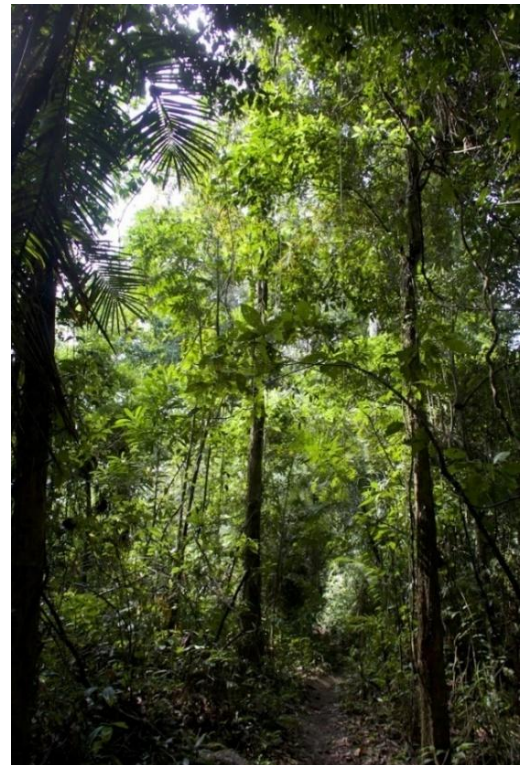
My first piece of advice (more specific to Peru) is to definitely bring warm clothes with you, as being freezing all the time in the first week of my internship was not ideal! If you are not travelling to Peru, it is still beneficial to bring a variety of clothes and look into how the weather/climate may vary. I would also suggest looking into getting vaccinations as soon as you can, as I left mine a bit later than I should have and all the spaces at the clinics were getting

filled up very quickly. I wasn't aware that I needed a course of 3 for the rabies vaccine, so had a bit of stress trying to get them booked. Getting things done early doesn't just apply to vaccines, but also flights, funding applications, and purchasing equipment. It saves a lot of stress later down the line.

## Miranda Barron, Balliol College, MBiol Biology, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I spent six weeks working with the ASA Lepidoptera team at their research station in the Amazon Rainforest. Although the Peruvian Amazon hosts an extraordinary diversity of butterflies and moths, these communities remain understudied, and long-term projects at ASA aim to understand their composition, life histories, and host-plant associations. My daily work varied but mainly centred around documenting changes in immature butterfly larvae, collecting data that could then be used by the researchers on site to construct detailed reports on their unique life stages. This involved taking macro photographs of over 30 larvae each day, recording their measurements and behaviours, and archiving their moults for future analysis.



In addition to lab-based tasks, we also spent time in the field collecting tagged host plants and searching for new caterpillars to monitor. For two weeks of the placement, we focused on daily canopy and ground trapping of butterflies, which were brought back to the lab for identification and documentation. These specimens contributed to both a broader study on community

composition and the station's museum collections. I also took part in daily fixed-point counts to monitor the migratory behaviour of *Panacea prola*, a stunning red-winged butterfly known for its mass seasonal movements. With support from our two supervisors and a week-long orientation period, we settled into these tasks quickly and always felt comfortable asking questions whenever we ran into difficulties.

## **Daily Life**

Being in such a remote location, the ASA community was very close-knit, made up of other international interns, resident staff, and visiting guests. Everyone was incredibly friendly and welcoming (and patient with my very basic Spanish!) which made it easy to settle into life at the field centre. We each had our own room and shared three daily meals together in the communal kitchen. With limited electricity, evenings were usually spent playing table football or chatting and playing cards until the lights went out. After that, the camp was pitch black, and with no light around for miles, the stars were incredible.

During my time, I also had the chance to get involved in projects run by other interns. These included nightly hikes to monitor amphibian populations and sorting through camera trap footage to identify mammals at the site. We also had two days off each week, which could be spent exploring the trails around the field centre or heading into the local town, Puerto Maldonado. There, you could stock up on snacks for the week, take local rainforest or lake tours, and see the Madre de Dios River.

## **Lasting Impressions**

What stood out to me the most about working at ASA was how completely immersed in the rainforest you become. Whether being woken in the middle of the night as a giant anaconda was wrangled into a bucket to show us, spotting porcupines outside my window, or having lunch while monkeys hopped around us, there was never a chance to get bored! The enthusiasm of everyone around camp was infectious, and I enjoyed being surrounded by people who shared such a strong interest in the field. After six weeks, I came away with new

skills, not just related to practical and fieldwork tasks but also in speaking Spanish. By the end, I could hold basic conversations, even if my vocabulary was mostly limited to talking about caterpillars! It was also a valuable experience in teamwork and resilience, especially when the hot climate and basic conditions could be challenging at times. Overall, working with the ASA was an incredible experience, and I would recommend it to anyone given the chance.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I recommend packing for a range of temperatures. We arrived during a ‘friaje’ (a mini winter), and I ended up having to layer every lightweight shirt I had. In hindsight, a fleece would have been useful! A good headtorch and a GPS app are also essential if you plan on night walks. If you have a camera, bring it, as there are lots of opportunities for wildlife photography. Most of all, don’t be afraid to apply and get involved with everything you can while you’re there!

## **UNIVERSIDAD DE PIURA**

Nakyung Kim, Christ Church, MPhil Economics, Second  
Year Postgraduate, in person



### **Work Projects**

I worked on two research projects under the supervision of the professor I worked with. I was tasked with researching existing related literature then coming up with strategies to competitively position the papers. The professor and his co-author team were very pleased with my alternative proposals, and it shaped the next stage of the projects. In the process of completing them, I had immense feedback from the host organisation because I had regular feedback on whether I had a correct conceptual understanding of them and how my ideas could be developed further.

## Daily Life

My host organisation kindly helped me find accommodation in a safe area in Lima by sending me a list of recommended places. It was very helpful since safety was one of my priorities in looking for it. As a result, I managed to find a shared accommodation with many international students in Miraflores, arguably the safest district in Peru. From here, the University was within walking distance, so I felt extremely safe on my commute. But where I stayed was beyond just lodging. It is where I made many friends beyond the workplace. I ate with them and travelled to other parts of Peru with them. These friends made fundamental aspects of my time in Peru.

## Lasting Impressions

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience because the culture and landscape offered by Peru was distinct from what I was familiar with, thus pushing me beyond my comfort zone. However,



other research assistants and people from the host organisation were really friendly and kind, so they helped me to feel welcomed immediately. I would say the most memorable takeaway from this internship is this notion of universality of humanity. What I mean by that is that, from my conversations with fellow research assistants of my age, I discovered that

we share similar concerns about the future despite speaking different languages and being shaped by different cultures. I had a similar observation when speaking with different professors at the University. Consequently, this experience broadened the scope of what I consider to be my comfort zone and offered me opportunities to connect with a diverse group of people.



# SAUDI ARABIA

## KING ABDULLAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KAUST)



Yiming Chen, St. Anne's College, MEng Engineering  
Science, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I am doing a robot manipulation learning project here at Vision-Cair group at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). We are using Aira glasses (meta-AR research glasses) for collecting human demos of some simple tasks like pick and place, fold clothes etc. And this pure human demonstration, collected-in-the-wild data can be used to successfully train a behavioral cloning policy with good zero shot accuracy! We are trying to reproduce this result in our own embodiment setting (mobile aloha). And there are some potential limits that could be tackled, like its pure point-policy (no image fed into the policy), object points have to be labeled manually once, and fixed end-effector orientation (hence restrict the DOF of the movement and task sophistication). The post-doc has a very solid understanding of the basics about embodying ai/robotics in general and provides very good guidance, the University/group has sufficient GPU for us, and other facilities are all satisfying.

### Daily Life

The weather is hot, and the campus is quite far from the city, Jeddah. Apart from that, everything is enjoyable. People are all nice and easy-going, I can quickly fit in by playing frisbee with the team here. And there are lots of other sports to try: decent gym, swimming pool, bowling, squash, tennis, pickle ball etc., and you can even try diving! Most of them are free of

charge (except diving), and the transportation inside campus is free, you can call a minibus during off-work time. So overall social and daily life experience is good. (If it could be cooler then it would be perfect!)

## Lasting Impressions

My internship is currently ongoing. But so far, the experience is quite good, I've learned a lot in an academic research setting, joined group meetings, presentations, and had discussions with group members. The social life is good, I made many new friends, and they are all nice people. It's my first time being in Saudi Arabia, so I got to know what's it like being here in person! So overall a very good internship experience.

## MChem Chemistry, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I explored the possibilities of twisted intermediates in planar aromatic 6 membered rings and have used computational tools such as GAMESS and Terachem to model the molecules and determine possible mechanisms of formation of the twisted structures. I have generated python scripts to automate workflows, enabling the same workflow to be applied to many additional molecules efficiently and quickly. I also attended weekly research group meetings and concluded my project with a presentation to the research group.



## Daily Life

I socialised with other interns and other members of the research group, travelled to the University campus from the University dorms via taxi or the shuttle bus service provided, and travelled around Shanghai and the neighbouring cities during my free time.

## Lasting Impressions

I enjoyed the experience very much and made many new friends in the process. Through the internship programme, I have also gained knowledge of the career path I want to take.

## MPhil in Water Science, Policy, and Management, First Year Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

For my MPhil dissertation, I am undertaking a research placement with the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in Saudi Arabia. The project investigates the bioaccumulation of wastewater-derived organic contaminants in *Variola louti*, a benthic reef fish of both ecological and commercial importance in Red Sea communities. The research aims to quantify how contaminants—particularly pharmaceuticals, synthetic chemicals, and desalination-related antiscalants—accumulate in different tissues and to assess potential risks for human and ecological health.

My main tasks include dissecting 60 fish specimens and preparing liver, gill, and dorsal muscle (fillet) samples for chemical analysis. Using high-performance liquid chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (HPLC-MS), I quantify contaminant concentrations across tissues to identify patterns of bioaccumulation and evaluate the relative exposure of edible fish parts to human consumers. I also compile and interpret the resulting data to explore correlations between tissue-specific accumulation and human health risk and ecological function, contributing to a broader understanding of contaminant pathways in coastal ecosystems.

The host organisation has provided extensive support through access to state-of-the-art HPLC-MS facilities, guidance in sample preparation and analytical techniques, and mentorship from senior researchers in marine ecotoxicology. This environment has enabled me to develop advanced analytical skills and conduct research that integrates ecotoxicological data with questions of ecosystem health and food safety.

## Daily Life

During my placement at KAUST, I am provided with a private room in a shared house with two flatmates, including another Oxford intern. The social environment is quiet and private, with few public spaces for interaction and limited summer-term activities. Most days, I work intensively in the laboratory, often until 8–9 pm, leaving limited opportunity for socializing. I primarily interact with colleagues during work and occasionally with my flatmates in the kitchen, while maintaining connections with friends and my partner back home to meet my social needs.

Despite the overall quietness of the local environment, I have found meaningful ways to engage in both my work and surroundings. Field excursions to fish markets outside campus provide a refreshing break from laboratory routines and help me contextualize my research in real-world settings. While there have been occasional social events, such as a visiting student dinner and a cinema outing, my schedule has generally prevented participation. On campus, I have access to a gym for exercise, and a bus service connects to the Jeddah shopping mall about an hour away, which I hope to explore when time permits.



## **Lasting Impressions**

Although my internship at KAUST is still ongoing, it has provided invaluable hands-on experience in laboratory research and tissue-specific analyses that would have been difficult to gain elsewhere. I have particularly enjoyed learning how to apply HPLC-MS techniques to study bioaccumulation in *Variola louti* and observing the direct relevance of my work to coastal ecosystems and human health. At the same time, the placement has presented notable challenges. Frequent changes to project direction, limited day-to-day guidance, and delayed communication around logistics have required me to exercise considerable initiative and adapt quickly under uncertainty.

Combined with a quiet, highly private environment, and few opportunities for social engagement or community with other interns, these factors have made the experience at times isolating and tested my resilience, self-motivation, and focus during long workdays, often extending into weekends. Despite these challenges, the internship has strengthened my commitment to interdisciplinary water science and ecotoxicology. It has reinforced my interest in research that bridges rigorous laboratory methods with practical environmental and public health applications, while highlighting the value of mentorship and collaborative support in achieving meaningful, sustainable outcomes.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

For future VSRP interns at KAUST, I recommend approaching the programme with flexibility and an emphasis on contributing to ongoing research rather than executing a fully self-directed project. The programme is best suited to gaining hands-on laboratory and field experience, learning from existing projects, and building practical skills. I would not recommend working on an independent research project, which I am doing.

Some practical advice:

1. Flights are often booked at the last minute, so proactively follow up to ensure all your materials are prepared.

2. Request your KAUST ID and, if possible, any virtual laboratory training before arrival. Necessary training and materials can take weeks or months to arrive, and labs are unlikely to provide them automatically.
3. Social life is limited and informal; most activities are private or arranged through personal connections. Proactively reach out to colleagues or flatmates to learn about sports, cultural events, or other recreational opportunities, though they may be offered infrequently.
4. For vegetarian diets, be prepared to cook often to meet your nutritional needs.
5. Tap water is disinfected but not potable; purchase drinking water. Summer temperatures are extreme (41°C+), with high humidity. Maintaining hydration – at least 2.5–3.5 liters daily – is essential. You will need to purchase large water jugs and transport them to your accommodation, either by taking a bus if the schedule aligns, or by carrying water yourself. I recommend purchasing 5L of water at a time.
6. Be aware that the combination of dry indoor air, humid outdoors, high chlorine content in tap water, stress, and dietary changes may cause excessive hair shedding among new arrivals (up to 200 hairs lost per day). It is very commonly reported among interns but can be distressing. Most people at KAUST for long periods of time purchase shower filters. Please be aware of this and plan accordingly.
7. If you have specific products that you prefer to use, please note you may not be able to get them in Saudi Arabia. Imports have very high associated fees, sometimes increasing the price by tenfold, depending on the item. If you would like someone to send you a package, please carefully note customs requirements, reach out to the KAUST UPS





office in advance to ensure they are aware and can provide instructions for your incoming package, keep a paper trail, and be aware you will have to pay additional customs fees as well as the person sending the package.

8. You are not permitted guests of the opposite sex, including family members. Members of the opposite sex are not allowed in your accommodation.
9. For women, social progress in Saudi Arabia has rapidly advanced in the past 10 years. While you are required to dress modestly, rules are more relaxed on KAUST campus, and you are not required to veil. Even when I was conducting field excursions in rural communities, a veil was not required – however, many local men may not be willing to look at you or talk to you, and you may experience staring. I would prepare loose, lightweight clothing with long sleeves and long pants. It is better to err on the side of conservative than not.
10. It's good to familiarize yourself with local customs if you plan to engage in fieldwork or communicate with local people off KAUST campus, especially if you are going to rural areas. For instance, you will want to stand when someone senior enters the room. Women will not shake hands with men, but you may benefit from placing a hand over your heart as a sign of greeting. You may be served Saudi coffee in a small cup. As soon as you finish the coffee, someone may refill it. It is generally considered rude to refuse. Saudi hospitality often includes preparing a very large meal for guests, often far more food than can be feasibly consumed in multiple sittings – do your best to eat what you can, but it is not mandatory to finish. If you are taking pictures, ensure no people (especially women) are in them, even if just for your personal use and memories. It is good to learn a few basic phrases in Arabic, and especially numbers, as if you are haggling or purchasing things and present as overtly foreign, you can expect to pay significantly more money than a local would. Outside of large cities and KAUST, you will want to carry cash.

Overall, the experience requires adaptability, initiative, and careful attention to well-being. Planning ahead, staying flexible, and taking proactive steps to secure resources and support will help future interns to make the most of the scientific and cultural opportunities KAUST offers.

# SINGAPORE

## TANGLIN TRUST SCHOOL

Gabriele Lukoseviciute, St. Anne's College, MBiol Biology,  
Third Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

My internship was based at the Tanglin Trust School, one of the top international schools in Singapore. My work was with the University Counselling department, aiding students with their UK applications. I have 3 years' experience of doing this already, so I didn't require a huge amount of support to get the job done, but all my colleagues were very accommodating, friendly, and inclusive.

This experience further reinforced my realisation that I would, in fact, make a good teacher and university counsellor myself, particularly in an international environment. It was extremely



satisfying to watch the students' progress and develop, both academically, and in their confidence. There was clear improvement with their personal statements, and many students emphasized how much the feedback and meetings had helped them.

## Daily Life

As someone who's usually active, I would walk to work (~4km), usually spotting many Giant Water Monitor Lizards, brown squirrels, and sometimes some macaques along the way. I settled in very quickly with my host family (within an hour of getting home for the first time, I had been invited to a running event by my host mum, with a 06:00 start the next morning!). There were four of us, plus myself and the other Oxford intern, in the office, and we all got along well. The first few weeks of my internship largely consisted of reviewing and giving feedback on personal statements (I took the 'STEM' statements, but this was also extended to Psychology, Business, Economics, and Marketing and Management). I also had many meetings, mock interviews, and mock tutorials with students, particularly in the last couple of weeks, where I was sometimes meeting with upwards of 15 students a day. The other intern and I would also give weekly presentations and 'ask me anything' sessions to both Year 13s and younger students.

Within a week of landing in Singapore, I joined the local grappling club and then proceeded to train there for 2-4 hours every day. As a university boxer, this became my substitute for the training I would usually be doing in Oxford. I learned so much, and made many friends, with many



requests for me to return to Singapore soon. I frequently went for dinner with my host family, particularly my host mum. We also exercised together frequently and often walked to/around landmarks and notable places in Singapore. On my last Sunday in Singapore, I chose to walk to

Johor Bahru and back (from my accommodation in the Dover areas), much to the amusement of my host family, who had become used to my long-distance walking escapades.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I had an absolutely brilliant time in Singapore, to the point that I have decided (unless I do a PhD in the UK) to aim to move there permanently/long term within the next 5 years. I already had 3 summers' worth of experience doing similar work (though there were some distinct differences) with a company in Shanghai, but my time in Singapore has definitely cemented a pathway in education as not only viable, but likely an excellent option. I really enjoyed living with my host family and became very attached to the BJJ/wrestling club that I joined and trained at on a daily basis. I gained many friends and intend to keep in contact with many of them while I am back in the UK. In all honesty, I didn't want to return back to the UK, having left at the end of June (I had an internship in Shanghai first, and flew directly to Singapore from China to complete the one from the Careers Service).

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Take the opportunities that are offered to you, and don't be afraid to be yourself and meet new people.

# SPAIN

## UNIVERSIDAD DE MURCIA

### Medicine, Final Year Undergraduate, in person



#### Work Projects

I completed one month's placement in cardiology in a hospital in Murcia, Spain. I shadowed doctors across a variety of subspecialities and learned a huge amount of medicine and clinical skills. I had brilliant supervisors who gave me informative one-to-one teaching.

#### Daily Life

I took the 1hr20 bus connections from my (provided) accommodation to the hospital each day, leaving home at ~7am. The earliest we could leave work was 3pm but we were often encouraged to stay later to see extra patients, which was always optional and very interesting. Outside of work, I played tennis both with the doctors and at the local club and I socialised with other students in my accommodation.

#### Lasting Impressions

My internship in cardiology in Spain has left a lasting impression on me, both personally and academically. From the very beginning, I felt welcomed into the department and encouraged to engage fully in the clinical and research activities. I had the opportunity to rotate through several areas, including general



cardiology, interventional procedures, echocardiography, paediatrics, surgery, and the intensive care unit. This gave me a broad perspective on how cardiovascular medicine is practiced in a large hospital and allowed me to appreciate the complexity of patient care across different settings.

Beyond the technical knowledge and clinical experience, the most striking aspect of the internship was the importance of communication. Working in a Spanish-speaking environment challenged me to improve my language skills every day and made me realize how much medicine depends on effective and empathetic interaction. This experience has greatly improved my Spanish and has given me the confidence to work across cultures and languages in the future. Above all, I will remember the generosity of the doctors and staff, who took time to explain, teach, and involve me in their work.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Be aware that the public transport system is suboptimal. Direct travel via car to the hospital is not far but the buses take ages. The hospital/clinical aspect of this internship is far better than the laboratory internship advertised alongside.

## **MBiochem Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry, Second Year**

### **Undergraduate, in person**

#### **Work Projects**

We spent each day working in the lab on protein purification, quantification and western blotting. There was a PhD student, assigned to help us, who was incredibly useful and supportive. However, the work was quite simple and something which we have been exposed to at university.



## Daily Life

Each day we would travel into town on the bus, which would take about 1.5 hours and then spend the day in the lab until the early afternoon. Commuting took up a large proportion of the day, which was quite a shame, especially in such hot weather. There were two other girls on the program who I spent most of my time with. On weekends we had the opportunity to experience the local culture and history of Murcia and go to the beach.

## Lasting Impressions

This internship was beneficial in that it helped reshape my career ambitions. I have learnt that I am very much not suited to a career in scientific research and would not enjoy it.

## MBiol Biology, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

The internship took place in the University laboratories, where we worked alongside a research team studying cardiomyocytes. Our daily tasks involved observing our PhD supervisor perform practical experiments, carefully recording the methodology, and then repeating the procedure



twice to consolidate our understanding. We were primarily supervised by one PhD student, who guided us throughout the internship and was an excellent mentor.

## Daily Life

There were three of us from Oxford participating in the internship, and we shared accommodation with several students from the University of Murcia. They were incredibly welcoming, and it gave us a great opportunity to practice our Spanish. We commuted to the laboratories by bus, which meant early mornings since the accommodation was quite far from campus.



## Lasting Impressions

The internship provided a valuable insight into daily life in a laboratory. The practicals we carried out, such as western blots, were techniques we had already encountered during our first year. While the meticulous approach was beneficial for reinforcing our skills, I feel the experience would have been even more rewarding if we had been able to learn more about the ongoing research in the lab. We did inquire about this but were informed that the details were confidential.

# SWITZERLAND

## JOHN ADAMS INSTITUTE FOR ACCELERATOR SCIENCE (CERN)



Sophia Martin, Lady Margaret Hall, MPhys Physics, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my 8-week internship, I was based at the CLEAR facility (220Mev Linear Electron Accelerator) conducting an experiment with my supervisor on beam instrumentation for the



AWAKE collaboration (Plasma Wakefield Accelerator). In addition to attending the summer student lectures, in which I learned about all different areas of research being conducted at CERN, I carried out a project in accelerator science. More specifically, I worked on optical optimisation for an advanced longitudinal charge distribution technique for femto-second electron bunches at CLEAR.

This involved optimising, calibrating and characterising the spectrometer so it could give a precise measurement of the electron bunch length by measuring the intensity modulation of the chirped laser pulses exiting the electro-optic set-up. It also involved calibrating and characterising the autocorrelator in order to ensure the bunch length leaving the laser lab is

reduced sufficiently by the optical fibres such that the pulses are ultra-fast yet longer than the electron bunches in the CLEAR beam line. My work involved hands-on practical skills in the lab while optimising the laser set-up, and in the beam line tunnel during the installation of the EO experiment. The analysis of the data collected from the spectrometer and autocorrelator was done in python, improving my computational skills. The optimisation was successfully completed, and the final EODS experiment produced very good results. I also helped out with the construction of the new beam line at CLEAR, which involved learning how to install corrector magnets and dipole magnets. In my final week at CERN, I gave a presentation on what I had completed during my internship. This was a very good experience and gave me a chance to develop my communication skills.

## **Daily Life**

Living on-site at CERN was an amazing experience; the commute to my workplace was a 5-minute walk and all friends, lecture auditoriums and restaurants were conveniently close-by. I found it very easy to settle-in and ended up getting to know the area very well. The restaurants on-site had a variety of food, and with grocery shops nearby and clean, functional kitchens in the accommodation, it was easy to make dinner with friends. I was often socialising with the other summer students after work and on weekends; we would go on hiking trips in the Swiss Alps, swimming in Geneva Lake and play many a table tennis match on-site at CERN. Additionally, we went on day trips to Annecy and Saint-Genis in France, as well as Bern and other places in Switzerland. There are many opportunities to visit different labs at CERN too, which I also enjoyed. I got on well with my supervisor and colleagues at CLEAR so we would often get lunch together, which was very enjoyable and also very important in gaining an insight into working at a research facility.

## **Lasting Impressions**

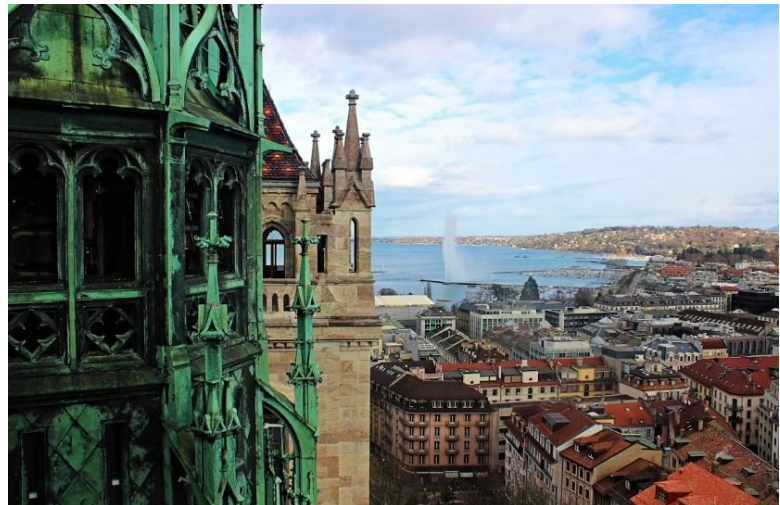
This internship has been an incredible experience. My time at CERN was educational, inspiring and very enjoyable. Not only did I learn more about a variety of areas of physics that are useful

for my degree studies but also developed hands-on practical skills that will be useful for the career in research which I hope to pursue. I have gained confidence in my practical and computational abilities and improved my communication skills. This internship has given me the opportunity to work in a cutting-edge research facility and the chance to conduct research alongside experts in the field has confirmed my ambition to go into academia and research. In addition to the project work, attending the lectures has also provided an insight into many different areas of particle physics and accelerator science research, not only at CERN, but globally. Aside from work and studies, the internship allowed me to travel, socialise and try out new hobbies! This has been an amazing opportunity, that has helped me develop many more skills, meet professionals and students that share a passion for physics and be involved with research at the frontier of high energy physics.

## MPhys Physics, Third Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

The internship at CERN was in the CLEAR department (CERN Linear Electron Accelerator for Research), which was whilst I was there, was mainly doing medical applications (irradiations of zebra fish eggs and plasmids) for local hospitals and international research groups. I was also



hosting some experiments on beam dosimetry, and beam profile monitoring. My main task was at first passive beam dosimetry via creating a python workflow to calibrate and analyse gafchromic films that were co-exposed with the samples and thus determine what dose of radiation they received for the users of the beamline. Then we worked on applying computer

vision in order to track beam centres, such that we could analyse systematic errors within the sample holders and the C-robot that positioned them, looking for slip and movements. Then focused on developing an active beam dose monitor using cameras monitoring screens in the beam and building a gui around this workflow in MATLAB, presented a working version of this to the group. The second month (August) was a beam shut down, so we were in the beam tunnel most days assisting (within strict guidelines) with the creation of a second beamline. Towards the end, I also joined a project working on a tool investigating geospatial modelling for radiotherapy access, as part of a potential future STELLA - CERN collaboration. I also did lectures for the first 5 weeks with the rest of the interns.

## **Daily Life**

Daily life was good and there was good weather in Geneva. I was integrated well with the CERN internship students (around 400-500 of them) and was living in the CERN hotel, only a short 3-minute walk from CLEAR. I also got along very well with the other Oxford interns (through the Careers Service) in CLEAR, socialised with a group of international interns at CERN and a few other Oxford students who were there through different means. We played beach volleyball (just down the road was a water centre), went into France a lot to shop for groceries and went to pubs etc. Geneva was nice and there were also a lot of people playing ping pong in CERN.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed the experience. I gained experience in a research setting and made a bunch of friends. It has potentially opened my eyes up to doing a PhD in physics, and particle physics has been confirmed as my master's topic.



# UGANDA

## BRASS FOR AFRICA

Molly Skeil, The Queen's College, BA Preclinical Medicine,  
Final Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

During my internship with Brass for Africa (BfA), I have been developing tools that aim to assist BfA in the monitoring and evaluation of its disability inclusion outreach programme, which is a



component of its 'Equality' theme. These tools address the primary problems that, previously, BfA has had no consistent method to track and record: Individual participant progress, perspectives of parents on their child's progress, disability awareness, and attitudes toward inclusion of people with disabilities (PWDs) in the wider community.

These tools were developed based on interviews with partners at their six disability inclusion (DI) outreaches (Dorna Centre (DCH), Good Shepherd (GSD), Special Children Special People (SCS), Teens & Tots Neurodevelopmental Centre (TAT), Uganda

Hands for Hope primary school (HFH) and Uganda School for the Deaf (USD)). This is in addition to observations of BfA sessions at these outreaches; regular meetings with Bena (M & E department); regular meetings with Florence (inclusion assistant) and the Inclusion in Focus

working group (IFWG); research into existing disability tools from resources and studies available online; and studying the tools that these outreaches already use to track the development of their students or residents. After initial drafting of these tools, they were refined through feedback from outreach partners and BfA teachers. Furthermore, I have responded to requests for support from Florence and the IFWG to create both a new post-session teacher evaluation form specifically for DI outreaches, and a monthly report tool which BfA teachers can use to share the key highlights and challenges at each outreach.

Finally, I have also drafted a 'Teacher Confidence Evaluation Tool' to help provide a foundation on which BfA can begin to evaluate teacher confidence in working with PWDs. The tools that I have been designing are summarised here, along with the related subtheme that they address under the main theme of 'Equality': Tool - Subtheme(s) addressed Participant background info - caregiver & parent versions - Rehabilitation IPT - Rehabilitation Parent FB - Rehabilitation Impact Verification Tool - Rehabilitation Community FB - Awareness & Inclusion Post-session teacher FB - Inclusion Teacher Confidence Evaluation Tool - Awareness & Inclusion Monthly Report - (Teacher reflection) Participant reflection tool - (Participant reflection).

## **Daily Life**

I feel that I settled in quickly among the BfA team and into the rhythm of work at my internship, largely because the BfA community are very friendly and welcoming. From the first week, I was observing and participating in disability inclusion (DI) outreaches and conducting interviews. I revisited each of the 6 DI outreaches multiple times to collect data and for additional interviews. I started designing M & E tools from the first week – my supervisor was happily surprised that I had already got to work on this – and continued the process of designing, listening to feedback, and refining these tools throughout my internship. I had weekly review meetings with my supervisor and the country manager to summarise progress and highlight any challenges I was facing to explore potential solutions.

Furthermore, I attended meetings with and gave assistance to the Inclusion in Focus Working Group – a group of teachers spearheading the BfA DI programme. In addition to communal

lunches every weekday, I socialised by playing trumpet with the teacher band and multiple outreach bands. Through this, I helped to teach the participants and made many new friends. Furthermore, several BfA teachers asked me for feedback and advice on their teaching (derived from my own experience), which I readily provided in detail. I even gave one teacher a keyboard lesson. Meanwhile, I was also inspired and learnt a lot by watching the teaching techniques of the BfA teachers themselves.

Outside of work, I attempted to fit in as many experiences of the Ugandan community and culture as I could. This included regularly going to a gym, joining a church choir, singing for the church mass services, playing recorder in a mass service, going for jogs with a BfA teacher, taking walks around the local area, and meeting the teachers' friends outside BfA. The



trips I made included to the Social Innovation Museum in Mpigi, a school talent show, a visit to the independence monument and an art gallery, a visit to Ggaba beach on market day, walking around the slums with a friend who lives there, and going with a friend to visit their parents in villages outside Kampala. Visits to religious sites included to the Ugandan national mosque, a cathedral, and a Ba'hai temple.

## Lasting Impressions

I will always be grateful for the fantastic opportunity I have had to work alongside the Brass for Africa team and to support their transformative outreach programmes even for a short time. I have been inspired by the passion, commitment, and drive to make the most positive impact that the BfA staff show every day. This includes all the teachers and everyone in the M & E

Department. In terms of the work I have completed, I hope that BfA will find the tools useful in supporting the future of their disability inclusion programme. Additionally, I hope that these tools can be further developed as the needs of BfA and its participants evolve.

Furthermore, I greatly appreciate being lent a donated trumpet so that I could play with the teacher band and several outreach bands. Among many other things I have learnt here, this is one: each of those BfA instruments represents a better life and a better future for one individual. I also tried to learn as much of the local language (Luganda) as possible, and I want to continue learning it while I am back in the UK. I made many new friends there who I will endeavour to stay in contact with. I hope to return to Uganda and BfA not too far in the future to see my friends again and develop a deeper understanding of the language and culture.

## **PLAVIO UGANDA**

**Sophia Dasa Kapsalis, Balliol College, MBiol Biology, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I completed the Sustainable Agriculture internship at PLAVIO Uganda, an NGO based in Lira, Northern Uganda. I absolutely loved my time here; however, due to USAID retracting all funding to African NGOs in March 2025, we were limited in the work we could do, since the charity no longer had funding and funds are extremely competitive now since many charities across the region are in the same position. We helped to look for funding opportunities, however otherwise in terms of tasks we were quite limited. Despite this challenge, which was out of the charity's control, we were looked after incredibly, with trips organised every week to take us to the field.

All interns took part in both the Menstrual Health and Sustainable Agriculture programme, so we visited schools and spoke to late primary school and early secondary school children about

menstrual health, in order to reduce stigma around this topic, since many girls drop out of school on getting their period. For the sustainable agriculture internship, we visited farms and local crop producers and spoke to people about farming methods used. This was in order to produce a document on soybean and maize production, highlighting where sustainable agricultural methods could be used. This document will be given out to farmers to support their shift to climate change resilient agriculture, on funding being secured again.

## Daily Life

We lived in a flat in the Eastern Division of Lira, next to an incredible market which we spent lots of time at. A former intern from the local area would come each evening and teach us how to cook local food. The food was the most incredible I have ever tasted, as it was all completely fresh - you would uproot a cassava and eat it for dinner a few hours later.

On the weekends Augustine and Jakob helped us organise trips – we had the opportunity to go on Safari in Murchison Falls national park, and go on a party weekend to Gulu, a nearby city. I even had the opportunity to play a radio set on the local radio station, Voice of Lango, which Jakob helped me organise. The 4 Oxford interns predominantly spent time together, and we had a great time exploring the city and all it had to offer. Every working day we would go to the office for lunch, either being in the field in the morning or the afternoon, with office time allowing us to research funding opportunities and our mini projects. I made many lifelong friends on this trip and had an amazing time.



## **Lasting Impressions**

I had an absolutely amazing time on this internship, and learnt a huge deal about East Africa, its beauty and the challenges it faces. In particular, learning a number of the languages spoken in Uganda was incredibly rewarding and has solidified language learning as something incredibly important to me while travelling. I learnt about the challenges that charities in Africa face currently, and how deeply Trump's retraction of USAID has impacted local communities, who often rely on support from foreign funding bodies.

I know now that I will definitely return to Uganda, as it is a country with unbelievable natural beauty and very welcoming and kind people. The people I met throughout the month I had out there taught me a great deal, and I would say that my perception on life has definitely been altered by this trip. I have also made a number of friends who I will continue to talk to for a long time, both from Lira and beyond. When I return to the region, I know I have a number of people I will be able to visit, which is a lovely thing to know.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Definitely stay on top of taking your antimalarial! As the area has a high prevalence of malaria and apparently the strain can be somewhat resistant to maloff, the UK recommended antimalarial. My roommate took hers 12 hours late and got malaria, but it was all sorted out very quickly by the lovely team of healthcare professionals who work directly below the flat where we stayed. Also be prepared for cold showers and blackouts – initially an inconvenience but you soon learn that it is part of the experience.

Also, be aware that lots of people will ask you for money, which can be quite uncomfortable. However, if you explain you are a student (and the cost of living in the UK) they tend to quickly understand that you are probably not in a position to help all the time. Definitely throw yourself into everything this experience offers, as Uganda is an incredible country and you will learn so much if you dive in headfirst!



## Victoria Wilkes, Jesus College, BA Geography, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

My internship was with Plavio Uganda as part of their Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Programme. My work was split between fieldwork and the office. Fieldwork involved visiting rural primary and secondary schools with the Project Officers to deliver talks to students on MHM. The format of the talk involved the Project Officers taking the students through what menstration is, the myths and misconceptions surrounding it, and the symptoms. Then myself and the three other interns would talk about our personal experiences of menstration and I did a demonstration of how to use a sanitary pad at several of the schools.

In the office I was tasked with finding new funding sources. To do this I compiled a document of information about Plavio, its operations and projects as well as costs and challenges. I then attached this to tailored emails sent to different organisations with the aim of a partnership, donations of sanitary products or funding towards reusable pad production training for local seamstresses. I also reached out to several brands seeking to partner with them and expand



Plavio's operations to include the distribution of period pants to local schools and communities. Along with this I wrote two reports on the fieldwork conducted and one on my feedback from the internship.

## Daily Life

My internship was six weeks long and for the first month I was with three other interns from Oxford, and we lived in an apartment. They then returned to the UK, and I lived with the founder of Plavio and his family for the remaining two weeks. I travelled with the other interns and two Plavio staff from Kampala to Lira, the city where we were based in Northern Uganda. Everyone was very welcoming and on our first night we all ate dinner together along with several charity staff and family members.

Over the next few weeks, our day would begin with breakfast of fresh fruit from the market and bread or rolex (omelette in chipatti). The market was a two-minute walk away so once we had been shown around, by a lovely lady who came to help us cook and became a friend to all of us, we were happy to go and buy food ourselves. We would then be taken to the office or field, normally by motorbike, where we would work and have lunch, which always included fresh avocado. After work we would go into the city to buy juice or fabric to get clothes made at the tailors.

Our weekends were spent swimming, on safari, walking up a nearby hill, exploring the market and visiting another city (Gulu) and a waterfall. The last two weeks where I was the only intern and lived with the family were brilliant. I ate meals with the family, went to the office or schools during the day and then returned in the evening and played games with the three children. At weekends we went swimming, went to the village to help harvest in the family garden and I met the grandparents in the village. Throughout the time I socialised with many of the Plavio staff as well as people who lived near us and made many good friends who I learnt a lot from and who welcomed me into their homes.

## Lasting Impressions

I thoroughly enjoyed the internship and had a brilliant time learning lots and meeting some fantastic people. I gained skills which will be useful in the workplace, such as report writing and public speaking to large groups. This internship also greatly improved my communication skills

as I had to navigate many different cultural and linguistic barriers. I also had the chance to learn about how a grassroots NGO operates and the challenges which are faced by many in the development and non-profit sector. However, the most important thing I gained from the experience was an understanding of life in Uganda and through this I gained a new perspective.

This internship gave me the chance to live with a family and join their household and daily routines, learn the local language, cook over a fire in a smoky kitchen and happily haggle in the market. Through my interactions with friends, strangers and co-workers, I've gained skills and knowledge which will benefit me for the rest of my life and an awareness of the world which I hope will guide me through whichever career path I choose. In the current aid environment, I've decided not to go into international development at present and this internship has helped me to realise this.



### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Buy a filter water bottle and bring lots of mosquito repellent.

**Victoria Miron, Wadham College, MBIol Biology, First Year**

**Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I had taken part in an agricultural internship with PLAVIO Uganda, an NGO operating at a local level in the Lango region of Northern Uganda. The internship operated via both office-based tasks and fieldwork. During field visits, we engaged with local farmworkers and assessed land conditions, identifying common challenges and evaluating existing support systems. We had

gained great personal insight into the faults with the present crop post-handling practices and the trading systems during the experience. Based on the data collected from the sites visited, we produced an ongoing practical guide for farmers on assessing soil and crop health to select the most sustainable and profitable crops, a document which would be developed further by future interns and staff members.

Additionally, we researched grant opportunities and identified companies across Uganda capable of providing machinery to farmers in preparation for the harvest season. We were delighted to have also been offered the opportunity to engage in work beyond the agricultural focus. We also contributed to PLAVIO's menstrual health initiative, visiting local primary and secondary schools to address questions on menstrual health and share strategies for managing period poverty.

## **Daily Life**

Our accommodation while interning for PLAVIO Uganda was near the central market in Lira City. Mornings usually began with a visit to the local market, where we indulged in traditional staples such as chapati-egg wraps, locally referred to as a "rolex", or banana sandwiches, something we were judged for by the locals. The workday plan was spontaneous; on some days, we received a 20-minute notice about whether it would be a field or office day, something we all found quite exciting.

On office days, we commuted by boda (motorcycle) to PLAVIO's office, where much of our research was conducted, often in the shade of a great mango tree. Lunchtimes were a highlight, offering opportunities to try a variety of local dishes and engage in insightful conversations with PLAVIO staff. On field days, we used to be picked up on a boda by the PLAVIO staff and took part in a journey lasting from 20 minutes to two hours to rural farmland, where we explored cassava, rice, and livestock farms or visited primary and secondary schools.

After the workday, we typically returned to town to enjoy more chapati and a refreshing tamarind and hibiscus juice. Evenings were spent assisting in dinner preparation with a local

volunteer at PLAVIO, which allowed us to develop a deeper appreciation of the region's culture and cuisine. Our weekends were full to the brim with exciting experiences such as hiking, going to Gulu (a well-known sight for entertainment and a location close to Aruu falls) and going on safari.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Taking part in the agricultural internship at PLAVIO was one of the most valuable experiences I have had. I had gained a lot of knowledge into how one conducts themselves in a more office-based setting as opposed to a laboratory, and how to deal with the members of the public and listen to their experiences to gain great insights into both the local culture and information useful for the project at hand. I had learned that though I enjoyed partaking in field-based work, I had had a greater affinity for laboratory and office-based research, something which I was quite unsure would be the case at the start of the internship. Working abroad offered a fantastic opportunity to explore what life would be like while working in a career path I wanted to pursue. I had enjoyed my time at PLAVIO immensely and had gained essential clarity on the pathway I would like to pursue further.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

In terms of the logistics side of a placement in more remote locations, pack fewer clothes and attire than you think are needed; if there is an item you have forgotten, it is likely to be available in the place where the internship is. Save space for medication and fly and mosquito spray; there is never enough.



## BA Philosophy and Theology, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

Whilst at PLAVIO Uganda I worked on research for the menstrual health management project in order to put together information sheets for potential funding. We also did many school and community group visits where we taught menstrual health hygiene and safe practices to young girls and boys. The staff at PLAVIO were extremely helpful and welcoming and helped us hands on by having frequent meetings and putting aside as much time for queries and discussions as we needed.

### Daily Life

Whilst in Uganda we stayed near the family home of the company directors in a group of 4 Oxford students. Every day we would get driven to the field or the office on motorbikes or in a car and were helped with the work for the day. When we returned, we had leisure time in the city and a woman who would help us shop and cook dinner every night. We had weekends free to explore the country, going on safaris and city breaks with the staff.

### Lasting Impressions

I have had many lasting impressions from the internship – both personally and professionally. It opened my eyes to the reality of the world outside of my comfort zone and how I can make tangible impact with my career choices. I feel as though pursuit of NGO work in my future is definitely something I would want to do – potentially after I train as a lawyer to gain more applicable skills in the area.

### What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Make sure to do research into the area and cultural practices so any differences in attitudes and communication don't come as a shock.



## CITIZENS ADVICE OXFORDSHIRE

BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Second Year  
Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

The main project I was working on while at Citizens Advice Oxfordshire (CAOX) was writing their 2024-2025 Impact Report and the Annual Report for West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice. As of April 2025, Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire, Citizens Advice South and Vale, and Citizens



Advice Oxford merged into Citizens Advice Oxfordshire. The impact report I was writing combines data from the work of each of these organisations from April 2024 to 2025. This report will be presented at the CAOX AGM on October 15th and published on their website shortly after. The goal of the impact report is to demonstrate the identity and work of Citizens Advice Oxfordshire as a whole. It focuses on three key areas: the type of clients CAOX serves, the type of work they do, and the impact that work has on clients.

I was given access both to the casebook, which provides data on the demographics of clients and types of issues for all cases brought to CAOX, as well as client stories and case studies of work done. It was a really interesting challenge to combine both this quantitative and qualitative data in a way that centres the human stories behind the numbers while making clear

the scale of the work done. Since the report will be widely published, it was also interesting to try and make the report as accessible as possible (both visually and in terms of language used) while maintaining nuance and complexity. The West Oxfordshire annual report used similar data (although looking explicitly at West Oxfordshire) but was just for trustees, so the way data was communicated needed to be slightly different. Aside from the reports, I also had the opportunity to sit in on client meetings (both appointment and drop-in sessions) and help with some smaller administrative tasks for clients and campaign work. I really appreciated these opportunities to understand the work of Citizens Advice outside of the data I was looking at.

## **Daily Life**

I stayed at college for the duration of my internship and was based mostly at the office in Witney, so every morning I would get the bus in for 9.30am. My bus fare was reimbursed by CAOx. Once in the office I was fully integrated into the rest of the team, my desk was in the same room as everyone else and I was often asked my opinion on what others were doing. I really appreciated how much it felt like they valued my opinion and saw me as a full person, rather than just an intern who would be there for a short while and then leave. On an average day, most of my time would be spent working on my reports, but I would often get to spend a couple of hours down the stairs sitting in with clients.

While I was in the office, I was allowed to make myself tea and coffee and was given £5 a day to buy myself some lunch. As well as the Witney office, I spent some time in the Oxford city centre office. I was struck again by how willing people were to help me even when they did not know me very well, and how good they were for integrating me into the team. I was invited to their monthly staff drinks which were really lovely. I also had the opportunity to attend the library drop-in sessions, at Oxford Library in the Westgate.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I am deeply grateful for my experience at CAOx. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience for two main reasons. Firstly, I have known for a long time that I like doing research and I find doing

work that I believe is helping people very fulfilling. CAOX has shown me a way that I can do work that I enjoy and find fulfilling, and I am very grateful that it has shown me the type of work I can see myself doing long term. Secondly, I was deeply struck by how kind and willing to help those I worked with were. In a time where the graduate job market feels a bit cutthroat, it was lovely to meet a team of people who are doing important and impactful work but remain open and welcoming. Aside from pointing me in the direction of my future career, I am very grateful for the insight into how the third sector works I got through this internship (e.g. how funding works, structures, link to government etc). My main lasting impression of CAOX is that it is full of genuinely kind people doing work that really needs doing.

## **COPLEY POINT CAPITAL**

**Adam Porter, Keble College, MEng Engineering Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

My internship was at a private equity real estate firm (in essence, we bought logistics & industrial real estate, held those assets through lease renewals and/or rent reviews and sold



them at a price reflecting their new value). Day-to-day I was responsible for a mixture of deal underwriting, market research and producing slide decks to communicate findings from each of these activities. Outside of these tasks I also undertook research on the feasibility and potential roll out of electric road haulage vehicles in the

UK, which set out to understand the economic and practical considerations of electrifying the

road freight industry. The report includes an overview of the sector, including details of current government support schemes established to accelerate the electric transition; provides a total cost of ownership analysis; and considers the feasibility of installing and funding the infrastructure required for electrification.

Throughout my internship I was given tasks that were of real value to the firm, being used in internal and client facing materials. In part due to the small size of the company (at fewer than 15 employees), I was afforded a wide range of opportunities to learn and experience the industry while shouldering responsibilities that would not be afforded to me at a larger firm. The guidance I received to help me raise the standard of my work was nothing short of excellent and I will be able to apply their diligent approach to quality to all future endeavours.

## **Daily Life**

The morning commute was generally pleasant – a half hour jaunt down the Jubilee line to get to the office for 9am. From there, I would set up my laptop at my desk, connect to the two monitors and check my emails. Usually there wasn't much of a backlog, and I would be able to begin on my actual work for the day. I would take lunch at my desk between noon and 2pm, depending on meeting times that day, and leave around 7pm. The work itself was engaging but doesn't lend itself to being discussed here. Outside of work I tried to relax. While I did go to the theatre once, I mostly went home to watch TV as I cooked dinner and the next day's lunch. Around half of my weekends involved no work of any kind, allowing me to enjoy the women's rugby world cup (at time of writing, England's Red Roses are two days away from being crowned world champions or runners up to Canada).

## **Lasting Impressions**

My lasting impressions of this internship will be that I enjoyed it and learned a lot, I don't think I will ever use Excel in the same way again! Aside from obvious things, like my financial knowledge improving, the internship has given me more confidence in professional settings. This was my first corporate job, which can be intimidating, but through hard work and a bit of

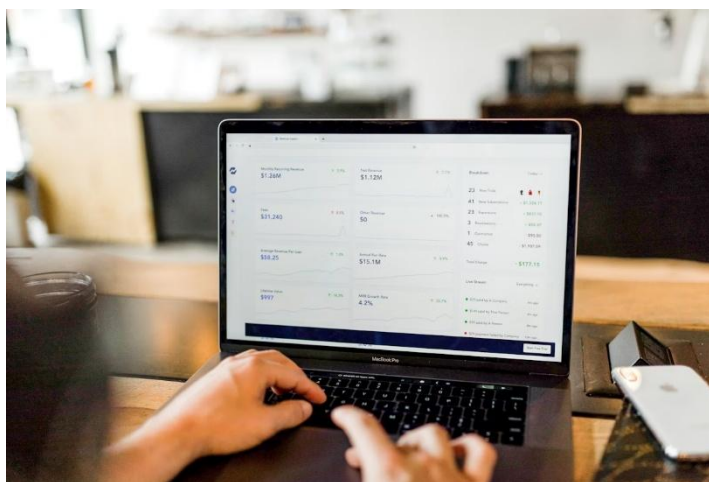
patience from my colleagues, I feel I have come on leaps and bounds. It is hard to say how much it has affected my career ambitions as I still have two years until I graduate, but I came to the internship with an open mind, and I could absolutely see myself working in the sector in ten years' time. What is definitely true is that this internship has exposed me to entire sectors that I had never considered before, demonstrating the breadth of opportunities available. I think that when people hear the phrase "real estate" they think of a branch of Knight Frank with photos of flats in the windows. Clearly this exists, but there is also an entire industry of people facilitating the trade of warehouses which in-turn allows you to buy your mother's Christmas present on the 21st and still have a chance of getting it under the tree by Christmas Eve, and I think that's pretty cool.

## ETRADING SOFTWARE

### MChem Chemistry, Final Year Undergraduate, in person

#### Work Projects

The main project centered around the quality of post-trade data in the UK and EU derivative and bond markets. We were asked to clean and organise the data, with the aim of assessing the data quality and how well it follows UK and EU regulations. This included a large amount of exploratory data analysis as the data was vast and often inconsistent. We were able to develop a system to organise historical and live trades into a logical, and easy to query, relational database, while detecting and highlighting data quality issues based on various categories, such as trade publication venue. The company



provided a lot of support throughout the project, with regular meetings and informal chats. The final presentation was attended by others outside of our team and was well received.

## **Daily Life**

Settling into the workplace was smoother than I expected. The team was very welcoming, and I quickly adapted to the office environment. I typically started the day by reviewing emails and checking in on ongoing projects, ensuring I understood the priorities for the day. Most of my time was spent collaborating with the other intern on data analysis tasks, preparing visual reports, and writing Python scripts. Afternoons were a mix of team meetings and focused project work. The office culture encouraged asking questions and sharing ideas, which helped me to learn quickly. There were also some arranged sessions as mini-tutorials on technical subjects and different parts of the business. After work, I often met up with friends also in London or went to the gym. Overall, the internship offered a structured but flexible environment, making each day productive and engaging.

## **Lasting Impressions**

This internship was a very good introduction to office work, with all the staff being friendly and happy to help. I gained a significant amount of knowledge about the financial markets, and how my current knowledge of data analysis and machine learning can be applied. The experience confirmed by career ambitions and I look forward to working in this field for longer.

**Daniel Bold, Trinity College, MMath Mathematics, Final Year Undergraduate, in person**

## **Work Projects**

The internship was essentially a research project. I worked under the supervision of established consultants in the regulatory and trading fields, conducting data analysis. Our research consisted of two main parts – data consistency and outlier detection. The data consistency



project worked on analysing how ‘complete’ the data certain bodies were releasing was - various deferral schemes in regulatory data leads to different records ‘matching’, sometimes in complex ways. We analysed how often the expected records were found and measured exactly how complete the data from different bodies was. The outlier detection project focussed on building mathematical algorithms to detect inaccuracies in price reporting. We used a variety of learning algorithms and mathematical methods and had the opportunity to present all our findings and methods incrementally to supervisors, who gave direction.

I received a lot of support from the organisation. In the beginning, this was understanding the regulatory framework we were analysing and understanding the format of datasets. Later on, this was more in-depth discussions about what was likely to work and what wasn’t. Outside of the project, everyone in the organisation was friendly and many offered to give demonstrations of different products that aligned with my interests.

## Daily Life

I commuted in via the Tube. The office is very central, being right next to St Paul’s Cathedral. The hours were 9-5.30 each day, and the office was a very nice, relaxed working atmosphere. I



settled in to working by trying to set myself small tasks to adjust to the technology the company used, and everyone was very chatty so the social aspect of settling in was very easy. My day usually consisted of programming, with perhaps a meeting with supervisors towards the end of the day to check in. We

were all sat right next to each other, so help was very easy to get when needed. The internship felt more like a collaborative effort – we were not told what to do by management, rather we

were asked what we thought was best and worked where our strengths were. Overall, it was a really enjoyable experience!

## **Lasting Impressions**

This internship gave me an amazing insight into the world of fintech and data analysis. I thoroughly enjoyed the work, and after the initial learning curve of being in a production environment, it was a fun experience. I thoroughly enjoyed it and encourage anyone interested in any area of tech or finance to apply! I gained a lot of familiarity with data analysis techniques through constant exposure to new methods and datasets. It has given me the confidence to pursue other data analysis-based jobs with a lot more confidence. I now see data analysis as more of a desirable career route than before.

## **FIDO TECH**

[Stefan Nedelcu, Keble College, MCompSci Computer Science, First Year Undergraduate, hybrid](#)

## **Work Projects**

During my internship at FIDO, I was tasked with a significant project to enhance the performance and efficiency of the FIDO API audio processing pipeline. My primary objective was to replace the existing Azure Functions implementation with a more robust and scalable solution, which I achieved by leveraging Python's Celery library for background processing. This involved extensive research and planning to understand the current system's bottlenecks and design a new architecture that could handle high-volume data processing more effectively.

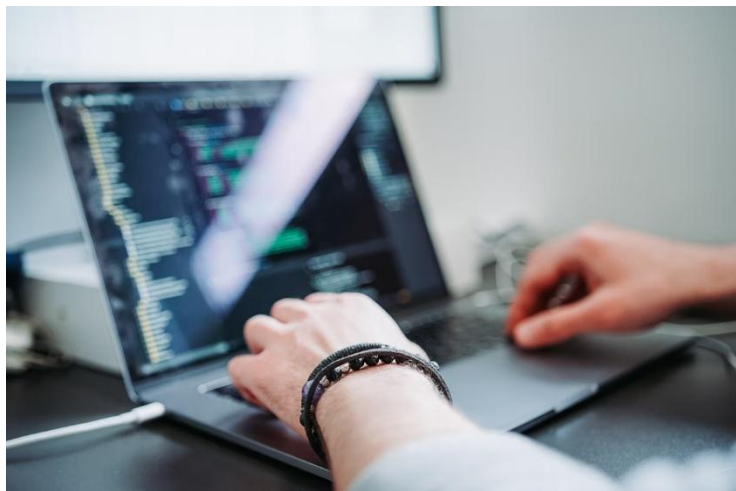
A key achievement of this project was optimising the pipeline to achieve a 58% speed increase, a substantial improvement that directly impacted the user experience. I accomplished this by parallelising tasks and implementing a background processing queue, which prevented the API from being blocked by long-running operations. Additionally, I developed a new GET endpoint

that allowed for real-time monitoring of background job statuses, significantly improving system visibility for the team. This work required a deep dive into system design principles and hands-on experience in architecting a more resilient and performant system.

The support I received from my host organisation was exceptional. My line manager, Charlotte, was an incredible mentor who provided constant guidance and constructive feedback. The entire Locate Team was welcoming and supportive, creating a collaborative environment where I felt comfortable asking questions and sharing ideas. The team's encouragement helped me navigate complex technical challenges and grow my skills in a real-world setting, and I am grateful for their trust in allowing me to lead such a critical project.

## Daily Life

My internship at FIDO was an in-person experience, and my daily routine was structured around collaboration, learning, and tackling interesting challenges. I would typically arrive at the office in the morning and start my day by checking in on the status of the background processing pipeline I was building.



This was often followed by the team's daily stand-up, where we would discuss our progress, any roadblocks, and our plans for the day. This routine helped me stay aligned with the team's goals and provided an opportunity to receive immediate feedback. A significant part of my day was dedicated to hands-on coding. I spent a lot of time working on the core logic for the Celery implementation, writing unit tests with pytest to ensure a high level of code quality and security. I found great satisfaction in watching the code coverage increase to 96% as I worked. I also had the opportunity to collaborate closely with other engineers on the team, whether through pair programming sessions or by creating and responding to pull requests. This

exposure to an industry-standard workflow using Git for version control was invaluable. Outside of work, I was fortunate to have a supportive and social team. This created a friendly atmosphere that extended beyond just work. My colleagues, including my mentor Charlotte, were not only great to work with but also excellent people to socialise with. We would often chat about things beyond our work, which helped me settle into the company culture and feel like a true part of the team.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship at FIDO was an overwhelmingly positive and transformative experience that has profoundly influenced my career ambitions. The lasting impression is one of immense personal and professional growth. I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of the internship, from the challenging projects to the supportive and collaborative team environment. The opportunity to contribute to a real-world product and see the tangible impact of my work was incredibly rewarding and has solidified my desire to pursue a career in backend software engineering.

The amount I gained from this experience is immeasurable. Technically, I deepened my knowledge of Python and its best practices, gained hands-on experience with asynchronous programming using Celery, and became proficient in advanced testing strategies like mocking and patching. Beyond the technical skills, I learned how to navigate an industry-standard workflow, participate in agile ceremonies, and effectively present my work to a larger audience. The chance to present my project to over 20 employees was a significant confidence boost and a valuable lesson in technical communication.

This internship has absolutely confirmed my career ambitions. Before this, I had an interest in backend development, but this experience transformed that interest into a clear passion. The hands-on work in system design, performance optimisation, and robust testing showed me the kind of engineering I want to be a part of in the future. I am more confident than ever that I am on the right career path, and the skills and experiences I gained at FIDO will be the foundation for my future success.

## MCompSci Computer Science, Second Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

I worked on multiple small projects to cover the full range of Quality Assurance work. My main project was working on regression testing to move from manual tests to automated tests, with



a secondary focus on creating an automated test suite for data integrity and permissions. I also had the opportunity to work on creating a metric for the Operations team, which involved recording the total number of Git commits made. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to help work on hotfixes and verify

them, as well as aiding another intern in testing their project in terms of the wider system. I also worked on a mini-project with the other interns towards the end of the internship that focused more on the research and development of a new algorithm to reduce background noise.

My main achievement was my work with the automated testing, as well as presenting this work to the rest of the development team. I also recorded a video presentation to be shared with the management side about the current capabilities of the automated testing. I was very well supported by the whole team. My direct supervisor was always on hand if I had any questions and the entire team was really friendly and happy to answer any questions I had about their work. It was a really great experience.

### Daily Life

I had a hybrid approach so had 3 days in office, 2 days remote. I settled into the office quite well, everyone was very friendly, and it was quite easy to make conversation. My commute was

a bit long, I had a bus, train and then a taxi, but I was commuting from college accommodation rather than in the same town. Outside of work, I mainly explored Oxford more and visited family and friends, though there was a work event one evening which I went to, which was very nice.

I socialized with most of the development team. Mainly the other interns, our direct supervisors, a couple of employees who started at the same time and some other employees, but there were lots of opportunities to socialize with people outside of whom I was working with through summer games, tech days and pizza. Working from home was okay, some of the development team checked in to make sure I wasn't working outside of hours and taking care of my mental health. My routine was mainly work in the morning, have lunch in South Park, work in the afternoon and then relax in the evening. I quite liked finding new recipes to cook and exploring the local area.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed the experience. I have a much clearer idea of how broad quality assurance can be, as well as how important it is. I feel my projects were really interesting, they allowed me to look at all aspects of the company, whilst giving the flexibility to focus on the areas that interested me. I had the opportunity to see behind the scenes of how software development teams worked, as well as how deployments and feature drops can be handled. I feel I gained a lot from the experience. I'm very confident with automated testing, as well as the considerations needed when looking into end-to-end testing.

I have more general knowledge about the day-to-day work of a QA developer, as well as the importance of the operations side of development. I feel it's definitely changed my career ambitions. Originally, I was a bit unsure on what QA work is but now it's definitely something I could see myself doing in the future. It's also made me a bit curious about the operations side of development and how that's managed, so I feel it's also broadened my career ambitions too.



## MPhys Physics, Third Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

I took the lead on scoping an app feature upgrade, within the Agile framework, including competitor benchmarking, user interviews, defining product requirements and user stories, designing an interactive prototype in Figma and breaking down the work packages to be assigned to developers in future sprints. I communicated with developers, users, business leads, designers and other product owners. I also researched and reworked the standard Product Requirement Document format used at the company to improve productivity and communication between teams at FIDO. I had formal weekly 1-1 meetings with my supervisor and another person who helped me throughout the internship to discuss how I was doing and any problems/barriers I had encountered that week. I also could ask anyone questions whenever I wanted throughout the week.

### Daily Life

I worked from home 2 days a week and from the office 3 days a week. When working from home, I would check my emails/to do list at 9am followed by a meeting at 9:30am to discuss with each of the teams how their work for that sprint is going. I then got on with my to do list and had meetings etc. I made sure to take a proper lunch break and go for a walk in



the evening to keep active. In terms of working in person, there were 4 interns and 3 permanent members of staff who started on the same day, so we had a well organised induction day with pizza for lunch with others in the office which was welcoming. I drove to work each day. I was also there for a tech dev day which involved team building activities which

was a great way to get to know the others. I took a packed lunch with me most days. I enjoyed my free weekends and saw university/school friends. I used 2 days of annual leave to have a long weekend away.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Positive, it has confirmed my career ambitions to work in product ownership in sustainable tech.

**Qiuyi Luo, Hertford College, MComSciPhil Computer Science and Philosophy, First Year Undergraduate, hybrid**

## **Work Projects**

During my internship at Fido Tech, I worked on a project aimed at improving the reliability of leakage detection in industrial systems through advanced audio signal analysis. The challenge was to design a method capable of extracting consistent and meaningful patterns from noisy real-world audio data. My main tasks included developing an automated, unsupervised pipeline that combined Short-Time Fourier Transform preprocessing with DBSCAN clustering to detect frequency peaks indicative of leakage. I optimized clustering and matching hyperparameters using Bayesian search with Optuna, balancing precision and recall through F-beta metrics to ensure robust detection in variable noise conditions. I also engineered features for classification from the detected peaks and benchmarked multiple machine learning models, using SHAP values to interpret results and enhance transparency. I received consistent and generous support from the host organisation. Each day began with a morning check-in with the Data and ML team, and I had regular catch-up meetings with my mentor several times a week.

When working in the office, I could always turn to Zak, the team leader sitting beside me, for immediate guidance, while during remote work my mentor Atul was highly responsive, often replying within minutes and arranging Teams calls whenever I was stuck. Onboarding was made smooth with detailed documentation, a clear project plan, and hands-on help setting up

development environments. I was also provided practical support such as free taxi transport between Bicester station and the office, which made the logistics seamless and allowed me to focus fully on the project.

## Daily Life

On office days, I would leave home around 8am to walk to the station and catch the 8:20 train to Bicester. I usually picked up breakfast and lunch at M&S before meeting my fellow intern and



two other FIDO employees to share a taxi to the office. We normally arrived just before 9am, giving me time to settle in and prepare for the daily team meeting from 9:15 to 9:30. After lunch—often followed by a short walk outside—I continued with my project or had catch-up sessions with my mentor. I typically

left the office at 5pm to take the train back to Oxford, arriving before 6pm, and often cooked dinner with my flatmate.

The train rides back were a highlight, as I usually travelled with another intern and a full-time employee from Oxford, and our conversations were both fun and a great way to learn more about the company. I socialised mainly with the other interns, who were in a variety of roles (QA, backend, product owner), which made for a supportive and diverse group experience. I worked in the office two to three days per week, and on remote days I kept a similar schedule, starting at 9am to join the daily meeting. The structure of our sprint cycles—with fortnightly sprint planning, demos, and retrospectives—kept everything very organised and collaborative. This balance of structured teamwork and independent project work gave me both consistency and freedom, and I found it easy to stay engaged and productive.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I thoroughly enjoyed this internship—it was by far the best I have experienced. I was given the freedom to explore different machine learning algorithms and frameworks for evaluation and optimisation, while also receiving excellent support from my mentor and the wider team. Beyond technical guidance, my mentor took the initiative to introduce me to colleagues across the company and made me feel welcomed and included, inviting me to join meetings and discussions. This combination of independence and support created an environment where I could grow quickly and feel part of the team.

I gained significant expertise in clustering algorithms, audio data processing, and best practices for structuring machine learning projects, including using Git effectively, designing deployable models, and writing structured unit tests. More importantly, the experience strongly reinforced my ambition to pursue machine learning as both an area of academic focus and a future career path. It confirmed that I would be excited to continue working in ML in future internships and after completing my degree.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would advise future interns to plan ahead for the commute—trains between Oxford and Bicester can sometimes be delayed or even cancelled, so it's worth allowing extra time, especially on your first day. If you are aiming for the 5:20pm return train, be sure to leave the office promptly at 5pm, as occasional traffic around the station can make the connection tight. On a lighter note, remember to bring lunch as there are no places to grab lunch nearby the office. The team at FIDO are very understanding if unexpected travel issues occur, so don't worry too much if things don't go perfectly on day one.

# FUSION ARTS



Sharvi Maheshwari, Kellogg College, DPhil Theology and Religion, Second Year Postgraduate, in person

## Work Projects

Over the summer, I interned with Fusion Arts Oxford, an organisation deeply committed to community engagement through creativity and culture. My main project was to develop a comprehensive database of charity organisations across the



UK, with a particular focus on mapping where their funding comes from. This initiative was designed to strengthen Fusion Arts' ability to identify potential sources of support, expand its network, and ensure greater sustainability for its community-centred work. The process involved careful research, collation, and systematisation of information to create a resource that could be readily used by the team in the future. Alongside this, I contributed to the curation of African artists for ongoing projects, an experience that sharpened my eye for diversity in artistic representation and gave me an appreciation of the organisational effort that underpins public-facing cultural work.

Currently, I am assisting the team in preparations for Fusion Arts' Annual Art Depot, a flagship programme that brings together artists, community members, and creative practitioners in Oxford. The Fusion Arts team offered remarkable support throughout my internship, providing both guidance and autonomy. I was encouraged to shape the project with initiative while also benefiting from regular feedback and mentorship. This combination of responsibility and

support made the internship an invaluable learning experience, allowing me to connect my academic interests with practical skills in research, arts administration, and cultural programming.

## **Daily Life**

My daily life at Fusion Arts was a lively mix of research, creativity, and community. I typically walked into the office in Oxford, which was itself a pleasant routine that helped me feel settled into the rhythm of work. The workspace had a welcoming atmosphere, with the team making it easy for me to integrate from the very start. Most days began with focused research on funding bodies and charity organisations, but the work was punctuated with conversations, check-ins, and the occasional deep dive into artist portfolios when I was helping with curation.

What I particularly valued was the balance between independent work and collaborative exchange. I often worked quietly on the database but then joined colleagues for discussions on projects or ideas for upcoming events. This variety kept the days engaging and gave me a real sense of contributing to the organisation's ongoing creative pulse. Overall, the combination of structured daily tasks, creative input, and a warm team environment made for a fulfilling and enjoyable summer routine.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship at Fusion Arts has left me with a deep appreciation of how creativity and community can be woven together to generate meaningful impact. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, not only because of the engaging projects I worked on, but also because of the organisation's ethos of collaboration and inclusivity. Being entrusted with substantive tasks from building a funding database to contributing to artist curation, gave me a sense of genuine responsibility and purpose. I feel I gained significantly in both practical and intellectual terms. On the practical side, I developed research and organisational skills, as well as insights into the funding landscape for arts charities in the UK.



On the intellectual side, the experience broadened my understanding of how the arts can serve as a bridge between diverse communities and voices. This dual growth, skills and perspective have been invaluable. The internship has also clarified my own career ambitions. While I have always been academically rooted, this experience confirmed that I would like to keep one foot in the world of applied cultural and community work. It has encouraged me to think about pathways where scholarship and practice can inform each other, whether through policy, arts leadership, or cultural programming. In this sense, the internship was not only formative but also affirming; it has shown me that meaningful careers often lie at the intersection of research, creativity, and community.

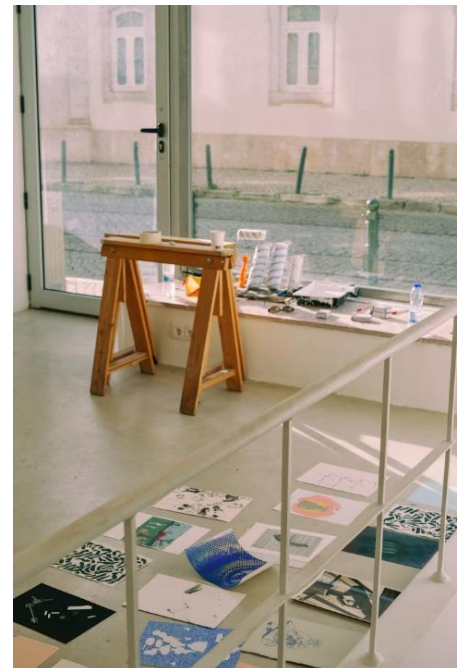
Alice Mitchell, Lady Margaret Hall, BA English Language and Literature,  
First Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

I worked as an intern at Fusion Arts which consisted of a wide variety of different jobs – the variety in the internship was one of the reasons I applied! Some of the tasks I carried out were creating marketing materials for exhibitions, compiling data to form lists for invitations to a big exhibition, as well as more practical tasks such as moving furniture and decorating in order to prepare for the exhibitions! I was supported greatly by the head of marketing as well as the artistic director; both of them explained things clearly and were very available for any questions or concerns I had about the tasks that I had to carry out!

### Daily Life

My internship consisted of both in-person and remote work. When in-person, I arrived and got settled into



whatever tasks needed to be done that day. I met other interns then and was able to socialise with them both inside and out of the workspace, which was really great. For days when I was working remotely, I clocked in and out of work by texting my boss, and either got on with any admin that needed doing or jumped onto a call with him or any other staff for discussions. I took a lunch break (as in-person) during the day.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at Fusion Arts. All the staff were incredibly warm-hearted, kind and supportive and working with them all was an absolute pleasure. I feel that I've gained invaluable experience and knowledge about the grassroots art and charity world; this space feels like a career option for me in the future! Being able to take part in such varied work with a wide range of people particularly stood out to me in my experience and is certainly something I would look for in a future workplace environment.

## **IQVIA**

Victoria Li, St. Catherine's College, MSci Experimental Psychology, Third Year Undergraduate, hybrid



## **Work Projects**

The team I was in is the EMEA Thought Leadership Team, and they work on client-facing white papers, blogs, and seminars to represent IQVIA's point of view. I had the opportunity to work on a range of topics in the healthcare and pharmaceuticals industry. I began by looking into cardiovascular metabolic pipelines, creating a database that could be easily referenced. I then spent some time on analysing trial to timeline, mapping the timeline from trial to approval to launch to reimbursement. This project strengthened my ability to find and integrate multiple sources of data. I also helped with a haematological white paper that is in the beginning phases of research.

Last but not least, I had the opportunity to work on an exciting white paper on anti-obesity medications in low- and middle-income countries. I collected data, and synthesized data into insights. These projects were all very fascinating and allowed me to understand the data bases IQVIA has and improve my skills in data analysis and critical thinking. I also had the opportunity to talk to various people within IQVIA and saw the range of different teams and functions. It was amazing to see people's different career paths and how it all led them to IQVIA.

Additionally, I really think the mentorship structure is amazing. From day one, I felt supported. There was always someone to introduce me to the team and guide me through my projects.

## Daily Life

I rented an apartment close to the office, which made my daily routine much easier. Getting to work was simple and convenient, and since the arrangement was hybrid, I usually spent three



days at the office and two days working from home. This balance gave me a nice mix of structure and flexibility. Because I had already been to London several times before, settling in felt natural and smooth. I was already familiar with the city, so I could focus more on the experience of the internship itself rather than adjusting to the environment.

The team I worked with was incredibly welcoming and supportive, which made a big difference. They were not only talented but also genuinely kind, and I enjoyed every opportunity to collaborate with them. One of my favourite parts of the week was having lunch together. Sharing meals gave us the chance to talk about both work and personal interests, and it made the days feel lighter. The most memorable moment for me was when we all went to the Proms. A colleague even travelled from Switzerland to join us, and we started the evening with dinner together before heading to the concert. It was a wonderful team bonding experience, full of

interesting conversations and laughter. I really appreciated hearing everyone's perspectives not only on healthcare but also on broader topics.

There was also another student from Oxford doing the internship at the same time. We often walked together from the office to the station after work, and it was nice to have someone to chat with during those moments. On top of that, I managed to meet some friends from Oxford who were also interning in London, which made the summer even more enjoyable. Altogether, the experience has been meaningful, both professionally and personally, and I am very grateful for the people I have met.

## **Lasting Impressions**

Overall, I really enjoyed the internship and found it to be both enriching and eye opening. It gave me the chance to develop valuable professional skills while also giving me space to reflect on career directions that I might want to pursue. On the work side, I gained practical experience with handling complex data sets, writing persuasively, and presenting findings in a way that was clear and engaging. I became comfortable using Excel on a deeper level and had the chance to work with IQVIA's internal database, which was an excellent opportunity to see how large-scale healthcare information can be organized and analysed in practice.

From a career perspective, the internship confirmed my interest in the healthcare industry. Before joining, I already had the sense that I wanted something that combined academic research with real world business insights, and this role turned out to be a perfect match. I was able to conduct desk research into healthcare topics, while also applying analytical skills to data and then presenting findings that could have practical value for healthcare companies. This blend of research, analysis, and communication felt exactly like the type of work I want to continue doing.

Another highlight was the chance to speak with many people across IQVIA. Every conversation revealed a new perspective on the different teams and functions within the company, and it was inspiring to hear about the unique career paths that brought people there. What stood out

to me most was how diverse their backgrounds and experiences were, yet how well everything connected within the organization. It made me realize that there is no single “perfect” starting point for a career. Instead, each person’s journey is shaped by both choices and unexpected opportunities. I used to feel pressure about finding the exact right path from the very beginning, but now I see that the process can take unexpected turns and still lead to fulfilling outcomes. This shift in perspective has left me feeling inspired and motivated for the future. I now approach my career with more openness and excitement, knowing that the path ahead may surprise me in ways that are ultimately rewarding.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

When applying for internships, take the chance to try something new. An internship is the perfect time to explore roles or industries you have not experienced before, and you will learn a lot along the way. During the internship, make the most of the whole experience. Focus not only on the work but also on the people you meet. Ask about their career paths, their day-to-day roles, and what they enjoy. These conversations can give you insights and inspiration for your own journey.

At the same time, connect on a personal level. Join team lunches or casual chats, as they make the experience more enjoyable and help you feel part of the group. Finally, stay open minded and curious. Every task is an opportunity to build skills and show adaptability. The more you engage, the more rewarding the internship will be.



## Emily Clark, Keble College, MBIol Biology, Third Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

I worked within the EMEA Thought Leadership team at IQVIA for a period of ten weeks over the summer. This team is responsible for producing IQVIA's opinion and position on key pharmaceutical and life sciences trends. This is generally done through writing blogs and white papers. During my internship, I worked on five core projects supervised by different team members. I enjoyed the challenge of working on multiple projects at the same time and appreciated the opportunity to investigate different areas ranging from biosimilars regulatory streamlining to long-acting parenterals. A highlight was co-authoring on a blog looking at GLP-1 use beyond obesity.

### Daily Life

The internship was hybrid, and we generally worked from the Paddington Office three days a week with the other two days working remotely. Every Monday, the London-based team members would come into the office as we had a 1.5 hour team meeting to discuss projects and upcoming meetings. I enjoyed coming into the office as it was a very sociable environment with the Thought Leadership team having lunch together every day and occasionally social events after work. We even went to the BBC Proms!

### Lasting Impressions

Not only did I gain skills and confidence in presenting, working with complex databases, Excel and more, but I also gained a much deeper understanding of the





life sciences industry as a whole. Conversations with colleagues across IQVIA, from Real World to Consulting, opened my eyes to how diverse and dynamic commercial healthcare can be. The team was incredibly welcoming, and it was inspiring to see their breadth of expertise ranging from global public health to therapeutic innovation and more. I am excited to take what I have learnt over the last ten weeks and apply to my future career.

## IUVANTIUM

### DPhil in Clinical Neurosciences, Third Year Postgraduate, hybrid

#### Work Projects

During my internship with iuvantium I worked on a project at the intersection of immunology and machine learning. The focus was to build interpretable models that could predict cytokine responses from the physicochemical properties of metal-based compounds. My main tasks involved cleaning and preprocessing the dataset, testing different regression approaches, and running leave-one-out cross-validation to evaluate performance. I also explored ways to control for donor effects and manage collinearity, which turned out to be key for producing reliable predictions.

Beyond the modelling, I created figures and summaries that helped communicate results to both technical and non-technical audiences. The support from iuvantium was excellent throughout. I had regular check-ins with my supervisor, who encouraged me to take initiative and explore different directions, while also giving constructive feedback to keep the project on track. I was also given the freedom to develop my own ideas, which made the experience feel more like genuine research than a narrow internship project.

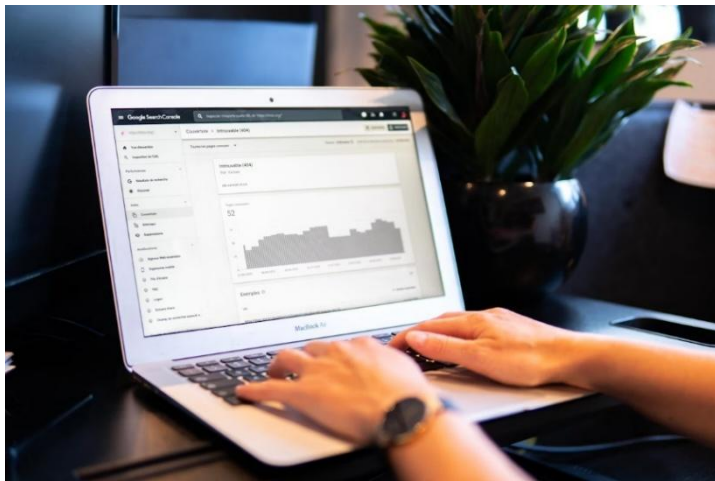
#### Daily Life

This was mostly a remote internship, although I occasionally worked from the startup's office, which gave me the chance to meet colleagues in person and see how the team operated day to

day. At home I kept a structured routine: I would usually start in the morning by running analyses that took longer to compute, then spend the rest of the day interpreting results, updating scripts, or preparing figures. We had regular meetings online, which helped me stay connected with the team and gave me a sense of progress even when working independently. The flexibility of the internship also meant I could balance my time well, and I often used this to fit in a gym session during the day, which helped break things up and made working from home feel more sustainable.

## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed the internship. It gave me the chance to apply methods I had been developing during my PhD to a completely different area of research. The project showed me how



transferable skills in machine learning and data analysis can be, and I found it rewarding to see that my work could have potential impact beyond academia. I also gained confidence in leading an analysis from start to finish, including the communication of results. The experience has confirmed that I want to continue working at the

interface of data science and real-world applications, whether in research or industry. More broadly, I valued the collaborative environment at iuvantium, where ideas were taken seriously and interns were trusted to contribute.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Take initiative and don't be afraid to suggest ideas. The team is very open to discussion, so if you think of a new angle or method, it's worth bringing up. At the same time, make sure you

keep clear notes of your analyses, as the work can evolve quickly and you'll want to track what you've tried.

## MUNCASTER CASTLE

Hongyi Zheng, St. Edmund Hall, MEng Engineering  
Science, Second Year Undergraduate, in person



### Work Projects

I was tasked with looking into the effects that the conditions at Muncaster Castle had on collections care, how the recent implementation of the heat pump changed it, and how to better conserve these important items. I firstly researched the suitable temperature and humidity conditions for conservation of various items, as well as the importance of the stability of such conditions. The past Curator of the Castle had helped set up dataloggers around the Castle. Using that data, I found that the thermal mass of the castle, together with the heat pump, helped temperature remain mostly stable, and within suitable conservation ranges.

However, the Castle was leaky, hence internal relative humidity tended to fluctuate much more, mostly tracking external absolute humidity, and far exceeded suitable ranges along with being very unstable, causing damage to collections. The wind also played a smaller role in which rooms saw the greatest changes, and some limitations to this approach were analysed. As a result, the heat pump was performing its job well, but unable to control humidity too. I then conducted some experiments with dehumidifiers placed in various rooms, observing that they helped relative humidity lower and more stable, though this effect was limited without many dehumidifiers.

The staff members running the Castle were also very supportive, helping seek approved areas for my experiments, and explaining them to visitors. With these promising results, I looked into possible improvements to scale up into possible eventual full approach. I then calculated the

cost of such an approach, which was quite high, as well as plausible alternatives. Moving back to the heat pump, using data provided by the General Manager of the Castle and working with him, I analysed the heat pump, comparing it to the prior gas boiler, looking at effectiveness and the recent solar power input, concluding that the heat pump brought about significant monetary benefits. I lastly evaluated potential efficiency improvements to the heat pump.

## Daily Life

The people at the Castle helped to create an amazing experience overall. I stayed in a shared house with several other staff members at the Castle. They were all super friendly whenever I met them, and we shared meals, played board games and had great conversations together. They made me feel very welcome, helping me out and kindly tolerating my use of the kitchen at night as the Wi-Fi in my room was extremely poor. It was a 5-10min walk to work each day, though the slope was steep and helped me get my cardio in. During work hours, I had insightful chats with the staff at the Castle, and during my meals, the kitchen staff were also very fun to talk to. The Castle was not just a tourist destination; it was also a gathering place for residents in the area.



I thoroughly enjoyed myself, marvelling at the spectacular bird show and trying my hand at the awesome medieval weapons hall. Additionally, in the evening, there were games nights, open mic nights and even local bands coming around to play at the cafe-turned-social-spot. These kept many evenings lively and helped me meet many new people. Otherwise, I played board games or talked. And of course, I spent some nights just on my phone.

Weekends were equally enjoyable. The Castle's location within the Lake District meant that I got to see many amazing sights, ranging from the grand Wasdale lake to the imposing Scafell

Pike, to the cute Ratty train. It is difficult to visit all these cool places otherwise, and though I missed the chance to climb Scafell Pike due to persistent inclement weather, I nevertheless thoroughly enjoyed all the scenic spots I visited, travelling almost like a local.

## **Lasting Impressions**

On the internship aspect, I learnt the important skill of taking on a project mostly by myself and seeing it through to completion, and although the work I ended up doing was slightly different from what I expected to do when I first signed up for it, I have no regrets. I have learnt a lot more about analysing and comparing data, particularly in the area of conservation, in a dynamic environment such as a castle.

I also tried implementing real-life experiments in the castle. I learnt that definitive conclusions are far more difficult without a controlled environment, but that I had to make the most of what I have, and this applied to several aspects of my internship. This confirmed my career ambitions in tech and engineering in the area of sustainability, as I enjoyed working with tech and data to influence decisions on heat pump operation, and further technology, to run a castle more efficiently, while simultaneously better conserving the collections. I would be very interested in seeking more opportunities in such areas, potentially looking more closely at data, using more programming skills to perform deeper analyses, and further experimenting with technology to create positive sustainability outcomes.

Overall, this internship was an unconventional one, but that definitely gave it its charm and made it a very rewarding experience. At the end of the day, I am a city person, but this experience managed to correct some of my prior misconceptions regarding living in the countryside and helped me discover all the fun activities that could be enjoyed within a tight-knit community. It is a place that I would like to return, to help out more in the future.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Go into internships with an open mind, be prepared for unexpected experiences, and always be ready to meet people and learn. That way, you can learn a lot more, make great connections, and create lasting impact.

## MSt Literature and Arts, Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

I was asked to prepare a timeline of the history and development of the gardens at Muncaster Castle. This meant reviewing the (incomplete and only partially organised) archives at the



Castle, and also reviewing the documents archived at the local county archives. The Castle does not currently have a curator or archivist in post, so I had to start the project from scratch with minimal guidance. In all, I considered about 6000 items, identified those to review, reviewed and recorded them, before beginning to draft a report. This required 6 days off-site at the archives in a different town, I could only do this because my partner drove me, public transport being inadequate. I also spent a day surveying the landscape. I asked for guidance on parameters, timescales etc, but these were not provided in a clear or timely manner, so I had to improvise.

### Daily Life

I worked both on and off site for the three-week period. The Castle staff were welcoming and helpful. Outside of office hours I worked on the project and spent time in the Lake District with my family.



## **Lasting Impressions**

I did enjoy the experience, the location was wonderful, and it was a unique opportunity. It was presented as a three-week project, however, I considered it to be significantly more than that.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

Insist upon agreed instructions that are smart, measurable, realistic etc, before starting the project.

## **OXED & ASSESSMENT**

Lara Teixeira da Silva Cesar Machado, St. Hugh's College, BA English Language and Literature, Second Year Undergraduate, remote

### **Work Projects**

OxEd and Assessment was really supportive throughout the internship. We were constantly in touch via Slack with the marketing team and had at least one catch-up meeting with our supervisor every week. In addition to this, our supervisor gave us an entire week for induction where we completed the teacher training courses ourselves and met with multiple departments to soak up as much information as possible about OxEd's products. I completed a range of tasks throughout my internship. I was mostly working on videos. I edited and subtitled two sets of video testimonials filmed by OxEd with a range of teachers, speech language professionals and other school staff in both a US and UK school. I was also given raw footage from webinars which I edited down into short snippet videos for Instagram with music and subtitles.

Additionally, the other intern and I worked on original animated videos explaining research terminology. The other intern drafted the script and then I made it into a video. I also filmed my own footage through Zoom, interviewing one of OxEd's employees and then editing and

subtitling the video into multiple separate files. Finally, I did some work with graphics, creating two sets of slides for Instagram on the impact of poor oral language skills on children. All of these projects involved a constant back and forth and went through many versions, as my supervisor and other relevant team members provided feedback on both style and content.

## Daily Life

Working from home was hard on my eyesight because I was constantly on my computer completing tasks. When I had tasks that presented an opportunity to move away from the computer, such as story-boarding a video, I took the chance to work with pen and paper away from the screen. I ensured I always took a



proper hour long break to have lunch away from my desk. Once the workday was over, I always went on a 20-30-minute walk to clear my head. I also found that staying hydrated was very important in avoiding headaches.

## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed my internship. My supervisor was extremely welcoming and helpful and set up meetings between myself and multiple people within the company all working in different sections (research, product development, IT, etc). I was able to ask them questions about their roles and therefore also gain an insight into areas beyond marketing, which I found really interesting. I learned a lot about marketing, particularly about the ways in which assets can be repurposed. It was also really insightful to hear from my supervisor how they planned their marketing strategy and what they took into consideration when thinking about their target audience. Additionally, I found it helpful to work with a company that had such well-defined branding because it taught me how to create visually consistent content.

## Luisa Fernandes Blacker Espozel, Jesus College, BA History, Second Year Undergraduate, remote

### Work Projects

This summer, I worked as a content marketing intern for OxEd & Assessment. My main project was to simplify academic articles with the goal of making the research the company undertakes more readily accessible to a general audience of teachers and education professionals. I also worked through a big backlog of unpublished news. The company had received several awards but rarely used these achievements for marketing, with only a few of them being present on their website. At the end of the internship, I ended up writing more than 20 articles (in under a month and a half!), which was great for exploring different types of marketing copy (social media, newsletters, website articles, etc.) and making me a more adaptable writer.

I had a lot of support from OxEd's Marketing team, particularly from Hazel (who was always extremely helpful). She gave me in-depth feedback for every article and set up meetings between myself and the researchers so I could have a better sense of the main takeaways of the academic papers I was reading. As a historian, this was a very unique experience of exploring an academic practice (scientific/data-driven) and different from the one I am used to as a humanities student.

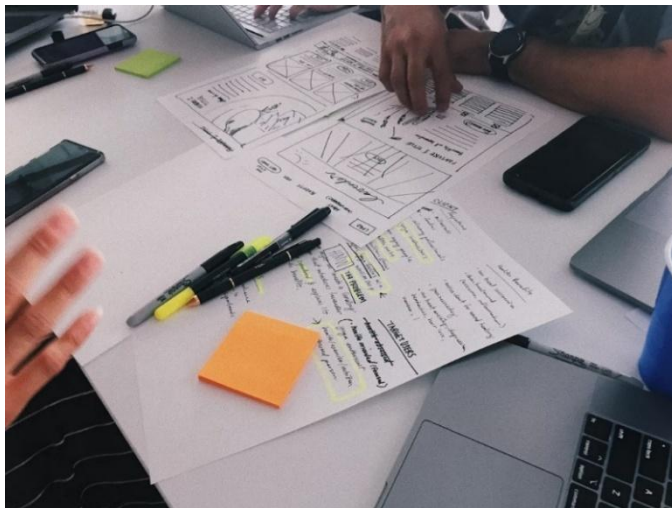
### Daily Life

The opportunity of doing a remote internship was really great for me as an international student, allowing me to see my family and friends back in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil while not losing sight of the UK job market and future prospects in England. It was also great to save up on summer accommodation in the UK by staying with my parents! The one difficult aspect of remote working was the difference in time zones. Being 4 hours behind the UK meant that I had to wake up at 5 in the morning for meetings sometimes, but I knew about this before signing up and ended up getting used to it in the end.

After these early meetings, I incorporated any feedback I received, ate breakfast, and started the day's work. This slightly odd timeframe also meant I finished everything quite early in the day: I used this extra time to get ahead on my degree work, making my way through some long reading lists to prepare myself for Michaelmas and for third year as a whole. During my free time, I caught up with friends from home, regularized my gym schedule (which I had been heavily neglecting throughout last Trinity), and watched a bunch of movies!

## Lasting Impressions

I had a great experience at OxEd and would really recommend it to next years' interns! Hazel is a really lovely boss, who is not only very clear with her instructions and goals but more



importantly very keen on seeing the interns learn and grow. The meetings with employees outside the Marketing team helped open my eyes to different career possibilities outside the obvious, which has helped me in broadening my list of possible careers after I graduate.

I gained a lot from the internship as the experience introduced me to marketing

techniques that will be useful for a future career but will also help me present information in a more compelling way in many different situations, from a tutorial essay, all the way to an Instagram society post. The experience also made me a better writer as it forced me to switch between tones and registers depending on the audience I was targeting. It also helped me confirm I would love to pursue a writing-heavy career, as I really loved making my way through the OxEd backlog of news and creating original pieces around them. Overall, I had an excellent time as a summer intern!

# OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Elena Sofia Massacesi, St. Antony's College, MPhil in Politics: European Politics and Society, First Year Postgraduate, hybrid

## Work Projects

My primary project was writing this year's Monitoring Report for the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. This involved providing key insights on the progress (or lack thereof) for each of the 52 policies, of which usually had three sub-policies, totalling to over 200 individual key aims. To fill out each policy I had to contact the relevant team, send them an excel sheet I had developed to get the information, and then often schedule a call to review it with them. After the first round of data collection, I met with my manager to decide on how to structure the report. I then scheduled review meetings with each team to ask for further detail as well as ensure I had not misquoted them. The report is to be published in October and to be presented to the Heads of Service.

My managers and the rest of the team were very helpful in directing me to who to contact as well as putting pressure on colleagues who were not responding. I also provided ad-hoc assistance to the Place Shaping team, attending their meetings, proofreading strategy reports, making maps, and writing some policy recommendations. I also had the opportunity to join the site visit to Abingdon and see the transport planners in action, scoping out the transport needs and proposing solutions.

## Daily Life

The office is very centrally located, so I would walk from my accommodation and get working straight away. I sometimes grabbed lunch with whoever was in the office that day. I enjoyed playing rounders with the colleagues when the weather allowed after work. A highlight was

when I organised a team lunch at my college – we walked there from the office since it is only 20 minutes away, grabbed lunch in the hall and I gave them a brief tour.

## Lasting Impressions

Starting the internship so late really messed up my initial momentum. The latter half was significantly better, as I started being able to actually liaise with people and make progress in my project. Through the very nature of the project, I feel I have gained a lot of insights into how the public sector works, which was exactly what I wanted



from this internship. I also learned a lot about different sectors I had never really considered in public policy, from tree planting to installing broadband, which allowed me to broaden my horizons beyond transport (what I had signed up for).

This experience has confirmed my ambition to start in either the private sector or the EU, as I felt that the work culture of the public sector was not as stimulating as I would have liked in an early career. To be clear, my work was interesting, but the overall vibe of the organisation was slower and reliant on permission from senior management than I would see myself in. I am very grateful that I had the opportunity to join the OCC, especially since public sector experiences are often at least six months long.

## MSci Experimental Psychology, Second Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

Over the past weeks I have contributed to two key projects within the Travels Plans and school engagement team. I have been supporting the update of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy



Action Plan (2025–26). This has involved reviewing existing actions from the 2024–25 plan, meeting with individual action leads to consult possible changes to wording, targets, and timeframes. My role has been to ensure the revised plan reflects both the lessons learned from last year and the practical realities of delivery for the coming cycle. I also carried out impact reporting on Phase 1 of the School Streets initiative in four schools in Oxfordshire, which restricts car use outside school gates at pick-up and drop-off times. I analysed both quantitative data (e.g. modal shift, traffic counts, and air quality measures) and qualitative feedback (from parents and school staff). I then synthesised these findings into a report highlighting successes, challenges, and recommendations for future phases.

## **Daily Life**

My internship has been a mix of remote and in-office work. Most of the team is in the office on Mondays, so I always attend on those days and usually add one or two more days during the week, often Wednesdays and Thursdays. On office days, we typically begin with a group check in session in the morning and then go on to complete our tasks for the day. For me, this has often involved reading reports, carrying out background research, and synthesising information relevant to the projects I am supporting. My team was particularly helpful and offered that I could call them anytime if I have questions. The office environment has been particularly valuable for both learning and social connection.

Lunchtimes provide informal opportunities to hear about colleagues' projects, which has been a great way to understand the range of work happening across the team. On Thursdays, one colleague kindly organises rounders after work, which is followed by a trip to the pub. These activities have helped build a sense of community and make the internship more enjoyable. There are also five other students completing the internship at the same time and we sometimes would grab meals together. At the same time, the hybrid structure provides welcome flexibility, especially given some of the challenges on weather conditions in Oxford. Overall, I find going into the office energising, and it has complemented the independence of remote work well.

## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed my internship. It gave me the chance to work on projects that were both meaningful and timely, and I gained real insight into the transport sector and the way local government approaches sustainable travel. The period I was around also saw heated discussions around implementing congestion charges – something I had not known was under development previously. These experiences showed me how complex but also impactful local transport planning can be. I also developed skills in impact reporting, particularly through analysing both quantitative and qualitative data from the School Streets initiative.

This was a fascinating project, and it confirmed for me how rewarding it can be to translate evidence into practical recommendations for decision-makers. In terms of career direction, the



internship has broadened my perspective. I would not have previously considered working in local government, but now I can see it as a sector where interesting and important work happens daily. At the same time, the exposure to evaluation and strategy work has opened even more possibilities, leaving me less

certain about a single career path but excited by the range of opportunities ahead.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Go in with an open mind and try to arrange chats with lots of people within the team. Internships are for exploration, to figure out what you enjoy the most, which might not necessarily be the current position.

# PRAGMATIX ADVISORY

## BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Final Year

### Undergraduate, remote



### Work Projects

I completed two research projects, in collaboration with another intern from Oxford University. One was more politics focussed, looking at the current government's approach to the UK



Overseas Territories and specifically their financial sectors. This consisted of a lot of news and Hansard reading, identifying important quotes, events and relevant advisors. We worked together on an article summarising the developments.

The other project was a little more economics focussed, looking at the impact of a town's population on the services/amenities it has (supermarkets, restaurants etc.). This involved searching for services data (very timely as most used MSOA rather than the 'Built Up Areas' we were trying to compare) and creating graphs to try and identify if there were relationships present. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to incorporate control variables into the analysis or run regressions, but hopefully when I return to the company soon, I will be able to work with the data set again.

### Daily Life

It was a 9-5 with a virtual office, so after getting ready in the morning I would join the group Microsoft Teams call at 9am. Every day we would have a meeting first thing where every member of the team would discuss their plans for the day. At least once a week the interns

would receive an hour-long training session on things like Microsoft Excel, the company's style guide, and report writing. Most days I would have catch up meetings with the other intern that I was working with so that we were up to date on where each other was at with our projects. This also was a nice opportunity to chat to someone as the Teams office was otherwise pretty quiet. When not in a meeting or training I would crack on with my research. I spent my lunch breaks at home with my Mum, and we would watch TV together which became a nice routine. We would go for walks at the end of the working day as well to stay active.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed the internship and found the work I was doing very interesting. The team were great and I'm looking forward to rejoining them. I didn't get to work on any proper client jobs during the internship so I didn't gain any of the skills most relevant to that, but I know I will get those soon.

## **PURPOSEFY**

[BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics, First Year Undergraduate, remote](#)

## **Work Projects**

Working in a lean start-up team meant I had exposure to a broad suite of responsibilities (from C-suite strategy, GTM, product, project management, to communications) and the opportunity to take ownership of impactful initiatives. I designed and implemented a cross-functional portfolio tracking system, which improved visibility across product development and client-facing functions and enabled senior stakeholders to monitor progress with greater accuracy. In parallel, I streamlined end-to-end project planning processes for a Fortune 50 client, creating clear alignment between internal teams and external deliverables.

Another significant initiative I led was the development of a go-to-market database of over 1,000 records, which I built and managed using a combination of Excel, Python, and AI/LLM tools. This system optimised outreach, strengthened partnerships, and supported more targeted client engagement strategies. My work in this area required not only technical capability but also close collaboration with C-suite executives, as I partnered with them on strategic growth initiatives that informed both immediate decision-making and longer-term planning.

## Daily Life

Working remotely across time zones gave me flexibility to structure my day around key deliverables while maintaining close alignment with the team. I typically began by reviewing priorities, setting out my tasks for the day, and making progress on independent work during the quiet hours before meetings began. This often involved building and refining tools, conducting analysis, or preparing materials to be shared with the wider group.

Most evenings to late nights were dedicated to virtual meetings, averaging three to four hours. These sessions included syncs with project teams, discussions with C-suite stakeholders, and check-ins to track progress on initiatives. The meetings were highly collaborative, and I often



presented updates on systems I had developed or contributed insights from the data I was managing. The live discussions provided opportunities to exchange ideas, align on strategy, and ensure initiatives stayed on track.

Outside of meetings, I valued the autonomy to manage my own pace of work. I could focus deeply on technical tasks, such as updating the go-to-market database or improving project

planning workflows, before integrating feedback from stakeholders. The remote structure fostered both independence and collaboration, teaching me how to balance ownership of deliverables with responsiveness to team needs.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship left a very positive and lasting impression on me. From the outset, I was drawn to the problem-solving nature of the work, and the experience confirmed how much I enjoy tackling complex questions such as “How can we acquire more clients?”, “How do we scale effectively?”, or “How can we deliver within existing constraints?” These strategic challenges required creativity, structured thinking, and collaboration across functions, which I found both stimulating and rewarding.

One aspect I especially appreciated was being treated as a true member of the team rather than “just an intern.” My perspectives were not only heard but also implemented in shaping the team's go-to-market strategy, which gave me a real sense of ownership and impact. The lean structure of the team meant that I



had the opportunity to gain broad exposure, from operations, to communications, to product development.

This breadth gave me a holistic view of how different functions interconnect but also clarified where my interests lie. Overall, the experience confirmed my ambition to pursue a career that allows me to focus on problem-solving in a strategic capacity. It reinforced my interest in roles where I can contribute to growth, innovation, and high-level decision-making.



# STOCKHOLM ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE, OXFORD CENTRE (SEI)



## BA History and Modern Languages (French), Final Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

I worked on the website update of AGORA Community Hub to improve usability, uploaded



content (summaries of research and policy documents related to climate adaptation involving citizen engagement), reviewed existing content, analysed interviews about usability of the hub, and edited the website (e.g. creating a video of how to use website). I also worked on writing content (101 article on Locally

Led Adaptation that would be published on the WeAdapt platform) and a presentation on the internship to the entire office.

### Daily Life

I would spend 2 days in the office and 3 days working from home, most time was spent uploading content and working on tasks, but I would also have regular meetings (between 3-6 a week). There would also be weekly office-wide meetings and weekly AGORA team meetings. I was given a clear work plan at the beginning and had very clear communication with my supervisors beforehand. When in the office, I had lunch with colleagues and other interns (there were 2 other interns from Oxford).

## Lasting Impressions

It was a fantastic opportunity that I would really recommend for anyone interested in policy work, think tanks or sustainability. The work was interesting, varied and rewarding, and the supervision was excellent with lots of very clear communication, so I felt I always knew what I should be doing. They were also responsive to what I wanted to do and get out of the internship, letting me choose or prioritise tasks. The office environment was very welcoming.

[Yanjing Lu, Kellogg College, MSc in Sociology, Final Year Postgraduate, hybrid](#)

## Work Projects

My internship was with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Oxford, where I worked on their flagship UK project, the Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) Hub. The MACC Hub is a major digital knowledge platform designed to bridge the critical gap between complex, academic climate science research and the practical needs of UK-based policymakers, public sector organisations, and businesses. The project's goal is to create a central, accessible, and user-friendly resource that translates dense scientific findings into actionable insights for real-world decision-making. As the Knowledge Management Intern, my role was to support the development and population of this platform with clear, engaging, and well-structured content. My responsibilities were varied and focused on making the MACC Hub a valuable and effective resource. My main tasks and achievements include the following:

1. **Content Synthesis and Creation:** My primary task was to synthesize dense scientific reports on climate adaptation into accessible content. My achievement was authoring several summary articles, thematic web pages, and a comprehensive FAQ section, successfully making complex topics understandable for a non-specialist audience.
2. **Data and Content Structuring:** I was responsible for organising information within the platform's content management system. My achievement was developing a logical content

hierarchy and tagging system, which significantly improved the user's ability to navigate the site and find relevant information quickly.

3. Collaboration and Strategic Support: I collaborated closely with senior research fellows to ensure all content was scientifically accurate and aligned with the project's strategic goals. My achievement was preparing briefing notes and content summaries that were used by the team in stakeholder meetings, helping to maintain a consistent project message.
4. Process Improvement Initiative: As a personal initiative, I identified the need for a standardized content submission process. My achievement was creating a "Content Contributor's Guide," a step-by-step document for future team members and external experts on how to format and upload their research. This guide will ensure the long-term consistency and quality of the platform's content.

The support I received from SEI Oxford was exceptional and played a crucial role in my professional development. My line manager was incredibly supportive, providing clear guidance, regular and constructive feedback, and entrusting me with significant responsibility from day one. The wider team, including senior



research fellows, fostered a highly collaborative and welcoming environment. I was included in all relevant team meetings, my opinions were consistently valued, and I was always encouraged to ask questions and take initiative on projects. Beyond my direct tasks, SEI provided opportunities to attend internal seminars and learn about the institute's broader global work, which greatly enriched my understanding of the climate and environment sector. Overall, the combination of structured mentorship and the autonomy I was given made this an incredibly valuable and positive learning experience.

## Daily Life

My daily routine began with a pleasant cycle to the office at the Oxford Eco Centre in Osney Mead, which was a great way to start the day. A typical day at SEI involved a mix of focused, independent work—such as synthesising research and creating content for the MACC Hub—and collaborative meetings with senior researchers to discuss strategy. Lunches were often a social occasion spent with my colleagues and fellow interns, which really helped build a strong sense of team camaraderie.

## Lasting Impressions

My internship at SEI Oxford left me with a profound and lasting impression of the power of a mission-driven, collaborative, and intellectually rigorous work environment. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, not only because the work was stimulating, but because I was part of a team genuinely dedicated to tackling critical global challenges. The supportive culture and the meaningful nature of the MACC Hub project made every day feel impactful. I feel I have gained an immense amount from this internship, both professionally and personally.

On a practical level, I developed key skills in knowledge management, content strategy, and the art of translating complex scientific research into clear, accessible formats for non-expert audiences. I also honed my professional communication and project management skills by collaborating daily with senior research fellows. Most importantly, I gained a deep, practical understanding of the climate adaptation landscape in the UK, moving beyond academic theory into real-world application.

This experience has been pivotal in confirming my career ambitions. Having previously interned in the finance sector, my time at SEI has solidified my desire to build a career where I can apply my analytical and communication skills to a mission with a clear social benefit. The process of taking complex academic knowledge and making it accessible for a diverse audience is a skill set I am passionate about. This internship has illuminated a clear path for how I can pursue this passion in a career, for example in international education, which is fundamentally about

knowledge transfer and building bridges of understanding. It has confirmed that this is the direction I want to take.

## **SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Alice Watkinson, Magdalen College, MSt English (650-1550), Final Year  
Postgraduate, hybrid

### **Work Projects**

I assisted the Arts Development Officer to develop the cultural sectors of the two districts. I assisted with events, grant applications, community programming and research. I met lots of



sector partners and gained insight into both the field of local government and public arts and culture. I produced programming proposals, wrote and evaluated grant applications, and evaluated events and services.

I received lots of support from my line manager who has committed to

supporting my professional development after the end of my internship. I also improved my professional communication and networking skills, both in email and in person. My biggest achievement was creating a network of researchers for Cornerstone Arts Centre, so that they can expand their programming to include cultural talks and lectures for the community in Didcot. I took initiative and reached out to possible partners and chaired meetings to facilitate these connections.

## Daily Life

My internship was primarily remote, however my manager represents the team at lots of external meetings and events, so I often accompanied her. These visits broke up the routine of working at home. I had an in-person induction at the office which was lovely; I got to meet the team and those in different departments, building connections for future projects. To wind down after a day of remote working I would go on walks. I also would work from a cafe sometimes in the afternoon to get out of the house, which was very helpful for my productivity and concentration when working on longer projects.

## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed my time at South and Vale. The team were lovely and valued my input – no running around and getting coffees! I felt like a member of the team. I feel much more confident asserting myself in a professional setting, and the varied nature of my internship meant I gained experience in a variety of different skills and settings, which is great for future job applications. I am proud of the work I have done, and I am grateful to my line manager for her support.

## SYNERGY GLOBAL CONSULTING

DPhil in International Development, Fourth Year  
Postgraduate, hybrid



## Work Projects

Synergy Global Consulting provides human rights guidance and conducts human rights impact assessments to a range of different clients, but primarily in the mining sector. Shortly before my internship began, Synergy gained a new client. I was tasked with producing a research report on this client, the aim of which was to identify key human rights risks in relation to the client's



operations in a number of different countries. This would in turn inform the guidance Synergy would provide at a later date. At the end of my internship, I submitted this report and presented it to the Synergy team. In addition to writing this report I also sat in on meetings and assisted with producing slide decks for other client projects. Synergy was excellent in providing support. I had meetings with my line manager every week, and my project supervisor was always available to answer questions and provide advice.

## Daily Life

I managed working from home in the same way I managed doing my DPhil, working from 9.00am-17.30pm, taking a lunch break at 13.00pm. Because of the timings of the internship, I was able to maintain my typical routine which includes doing exercise in the mornings before work and relaxing in the evenings (with friends etc.).

## Lasting Impressions

Synergy is a great place to do an internship. The team is incredibly helpful and supportive and do really interesting work that requires high level analytical thinking. The company culture is very friendly and not hierarchical which I enjoyed because it made me feel comfortable asking questions and getting



the support I needed. Sitting in on meetings and producing the research report gave me concrete insight into the world of development consulting, which helped me to solidify that this is the field of work I would like to enter when I finish my studies.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

I would read up about the mining sector and human rights regulatory frameworks.

# TNG TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING UK

Dylan Heydon-Matterface, Somerville College,  
MMathCompSci Mathematics and Computer Science,  
Second Year Undergraduate, in person



## Work Projects

In my internship, I am working as a Junior Consultant at TNG Technology Consulting. Specifically, I am working on a company-internal project relating to AI Code Migration – the team I am a part of are developing a tool to modernise legacy Java code. Right from the beginning, I was made to feel like an integral member of the team. I'm involved in the same tasks that the rest of my team are doing, which feels very rewarding. In my mind, interns have a reputation for being given the work that "no one else wants to do", just because they are interns and won't complain about it.

In my position, however, this couldn't be further from the truth. Since my position is almost identical to that which I want to pursue in my future career, I find the work fun and engaging, to the extent where I am slightly disappointed when I leave at the end of the day. I regularly receive positive feedback from the other members of the team who genuinely seem happy to have me working alongside them and are impressed at the quality of work which I produce. TNG themselves have been very supportive in allowing me to get settled into my position: I received valuable training when I started, and I have had meetings with various colleagues to assess how well I am doing in my position and whether there is anything they can do to help me.

## Daily Life

I generally work from around 8:15am to 5pm each weekday. I was unfortunately unable to secure accommodation through my college, so I commute by bike into the office in Jericho

every day (around 20 minutes each way). I quite enjoy the commute, and I have recognised that the extra exercise each day has improved my general fitness. The office itself has a great environment: my colleagues are very friendly and helped me to feel welcome from the very first day there (in particular, they invited me to come down to the office for lunch with them before I even started, just so that I could get to know them early.)

Outside of work, I have been enjoying developing my cooking skills in the evenings: I hadn't really properly cooked for myself before starting this internship, and I decided that I wanted to get better at cooking. I've been really proud of the dishes that I've made so far, and I'm looking forward to trying new things in the coming weeks!

Within the office, I've enjoyed socialising with my fellow intern (who is roughly the same age as me), as well as the permanent employees, one of whom I actually did already know as he is an alumnus of my college (he was in his final year when I was in my first). I have been finding time management slightly challenging (I am still quite a slow cook!), to the extent that I have been neglecting the amount of sleep that I get some nights, so I want to try and manage that better in the coming weeks.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I have absolutely been enjoying my internship so far. The work I'm undertaking is very rewarding, and is giving me a brilliant insight into what it's really like to work in the field that I



have wanted for years to work in. I have already learned a lot: firstly, from the detailed training I received at the start of my internship, but also from the hands-on experience of working on a real project day-to-day. I am learning both practical skills (improving my coding ability) and soft skills (for example, communicating with fellow

members of the team to appropriately distribute tasks between ourselves, and coordinate joint activities).

I would say that working this internship has solidified my aspirations to work in the software engineering industry in the future, simply because of how much I have been enjoying the work so far. I have undertaken work experience in several industries in the past, some of which I really did not enjoy, so it is refreshing to be in a position that I actually do enjoy. I look forward to entering the industry and (hopefully) obtaining an enjoyable and rewarding job.

## UFONIA

### MEng Engineering Science, Final Year Undergraduate, hybrid

#### Work Projects

Working on evaluating a clinical conversational AI system. My primary project was focused on assessing errors by automatic transcription services and research into metrics/approaches to measure performance using more advanced/clinically relevant metrics rather than baselines. I also supported internal benchmarking of different systems, worked on various other pieces of work, attended events, and delivered journal club sessions to the company. Converging on a short conference research paper, I led weekly research workshops on my stream of work and attended the other intern's workshops so that we were contributing to each other's work. I fit well into the team and will be continuing on a permanent basis.



I felt very supported throughout, with regular 1:1 meetings with my line manager and head of the team, and collaboration with internal team and external research partners. Help was always given when asked for, but autonomy was provided to plan my own day and tasks – no micromanagement. I felt I was given responsibility and trust, and benefited from the rich experience of the team to guide my work. A thoroughly rewarding experience. I learned a lot in a short amount of time and very much look forward to continuing.

## Daily Life

I was in the London office with my team 1/2 days per week, otherwise I was in the Oxford office, often with the other intern and select colleagues. There were several after-work trips to the pub with colleagues, numerous lunchtime outings/meals, and lots of informal chats about new technology outside of normal work tasks. It was very much a friendly and welcoming environment with a flat hierarchy and all bosses felt approachable.

## Lasting Impressions

I learned an enormous amount – the most enjoyable and valuable work I have ever done. I gained a lot of new research, technical, and presentation skills. It has confirmed my ambition to work in technology – especially my interest in AI which has developed over the last few years. I am keen to lean into this further and very excited at the prospect of continuing to grow with the company.





# UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, BODLEIAN LIBRARIES – MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS



Lucian Shepherd, New College, MSt Modern Languages,  
Final Year Postgraduate, in person

## Work Projects

During my internship, I undertook a variety of projects, focusing in particular on the Bodleian's German language medieval collection. This included expanding existing catalogue entries with



new content and decoration information by editing directly the Bodleian's GitHub repository of data files. I also wrote a brand-new catalogue entry for two fragments that had not been studied yet. I was able to apply my palaeography knowledge to date and localise the fragments and identify the text with the help of my supervisors. It turned out that

these fragments are a significant discovery as very early witnesses of one of the most popular texts from late medieval Germany. Consequently, I am in correspondence with colleagues in Germany who have worked on this text and am drafting a short article to further disseminate my findings.

Finally, I sorted through the language categorisation of German collection items and recategorised items as appropriate so that they better reflect their content. All throughout I have had the support of my supervisor, Andrew Dunning, who gave me a warm welcome, offered opportunities to see aspects of the library that aren't public, and answered any questions I had — both technical and practical.



## Daily Life

Because of the variety of my work, my days were each quite different. On my first day, I was given a tour around the building and later was able to see how promotional videos are set up and filmed — a commonplace activity in the library to raise money for major digitisation projects. I could work flexibly between the Weston First Floor Reading Room when I needed to consult material and elsewhere when doing encoding tasks.

I might start my day, for example, by writing up yesterday's findings in the GitHub repository and end it in the Reading Room transcribing fragments, consulting books on medieval German linguistics and the history of Gothic script or even organising an alphabetical card index by hand. Every few days, I would have meetings with my supervisor to discuss how I am progressing with my work and who I might want to meet in the Bodleian for advice, such as the digitisation and conservation teams. At the heart of the internship, I was able to follow my interests and complete projects with my supervisor that would support my career ambitions.

## Lasting Impressions

This internship has been an amazing opportunity to gain insight into a career in archives and to put my skills in TEI and medieval book history into practice. I have thoroughly enjoyed the chance to spend a long period of time with the Weston Library's collections and be able to explore them thoroughly from the perspective of an archivist and curator. The variety and flexibility of the work meant that every day was new and exciting.

My project on the previously unidentified fragments has offered me a particularly significant academic stepping stone to publish a short article on them. I have also learnt a lot about dialects, scripts and how to date manuscripts through this direct practical application as well as what the realities of life in an archive looks like. It's proven to me how much archival work I can already do independently, which I hope to continue in my free time, and that a career in this sector would interest me. I am also grateful for the connections and visits to other departments in the Weston Library, broadening my understanding of the institution. Consequently, I can only

recommend this internship for others who are interested in a career working with special collections.

## MPhil in Medieval History, First Year Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

One of the main projects I worked on during my time at the Bodleian was a review of four manuscript volumes, written by sixteenth-century antiquarian John Leland. Leland is well-known today for his itineraries and journals of his travels around England and Wales, but lesser known is his extensive collection of notes and



textual extracts from different manuscripts and documents he came across during those travels. These extracts are compiled in four volumes, marked by Leland's idiosyncratic organizational logic – pages often feature several different blocks of text from entirely unrelated texts and locations, some text written vertically on the page instead of horizontally. The only modern edition of this set of volumes was written in the eighteenth century by Thomas Hearne. While this is a valuable resource, it is not easily accessible for modern researchers.

My role in this project was to go through these four volumes and make a comprehensive list of contents, based partially on the titles Hearne provided in his edition. This took quite a while to do, given the complex nature of the manuscripts. Andrew Dunning, my supervisor, taught me how to use Visual Source Code, which allowed me to create an index with clearly structured data. I learned a fair bit about the sorts of data and metadata that librarians handle on the back

end of online catalogues, which was both helpful to my task and informative for my own professional aspirations.

## **Daily Life**

I went into the Weston each day, usually calling up the Leland volumes in the morning and working through them. Leland's early modern handwriting took a while to get used to, so some of the first days were simply set aside for me to peruse the manuscripts and try to tease out some sort of internal logic for their organization. Andrew Dunning and I would meet at least once a day, both to check in on the Leland work and to chat about other smaller-scale projects, including a comprehensive bibliographical review of the Weston's collections of modern books on manuscript studies.

I was also often working alongside another intern, who was working on a project on a collection of fifteenth-century German printed books. While our projects were not particularly related, we had a great time getting to know each other. A lot of the work in the libraries could be a bit isolating – after all, you're not exactly encouraged to chat with others while in the reading rooms! But Andrew was a fabulous resource. Our daily meetings provided useful checkpoints for me to ensure I was on target, and we were able to talk through issues I was having with my project.

## **Lasting Impressions**

First and foremost, I feel more confident in saying that a life in the library is for me. I loved working on this project, as it felt not only intellectually challenging but also productive in a way that most of my regular academic projects aren't necessarily. I enjoyed the experience immensely, as I had a flexible schedule that allowed me to meet with my supervisor, sit in on meetings and tours, and still get work done on my projects.

The projects I was assigned to were varied and each interesting in their own ways. I learned a lot about the skills that I would need to acquire should I go into library sciences, particularly metadata analysis and some simple coding. This was useful, as I always hear people talking

about professional development but never see what exactly I need to learn. I feel like this experience largely confirmed my career ambitions, and it's kept open a door into the world of libraries that I think I'll go down at some point in the next ten to fifteen years, once I've finished my graduate degrees.

## UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, BODLEIAN LIBRARIES – RARE BOOKS



Esme Clara Gutch, Hertford College, BA English Language  
and Literature, First Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

The main project which I was asked to work on was in the Ephemera department, working with 20th and 21st century book covers to start to make an inventory of which book covers the library owns, to begin to make them more accessible to researchers wanting to access them. I



also assisted in facilitating various workshops and events, as well as observing and participating in the planning and preparation for a course on 'The Psychology of Surrealist Photography', in which the tutor wanted to show pieces of Ephemera to the students.

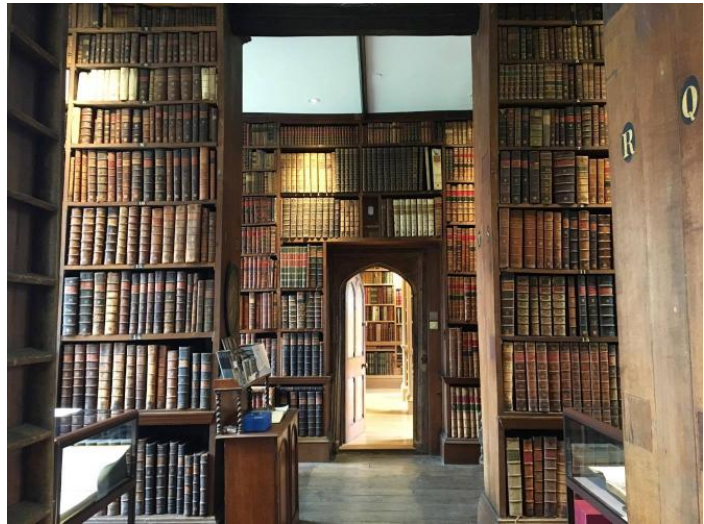
### Daily Life

Everyone in both the Ephemera and Rare Books Department was so generous and welcoming, and I feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to get to know so many wonderful librarians at

the Weston. In terms of settling in, the morning coffee or afternoon tea breaks were great as I got to chat and have a short break while getting to know other people in the office much better. I particularly enjoyed making friends with other interns who were there at the same time as me – it was really fun to connect and share experiences of our different projects and tasks while both working in the same area of the Weston Library. I am excited to keep in touch with many of the people I met while doing my internship.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I thoroughly enjoyed my internship. I learnt a huge amount about libraries – from how to care for texts in special collections, to the intricacy of how collections must be organised, cared for, and protected, and the many stages that a book goes through at the Weston before being accessible to researchers, from the Rare Books Department, cataloguing, to conservation etc. Before starting the internship, I was already interested in working in libraries. While this is still the case, I feel that I very much understand what a life working in libraries might be like – there is much more focus on data management and data organisation than I had initially realised.



I also really loved helping with workshops run by the Education Department, and this is another area which I am now interested in exploring as a future career. Working more directly with young people to open up these incredible resources and centres of learning to facilitate their study, seemed to be very rewarding, and I could see myself exploring this as a career pathway. Ultimately, I loved completing my internship, and I feel very happy, lucky and proud to have felt part of the community at the Weston Library for those three weeks.



# UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, DEPARTMENT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

BA Ancient and Modern History, Second Year Undergraduate, in person

## Work Projects

Rather than complete any particular project, our role was to support the logistics and run the social activities at the Exeter College Summer School. Over the three weeks, the logistics operated smoothly and by the end of the programme, the students had



become close friends and gave feedback on their positive experiences in Oxford beyond just the classroom, which I attribute to the various social activities put on by myself and the other assistants. The other assistants were very helpful, given they had completed the internship the previous year too, in advising me on the best ways to support the students, and the logistics director was equally supportive and helpful.

## Daily Life

We were let into our accommodation a day before the internship began to give us time to settle-in but given we were used to Oxford as a city, this was pretty easy. The accommodation was provided for within Exeter College. All meals besides a couple at the weekend were provided for in hall at Exeter, which also meant I did not have to worry about sorting my own food arrangements. We had a first meeting a couple of hours before the students moved in, just to make sure that we were all prepared for the weeks ahead. Each week, we were given a



day and a half off, which gave me time to go on long runs and meet up with friends. I mainly socialised with the students themselves, so the role of running their social programme was naturally fun and sociable in itself.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My lasting experience of the internship was certainly of the people I met. Both the students, tutors, and other assistants were lovely and easy to work with, ensuring the overall experience was pleasant. I became good friends with some of the American students and will remember the enjoyable Oxford experiences I shared with all the students. I feel that I was able to develop my people skills over the internship, becoming more confident in speaking to the students and better at communicating with the tutors and other assistants. The experience further cemented my wish to continue to postgraduate education, having witnessed the enthusiasm and skill with which the adult students pursued their academic programmes. Whilst it did not change my career ambitions beyond that, it was an entirely worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

## **BA English Language and Literature, Second Year Undergraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

I was an assistant on the Continuing Education/Exeter College Creative Writing Summer School. We had 78 students on the course, aged 19 to mid-70s from all over the world, and as well as being the main point of contact for students, I organised social events and led tours across Oxford/trips to other cities. I enjoyed the freedom of the internship: apart from office hours, we could organise activities as we saw fit. There was always support from the host organisation but it was a wonderful feeling to be trusted to provide a great experience for all the course participants. As someone who writes creatively, it was also great to engage with so many writers with different experiences and so I got more involved in the 'academic' side of the course too.

## Daily Life

The internship lasted three weeks and we (the three assistants) got a day and a half off each week, which was the perfect amount of time, I felt. The morning would start with office hours



(starting at 8:30) which included solving any problems as well as setting up for the plenary lecture series (greeting guests etc). I attended the lectures when I could which was very enriching. Throughout the working day, we had afternoon and evening office hours, but also led tours around Oxford, including tours of our colleges.

We finally organised evening activities which was a great chance to socialise with people from all over the world, of different backgrounds and ages. This included pub/college bar trips, running pub quizzes and karaoke, movie nights and evening walks. I also participated in one of the open mics which was very rewarding.

## Lasting Impressions

The most rewarding aspect of the internship was the people I met – both the other interns and the people on the course. I love meeting people from different cultures, and the social atmosphere was great (I was especially inspired in returning to my own creative writing). I know I've gained problem solving skills, communication skills and, on the academic front, I've learned more about different tools and methodologies for writing.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Organisation and a can-do attitude are key, as well as a sense of humour! Throw yourself in and talk to as many people as possible – it's hugely rewarding.

# UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



Joyce Wei, St. John's College, BFA Fine Art, Second Year

Undergraduate, in person

## Work Projects

I have been working as an intern at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History on the 'Unravelling the Buckland Archive' project, where I spent most of my time, with the other co-intern in the Paper Conservation Room, working on the uncatalogued scrolls by William and Mary Buckland, and other geologists or palaeontologists. By the end of the internship, we had catalogued approximately 250 individual items. Before we started digitalising and cleaning the scrolls, our supervisor provided an induction lesson on how to handle archives, as well as introducing the kinds of materials we need.



## Daily Life

I stayed in one of the college's on-site vacation residence houses, which was only a 3-minute walk to the museum. Throughout the internship, I had the privilege of handling and cataloguing archival materials that had not been unfurled for centuries. Ranging from delicate hand-drawn topographical sketches in ink to vibrant watercolour and gouache paintings used in lectures, my primary role was to organise these materials, laying the groundwork for future study, digitisation, or even exhibition. Outside of work, there are plenty of tours and teas offered for

internship students at the museum, with an aim of educating and deepening our insight of the museum's daily organisation and archival storage.

## **Lasting Impressions**

On a technical level, the hands-on archival organisation has instilled in me an exceptional level of focus and patience to handle sensitive materials with the utmost care. The opportunity to handle such historically significant materials was a privilege, and the skills I acquired will undoubtedly benefit my future career, whether in museums, galleries, or academia. In addition, I am very lucky to actively participate in the curation of knowledge by engaging in the ways the items are archived, which will eventually be examined by researchers, and made legible to contemporary audiences. For a future career, I look forward to engaging in this industry again.

## **UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, PITT RIVERS MUSEUM – LEARNING TEAM ASSISTANT**



**BFA Fine Art, Second Year Undergraduate, hybrid**

## **Work Projects**

During my internship as a Learning Team Assistant with the Pitt Rivers Museum, I was tasked with exploring the museum's collections and creating an art outcome inspired by objects that could spark conversations across cultures. Initially, my project was guided by the principles of the Multaka project, which focuses on cross-cultural understanding. At first, I explored similarities and differences between objects from different cultures, but gradually I found myself drawn to connecting this exploration with my Ghanaian heritage.

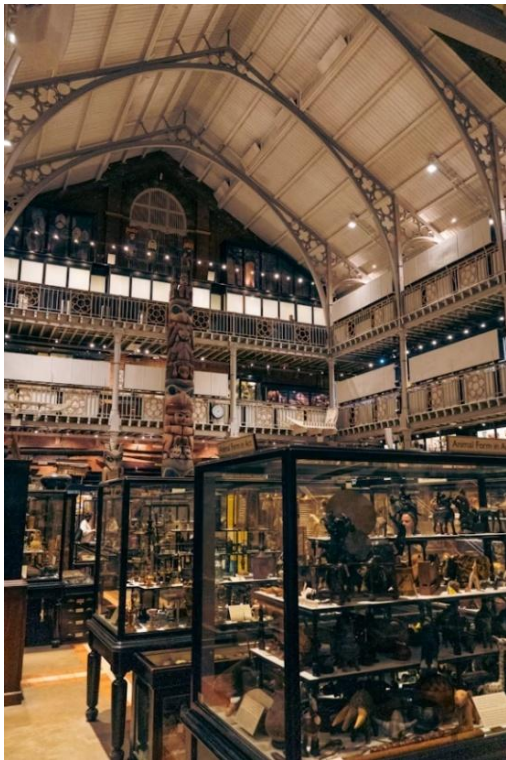
A key turning point was discovering an archived photograph of Sasabonsam and Mmoatia sculptures in the collection. They are figures from Ghanaian folklore representing a vampire and messenger dwarfs. This discovery led me to explore the idea of vampire myths across

cultures, recognizing how these narratives exist globally but take on unique forms in local traditions. I created an audio piece combining archival references with oral histories, including an interview with my mother, to emphasise how stories are passed down between generations.

The host organisation was incredibly supportive throughout. Even though my internship shifted from hybrid to fully virtual due to a hip injury, the Learning Team maintained weekly check-ins to provide guidance and feedback. They encouraged me to take the extra time I needed to rest and to develop a project I was proud of. This flexibility not only made the internship accessible for me but also allowed me to work at a thoughtful pace, resulting in an outcome that felt deeply personal and meaningful.

## Daily Life

Because of my hip injury, the internship was adapted from an originally hybrid format to being fully remote. Instead of working intensively over two weeks, it was extended to two months, which gave me time both to heal and to explore the project more deeply. My routine became



centred around working from home, with weekly virtual check-ins with the Learning Team at Pitt Rivers. These meetings provided structure, guidance, and encouragement while allowing me the flexibility to work independently in between.

Each day I worked on the project, I would set aside quiet time for research, listening to archived materials, or writing down ideas for how to connect Ghanaian folklore with the wider theme of cross-cultural myths. Since I was unable to commute or participate in museum life in person, I found ways to immerse myself virtually, by engaging with the collections online and drawing on my personal cultural knowledge.

Outside of these sessions, I managed my energy and recovery carefully, often breaking up research tasks into smaller segments. I also found it helpful to balance work with restful activities such as reading, light walks when possible, and conversations with family.

Interviewing my Mum for the audio piece became not only part of the project but also a meaningful personal connection in my daily life. Although I missed the chance to experience the museum environment directly, the virtual format gave me a unique opportunity to work at my own pace and develop independent research skills. My daily life during the internship became a balance of creative exploration, healing, and reflection.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship with the Pitt Rivers Museum has left me with very positive and lasting impressions, even though it unfolded differently than originally planned. What began as a short hybrid placement became a two-month virtual experience due to my hip injury, but the flexibility and support I received made the process both meaningful and enjoyable. I particularly valued how the museum encouraged me to bring my own cultural background into the project.

By centring my research around Ghanaian folklore and connecting it to broader cross-cultural myths, I was able to create an outcome that felt both authentic and innovative. The audio piece, combining archival discoveries with oral storytelling from my mother, gave me a sense of bridging academic research with lived experience. This reinforced for me the importance of including personal narratives in cultural and museum work. I feel that I gained a great deal from this experience – not only research and creative skills, but also confidence in my ability to adapt and work independently, even under challenging circumstances.

The internship confirmed my interest in working within cultural heritage and museum education, particularly in roles that highlight inclusivity, storytelling, and cross-cultural dialogue. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the internship and am grateful for how it was shaped around my needs. It showed me how museums can support diverse voices and experiences, and it has strengthened my ambition to continue exploring how heritage work can connect personal and collective histories.



# UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, PITT RIVERS MUSEUM – PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTION



MSc in Social Anthropology, Final Year Postgraduate, in person

## Work Projects

I digitised photos from the Nagaland project the Pitt Rivers Museum is involved in currently, while working on my own research project on the side. My chosen topic was photographs from the Middle East. Due to the concentration of the collection on one or two prominent figures like Wilfred Thesiger, it was hard to locate my topic at first, until I found the archive of the English Weaver Gigi Crocker Jones.

This archive revealed to me a connection between nation-state building and the state of crafts among pastoral communities in Oman which I decided to explore further in my dissertation. I am currently writing a blog post about it for the PRM website to bring this weaver's life work to the world after 21 years of being untouched. I am glad I could contribute to showcasing the visual memory of a Middle Eastern country we know very little about in general discourse.



## Daily Life

I was introduced to all areas of the museum in the first two days. My supervisor took me to meet all the teams at the museum to get a sense of how it functions as a whole body and I learned so much about the backstage work we often don't know about from the visitor's end. I learned about the ways my colleagues established their careers in the heritage industry, which looked very different for everyone. We also went to grab ice cream as an introduction. My supervisor was amazing at making sure I fit in the work culture of the PRM but also that I get a deeper appreciation of the various kinds of work the museum offers. It was a very comprehensive introduction to an important part of the heritage industry.

Regarding the workflow, my day was very organised, and my tasks were clear. My supervisor made sure I combined structure, with freedom to explore and research. In the morning, I digitised a set of photos, often around 50 a day that don't relate to my research topic but are clearly to support the team and what PRM is involved in now, namely the Nagaland project. After my lunch break, I would open Gigi Crocker Jones' manuscripts and photographic archive that was immense (more than 4000 pictures) and I would work out my research topic, learn about her and her work in order to create a holistic narrative of her to introduce her on the blog, because there's very little known about her. It was an immense task but very rewarding and I loved that it was more contemporary, between 1980s-1990s. It felt relevant to the world and the struggles people are still undergoing today, especially relating to the experience of nation-state building and belonging in the global south and the kind of challenges it can pose on specific individuals.

## Lasting Impressions

I loved my experience at PRM. I really appreciated the professionalism and the freedom within the structure. It really felt like my supervisor cared about me learning and gaining skills. He was very experienced, and I am grateful that I was truly guided and directed without being

restricted. That delicate balance was very masterful I felt. In terms of insights, I clearly noticed my passion for research.

I applied for this internship to reawaken a part of my personal history that really used art as a tool to express and heal in community, and I found that in Gigi Crocker Jones' archive.

However, I noticed that I don't necessarily want to work in the museum as a tour guide or archiver but as a researcher, at the intersection of the academia and heritage industry. In the PRM there was an office that specialised in youth education at the museum, and I am curious to explore further how these two relate as I am also very involved in youth education. It really clarifies my vision and my strengths.

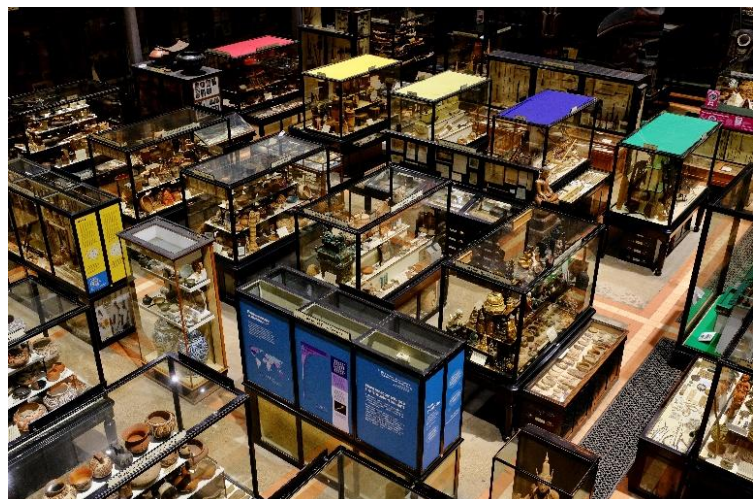
## UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, PITT RIVERS MUSEUM – OBJECTS COLLECTION



Subhan Aslam, Exeter College, BA History and English,  
Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my internship at the Pitt Rivers Museum, I worked primarily on a collections project focused on the museum's clay pipe holdings. This was in preparation for a visit from the Clay Pipe Society. My role involved examining, dating, and updating records on the museum database, as well as conducting contextual research to better understand the origins and uses of the pipes.



Alongside the main project, I was given the opportunity to spend time in various departments across the museum, gaining insight into curatorial, conservation, and learning roles. A highlight was spending a day with the textiles team, where I was introduced to object photography techniques and the practicalities of recording and preserving delicate items. I was also involved in public engagement work, helping to run VR and object-handling sessions focused on Evenki artefacts and contemporary art in the museum's collection. These sessions allowed me to engage directly with visitors and contribute to accessible and interactive interpretation of the objects.

Throughout the internship, I received strong support from staff across the museum. My supervisor provided ongoing guidance on my project, and colleagues across departments were generous with their time and expertise. The internship gave me both practical experience and a broader understanding of how different teams contribute to the museum's work.

## **Daily Life**

My internship was in Oxford, so I was living in college accommodation and cycled in every day to get to work. Outside of work, I was hanging out with people running the summer programme at my college and joining in on their activities as my friends were working the programme.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed my internship at the Pitt Rivers Museum. It was a valuable opportunity to explore how a museum works behind the scenes while contributing to a meaningful project. I liked having a clear task with the clay pipes but also appreciated being able to move between departments and get a broader understanding of the museum's work. I gained practical skills in object cataloguing, research, and photography, and also developed more confidence in public-facing roles through the VR and object-handling sessions. The variety of tasks kept the experience interesting and made me feel involved in the wider work of the museum. The internship confirmed that I would like to explore a career in the heritage or museum sector. It

showed me the range of roles available and helped me see how my own skills could fit into that environment.

## UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, PUBLIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH

Elisha Ainsworth, Keble College, BA Human Sciences, Final Year  
Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

In my role as a Public and Community Engagement with Research Mapping Intern, my project involved researching (via the web and social media) and record a list of public and community



engagement with research projects and methods at UK universities. My outputs consisted of a database, created via Microsoft Lists, as well as a report, detailing my process and findings.

The goal is for these outcomes to potentially be used by University of Oxford researchers looking for best-

practice engagement with research case-studies. To make the tool most effective, I was encouraged to use a wide range of case studies, from a range of disciplines and a range of types of universities (e.g. Universities part of the 'University Alliance', Universities part of the 'Million Plus' group, etc.)

I benefitted heavily from all the support offered by the team. Whenever I had an issue, I felt very encouraged and safe to ask for help. The team would also offer help before I asked, with

one team member giving me a tutorial on using Microsoft Lists, a platform I was previously unfamiliar with.

## **Daily Life**

The first few days of the internship involved both settling in and setting up. This included receiving a tour of the office, meeting some of the team and being introduced to a list of 'pre-reading' (to be done before starting our project). The PCER team generously provided me and the other intern with work laptops for the duration of the internship. Setting up on these laptops took time, and involved a call with IT Services, yet I felt very supported by the team throughout the whole process.

I loved working in the team's office space, located in the Robert Hooke building (right opposite Keble College). We were encouraged to take frequent drink/snack breaks, so I definitely benefitted from the office's coffee machine! The PCER team hired another intern and, despite the fact our projects were quite different, we ended up benefitting heavily from discussing our respective work with each other! Over the 3-week period, we became quite close, even having a celebratory ice-cream trip on our final day, contributing to the positive social atmosphere of the internship. Another social highlight was attending 'Bingo and Bagels' with the Research Services team. Our inclusion, as interns, to this event was really nice and certainly helped with team synergy.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I really enjoyed my internship experience! I found the project very interesting, and I feel like I learnt a lot from it. Additionally, the experience of working in an office was really useful and allowed me to more clearly envision myself working in a similar space full time. Previously, my career goals were blurrier, yet this internship affirmed my aspirations to work in professional services within higher education, specifically in outreach. When applying to such roles, I think this experience will look really impressive on my CV/Cover Letter!



## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

Even though the role is hybrid, try to work in-person as much as possible, as you gain so much from meeting and talking to the wider team! Additionally, try to attend as many events organised by the team as possible!

## UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

Millie Sanders, St. Anne's College, MSci Experimental Psychology, Third Year Undergraduate, hybrid

### Work Projects

During my internship, I worked with a team to organise and analyse a large dataset that had been collected as part of a longitudinal study that ran for 6 years pertaining to children's reading and language

development. We began with organising the data, which involved cleaning the dataset alongside developing a data dictionary to describe the dataset and aid other researchers in understanding the data when they come to use it.

This was in the aims to get the

dataset into shape suitable for uploading to the UK data archive. Once this was complete, the other interns and I were given our own mini projects to work on in line with our own academic interests.



My project investigated how the home literacy environment changes over time, and how the home literacy environment relates to other variables such as parental literacy skills or child language development over time. To do this, I used R to run statistical analysis techniques such as regression models; therefore, this internship has greatly developed my programming and statistical skills. My supervisor, Professor Maggie Snowling, was very supportive throughout the entirety of the internship; answering any queries I had and guiding me on how to best develop my project in order to make the most meaningful contribution to the field.

## **Daily Life**

The first week of my internship was in person, and to settle in we were shown around our host college, St John's, which was lovely. My team and I usually spent some of the day brainstorming and working together here until lunch, where we would go eat together in the cafe. In the afternoon we would do our own thing where I would then usually make use of the gorgeous libraries.

For the rest of the internship, we worked from home. For me, this looked like many days spent at my desk at home but also many trips to cafes for the morning/afternoon for a change in environment. My team and I had frequent teams meetings to stay in touch and update each other with our progress, which was important in feeling connected and giving each other new insights into our work. I made sure to get out of the house in the evenings when I had spent the day working from home in order to relax and wind down and not feel claustrophobic, and this often involved going on walks or going to the cinema.

## **Lasting Impressions**

I very much enjoyed taking part in my internship, with this opportunity being one of the most valuable experiences of my academic journey so far. I appreciated the opportunity to take such a deep dive into an area of psychological research that I had not yet come across, which furthered my awareness of the huge amount of diversity within experimental psychology. Furthermore, this internship gave me great life experience, while also providing a deep insight

of the reality of academia and what day-to-day life may be like pursuing a career in higher education research in experimental psychology. As I was able to take part in different stages of the research process, I now have a more detailed understanding of the practical skills suited to carry out high quality research. As a result, this internship has confirmed my career ambitions in wanting to pursue a role as a research assistant following the completion of my master's in experimental psychology.

## MSci Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics, Second Year

### Undergraduate, hybrid

#### Work Projects

My internship involved two main projects based around a large dataset from my supervisor's research group called the Wellcome Project on Reading and Language dataset. The first sub-



project was cleaning the data ready for archiving in a public access website. I derived descriptive statistics for a large number of variables, added descriptions of variables to the data dictionary, created some data visualisation graphs, and researched the specific requirements of the UK data

archive. The second sub-project was my own data analysis and interpretation using raw unanalysed data from the set. I looked into the association of participants writing proficiency, reading levels, language levels and diagnoses of dyslexia and/or developmental language disorder.

I used novel software to analyse syntactic, lexical and semantic complexity in 187 writing samples of children aged 8-9. I then ran statistical tests on correlations and group mean

differences among the reading and language outcome groups. Prior to this I reviewed the literature in the research area in order to inform my research questions, methods and interpretation of results. I also met with a specialist in computational linguistic analysis software in order to learn how to apply it to my data. This sub-project culminated in writing up my findings in a paper which I will present to a group of specialist academics and attempt to get published.

## **Daily Life**

The first week of this internship was in-person. During that week, I met with my supervisor and two other interns in St John's. On the first day, we were introduced to the dataset and the project. Together with the other interns, we oriented ourselves in the dataset and presented our supervisor with questions and suggestions for how to clean it and how we would organise work/distribute work among ourselves for the duration of the project. We also attended a research day with the lab group and associated spin-off company (OxEd Assessment, which implements the main focus of the lab group's research – the Nuffield Early Language Intervention). We met with colleagues who specialise in data archiving and in various aspects of the dataset (e.g. home literacy environment, socioeconomic status, mental health) so that we could gain insight into the research sub-projects we would undertake.

The next weeks of the project I worked from home. I gave myself tasks based on how we had distributed work with the other interns. We met online with our supervisor at least once a week and called each other to discuss progress whenever we needed to. It was helpful having two other interns working alongside me to direct my efforts and give a greater sense of progressing through assignments quickly. In each weekly meeting with our supervisor, we presented our output from the week as well as asking questions and getting advice on research methodology or interpretation of results. I was also in regular email contact during the week, so it worked well. Outside of work I spent time with my family, went for runs or swimming and enjoyed cooking. I felt fortunate to be able to spend time with my family over the summer while also completing the internship.

## Lasting Impressions

I had a very good experience doing this internship. I learnt a huge amount about how to apply the research, data analysis and writing skills from my degree in the professional academic world. I also gained a number of skills I would never have had exposure to in my normal academic life, such as how to use specific analysis software. I was really encouraged by the collaborative nature of the research I was exposed to and felt able to connect with experts in the field.

One of the challenges was persevering with difficult tasks (getting to grips with new software, dealing with a huge messy dataset, applying novel statistical methods and computer code)



while relatively isolated (while my supervisor was always available, there were also certain aspects I knew I had to just get on and figure out by myself). However, this gave me a lot of confidence in my ability to stick with challenges and apply myself to solving tricky tasks. Overall, the experience has confirmed

my career ambitions while also helping me to hone exactly what I aspire to do. I feel I have been exposed to a range of possible careers within the education and research field, and I now know even more precisely how I can apply my skills and interests to a job in education policy.

## What practical advice would you give to future interns?

I would advise future interns to really throw themselves into the challenges and try to connect with as many people as possible while completing the project. It could feel quite isolating working from home unless you organise to meet with people online and discuss your progress.



Also, the internship offered a mix of in-person and online – I was only able to get accommodation for the first week of the internship but in hindsight, it could have been beneficial to spend a greater proportion of the internship in person (especially if the other interns were able to as well). So, I would advise trying to spend at least half the internship in Oxford if you're able to find suitable accommodation.

## MBiomedSci Biomedical Sciences, Third Year Undergraduate, remote

### Work Projects

I completed an internship which was looking at previously collected data of children with reading and language problems between the ages of 4-11. We were initially tasked with organizing this data and uploading it to the UK data drive as advertised. However, we were then later assigned individual mini-projects to complete. This involved analysis of the data and a write-up of our findings. Organizing the data for the data drive involved categorizing the data by the age at which it was collected, calculating descriptive statistics for the data, and correcting miscalculated data. It also involved collating the tests that were used at each time-point, and their reliability scores.

When our tasks changed to individual mini-projects, I used R to understand the relationship between mental health outcomes in children between the ages of 8-11 and their reading and language ability. We had weekly meetings (with the head of the project and the other two interns) in which we reported what we had done that week, although these rarely lasted more than 30 minutes. Aside from that, I felt quite unsupported in my work, and I think it was





assumed that we all had the same level of statistical knowledge. I am glad that the workplace environment was kind, and there was encouragement at the weekly meetings with everyone being very friendly, although I personally think that I needed a bit more direction in what needed doing and how it was expected to be done.

## **Daily Life**

When working from home I tried to establish a daily routine, in which I would start at around 9am and finish at around 5pm. This meant that there was consistency in my working days and that the other interns were available to respond to any queries I had. However, it was nice to have flexibility in my working days, and there were often days where I had made plans in the day and chosen to work in the early morning and in the evening. This meant that I could still catch up with friends mid-week. Any work that I hadn't done could also be done at the weekend.

## **Lasting Impressions**

The internship has confirmed that I need a workplace with a bit more support and is also changing my career aspirations from research into a different non-academic sector. I am excited to discover what this might be and know that I have gained knowledge from the internship with regards to coding, organization, and time management which will help me in my future work. I don't believe that this was a wasted experience, and I am glad to have learnt more about my work style.

# UNITED STATES

## ILLUMINATE CONSULTING GROUP

Rabhya Agarwal, Brasenose College, BA Philosophy  
Politics and Economics, Second Year Undergraduate,  
remote



### Work Projects

Illuminate Consulting Group advises universities on academic strategy in a bid to make their projects and research more visible online, fix their repositories, and help them get better in rankings. My engagement with the Illuminate Consulting Group stretched across all these avenues and I was



fortunate enough to receive a taste of each of these. The internship started off with projects regarding data pulling and cleaning. Illuminate Consulting Group keeps a record of \*all\* international rankings for universities and research institutions. And every year all of these rankings (25+) need to be pulled from the internet and put in an analysable form that Illuminate Consulting Group can work with. The internship usually starts off with this, we were told, and ours indeed did.

We would write Python scripts to pull information from the relevant websites and then clean the data. Oftentimes, the data would run into the tens of thousands. All the interns recruited

through the Careers Service, including me, engaged in this task together. Since there is a major emphasis on quality, more so than quantity, we would check each other's work throughout the process. I pioneered a couple changes in the way score normalisations would work for the cleaning bit here. Then, we moved on to a series of other tasks. I worked on a dashboard analysing the relationship between the scores and ranks published by the rankers. I also worked on a history of awards won by researchers and the institutions they belonged to.

Next, I also contributed to little tasks that curated internet presences of researchers and repositories. Lastly, all of us worked on certain client files – preparing bespoke presentations for clients regarding their ranking history and current researcher status. There was immense support from the organisation throughout! We always had someone to ask questions to and help us work our way through our tasks.

## **Daily Life**

All of us interns, I believe, were working remotely. This made communication between us interns slightly slower, but there were many advantages to being at home as well. For me personally, my day started at about noon. Since the Illuminate Consulting Group is based in North America, they were very much behind my time zone as I was working from India. For the first part of the day, I would work independently and often liaise with other interns who would also start work at roughly the same time as me. The day would start with tasks that were previously agreed upon. I would usually break for lunch at about half one and would be back soon after.

Afternoons would usually see the consultant we were working closely with, who was based in North America, come online. So, work would naturally be a bit smoother ever since then. I would break for dinner at about 18:00 or 19:00 and then there would be a meeting every day at 19:30. In this meeting, we would update the team on the tasks we did, the hurdles we faced, and the interesting things we noticed. Other than this, there were weekly one-on-one sessions which ensured longer term projects were on track and that we were taking something away from the internship. The internship was great in the sense that it could accommodate daily

flexibilities. There were times when I requested to start late, or early, or take some time off during the day, and such requests were always met. In this sense, my daily schedule was fixed yet dynamic, something I appreciated very much.

## Lasting Impressions

I really enjoyed the internship in the long term of things. There were many skills I think I gained from the process, with many of them being easily replicable in the sort of jobs I want to do as a



career. Firstly, the use of coding and Excel and all other technical skills were very easily replicable in research. I wish to pursue a career in economics research in the future. I have not decided yet whether it is going to be in the private sector or at universities. However, the skills gained here should be replicable overall. For

example, applied microeconomics research focused on the quantifiable policy problems that come up in everyday politics and society needs datasets pulled from the depths of the internet. Then, these datasets need to be cleaned and only then prepared for further analysis. This matches up pretty much exactly with the methodology followed by Illuminate Consulting Group. I was very happy in this sense.

Moreover, economics research often requires working with fairly large datasets. And I did work with datasets at ICG that were fairly large, containing over millions and millions of entries. Even in this way it prepared me well for a career in economics research. Secondly, the focus on the quality of research was very high at Illuminate Consulting Group. So, it was pretty good to know that it was suited to academic rigour. Lastly, the managing director of the company, with whom we interacted in the evening meetings (as mentioned above) almost every day, was very

insightful and would offer advice on most things related to the academic world. A lot of this advice would be very helpful, I presume, for a career in academics.

**Amelia Jade Mae-Xian Lim, Balliol College, MSc Biomedical Sciences,  
First Year Undergraduate, remote**

## **Work Projects**

During my internship, I worked on several projects focused on improving institutional performance. My work contributed to developing accurate master files, dashboards, and client-specific outputs that informed strategic decisions for universities. My main tasks included pulling and cleaning large datasets and subsequently analysing the data. I was also involved in designing a sustainability dashboard and creating presentations for clients. Through these responsibilities, I strengthened the following skillsets: Excel, PowerPoint, and Python. These technical skills complemented my ability to manage detail-oriented tasks while keeping sight of the broader project goals.

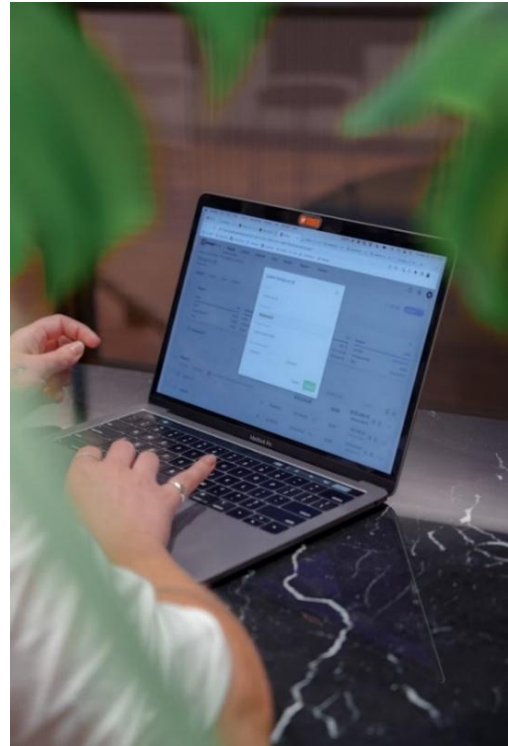
Overall, I worked closely with my team to support organisational deliverables. The support from the host organisation was consistent and encouraging. We had daily calls to align progress, clarify expectations, and distribute workstreams. I also had an open line of communication to ask questions, which made it easier to resolve issues quickly and deepen my understanding of complex datasets. This collaborative environment not only improved the quality of my work but also gave me the confidence to take initiative on independent tasks while knowing guidance was always available.

## **Daily Life**

My internship was conducted remotely, which meant I had to establish a structured daily routine to balance productivity with wellbeing. I typically started my workday in the afternoon, logging in around 3:00pm and finishing at 11:00pm. This schedule aligned with the team's working hours and gave me a consistent rhythm. Before starting, I would spend some time

reviewing notes from the previous day, planning my tasks, and checking for updates from the daily call. These calls were an important anchor to the day, providing clarity on priorities and allowing space to raise any questions before working independently. We started each day with goal setting.

During work hours, I mainly focused on achieving these goals. I set small milestones throughout the evening to stay focused and motivated. To avoid fatigue, I took short breaks every couple of hours, often stepping away from the desk. Working from home required discipline, but I also appreciated the flexibility it provided. My workspace was set up to minimise distractions, and I maintained a clear separation between work and personal time by having a designated workspace, as suggested by our leader. After work, I usually relaxed by reading, going for a walk, or spending time with family and friends. These routines helped me recharge and return the next day with energy. Overall, remote working taught me how to manage my time independently, maintain focus without direct supervision, and develop healthy habits that balance productivity with wellbeing.



## **Lasting Impressions**

I believe my internship was a highly valuable and rewarding experience that left me with several lasting impressions. I particularly enjoyed the balance between independent responsibility for us interns and team support. Being trusted to contribute directly to client-facing outputs gave me a sense of ownership and confidence in my work. At the same time, the daily check-ins and open communication channels ensured I never felt isolated, even though



the internship was remote. This combination created an environment that was both challenging and supportive.

I enjoyed myself very much and I gained a great deal from the experience, both in technical skills and personal development. From a technical perspective, I improved significantly in Excel, PowerPoint, and Python, and their applications. Beyond the technical side, I also developed professional skills such as managing deadlines, problem-solving independently, and communicating clearly with colleagues in a virtual setting. In terms of career ambitions, the internship has been both confirming and inspiring. It confirmed my interest and ambition to pursue a career in data analysis and consulting. Overall, the experience strengthened my motivation to build a career in this field.

**Satyam Agarwal, St. Hugh's College, MEng Engineering Science, Third Year Undergraduate, remote**

### **Work Projects**

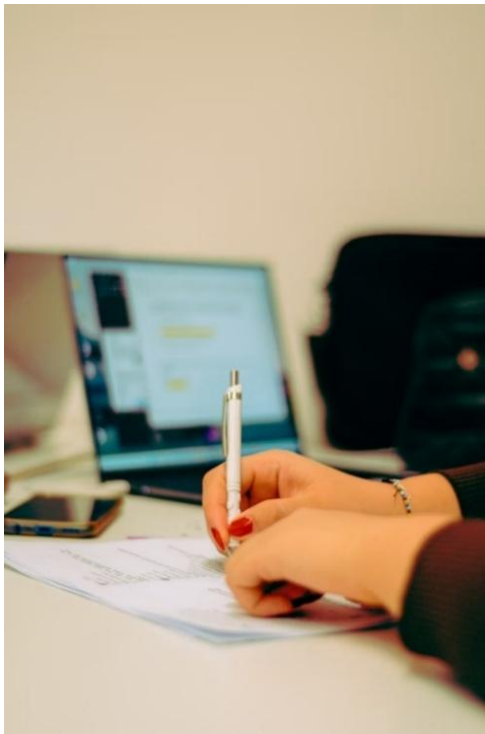
During my internship as a Data Analyst at ICG, I was an integral part of the team's project pipeline, which involved data gathering, analysis, and developing strategic recommendations for clients. A significant achievement was developing new tools and automated data pipelines that drastically increased efficiency. For instance, I created software solutions that sped up specific processes by a factor of 100, which greatly improved the team's overall workflow. Beyond process optimisation, I also worked directly on live client projects. This involved conducting in-depth data analysis, presenting key findings, and contributing to the development of actionable strategies. It was rewarding to see my contributions directly used to solve real-world problems.

I received excellent support throughout my time at ICG. The team maintained a regular check-in schedule to monitor my progress, and as I demonstrated greater capability and understanding, the tasks I was assigned became more complex and independent. By the end of the internship,

most interns were leading their own projects. The daily check-in sessions were a valuable forum for collaboration and problem-solving. A unique aspect of the internship was the freedom we had to choose new tasks that aligned with our interests and skills. This enabled us to work on a variety of projects, sometimes independently, sometimes in teams, and at times directly with senior members, including the Director.

## Daily Life

My remote internship with ICG allowed for an exceptional work-life balance and a high degree of flexibility. The team was globally distributed, and we were all able to set working hours that



suited our local time zones while still collaborating effectively throughout the day. My typical workday began at around 10am, after a morning of personal activities. I'd start with a coffee and a quick check-in with my team before diving into my tasks. I'd break for lunch to spend time with my family and then return to a mix of meetings and project work. The workday concluded with a catch-up call with the ICG team and other interns, which was a great way to wrap up and reflect on our progress. The work was consistently engaging and challenging, and the team was so supportive that I genuinely looked forward to starting each day. After work, I made time to relax and recharge, often with a

workout at the gym and by pursuing personal projects.

## Lasting Impressions

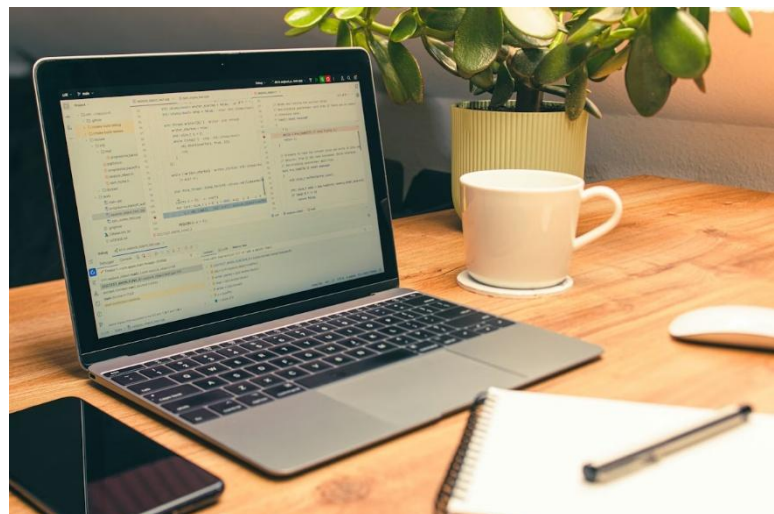
My internship at ICG was an incredibly rewarding experience that left a strong and lasting impression. I particularly enjoyed working on live client projects and seeing my work have a tangible, real-time impact. The company's culture places a high value on meaningful work, and

every task assigned to the interns was purposeful and directly contributed to the company's objectives. ICG is an exceptionally well-organised company that instilled in me a strong work ethic.

I learnt invaluable organisational and presentation skills that I will carry forward into all my future roles. The hands-on technical aspects of the role reinforced my career ambitions to work in a technical field. Simultaneously, the direct exposure to clients gave me a deep understanding of the consultancy world and the skills required to succeed within it. This experience not only confirmed my career path but also gave me a more nuanced understanding of where I want to focus my efforts.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

ICG is a company that values logical ability, organisational skills, and a strong work ethic. This internship is a fantastic opportunity to learn how to excel in a serious consultancy role, and there is an immense amount to learn from the highly experienced team. My advice to future interns



is to be open and curious, and never be afraid to share your ideas. Effective and clear communication is key; there is no room for jargon or speculation here. By being proactive and transparent, you'll get the most out of this experience.

# ZAMBIA

## CRUCIBLE LUSAKA

Iona Davies, Lincoln College, BA Philosophy, Politics, and Economics,  
Second Year Undergraduate, in person

### Work Projects

Crucible Lusaka is a school that has only opened very recently in the capital of Zambia. Its aim is to attract the brightest students across Zambia and prepare them to attend prestigious universities prior to returning to Zambia as leaders. Crucible provides full scholarships to all students to ensure that it is accessible to students from a range of backgrounds. The majority of the students have never been outside of Zambia. My role was to support the students with their Economics A-Level whilst also introducing them to extension materials and giving them an insight into university life in the UK. I delivered several lessons and spent a lot of time with the students, particularly the girls.



My host organisation was very supportive. I was allowed flexible hours if I wished to travel and see some of the country. They also provided a stipend and accommodation within walking distance of the school. They were incredibly friendly, and many people involved with the organisation met with me before I traveled to Zambia, to address any concerns I might have.

The organisation also provided online safeguarding training prior to my arrival and a guide to the country, including recommendations on places to visit.

## Daily Life

When I arrived in Lusaka, I was met at the airport by one of the teachers. I was then taken to the school to have a tour and meet the principal, who then took me to my accommodation. I



very quickly settled in, heading out for dinner with the other visiting staff that evening and buying a SIM card the next day. Luckily, I was able to walk to work each day.

Outside of work, I traveled and attempted to see as much of the country as I could. I visited Livingstone and saw the Victoria Falls. I also saw a wide range of

animals, including orphaned elephants. I socialised mostly with the other intern and visiting staff. However, I also spent time with permanent staff and enjoyed a range of social occasions with them. Whilst I was in Lusaka, I also made friends with a woman I met at the local church. We then met up a few times at bars and watched a film together.

## Lasting Impressions

I had an incredible time during my internship. It was a fantastic opportunity. I have gained so much from it, including experience of working abroad, the importance of having an impact in work, and an introduction to working life. I worked long hours, six days a week, but I enjoyed the work so much that I didn't mind. The experience has shown me that I would like a career where I can directly impact others.

## Daniel Adam Wilkinson, Balliol College, DPhil Politics (Political Theory), Final Year Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my internship with Crucible Lusaka, I worked on curriculum development and strategic planning for the school's flagship programmes in Liberal Arts and Leadership. The central focus of my work was designing a comprehensive framework for a Liberal Arts curriculum that emphasised four core themes: Know Yourself, Know Your Country, Know Africa, and Know the World. Within each theme, I developed detailed unit structures, ensuring that the framework combined intellectual rigour with contextual relevance to Zambian and African realities.

Alongside this, I contributed to the redesign of the Leadership curriculum, aligning it with the school's values and competencies framework. This involved mapping leadership skills onto progressive capabilities across four developmental modules – Leading the Self, Leading Others, Leading Organisations, and Leading for Change. I worked to ensure that both curricula were mutually reinforced, equipping students with the critical, creative, and practical capacities needed for success in higher education and beyond.

Beyond curriculum design, I was also involved in shaping the school's broader strategic direction. I advised on how the Liberal Arts and Leadership frameworks could fit into a holistic educational vision that balances academic excellence, character formation, and innovation. This required close collaboration with senior staff, drawing on both my academic background in political theory and my practical experience in education.

I received strong support throughout from the school's leadership team, who provided guidance, feedback, and opportunities to test ideas collaboratively. This mentorship was invaluable, allowing me to develop professionally while making a tangible contribution to an ambitious educational project. Overall, the internship gave me the chance to apply my academic expertise in a practical context, while playing a role in shaping the long-term trajectory of a pioneering school in Zambia.



## Daily Life

My internship in Lusaka was in-person, which gave me the opportunity to immerse myself not only in the work itself but also in the daily life of the city. I quickly settled into a routine: travelling each day to the school site, where I divided my time between independent curriculum design and collaborative meetings with colleagues. The work environment was both supportive and stimulating, and I found it easy to integrate into the team, thanks to the openness and hospitality of the staff.

Outside of formal work, I made the most of my time in Zambia by engaging with the local culture and community. Evenings and weekends were often spent exploring Lusaka's markets, restaurants, and music venues, as well as making short trips further afield. I particularly valued opportunities to learn more about Zambia's history and contemporary



politics, which gave further context to the curriculum development work I was doing. Socially, I connected both with colleagues from the school and with other interns and young professionals working in Lusaka. This helped me build a network of peers who shared insights, advice, and experiences of living and working in the city. These friendships were an important part of daily life, providing balance to the intensity of the work.

Day-to-day, I developed a rhythm that combined structured work with time for reflection and relaxation. I often spent part of the evenings reading, writing, or exercising, which helped me maintain perspective and energy across the internship. Overall, daily life in Lusaka was a rewarding mix of professional focus and cultural exploration, giving me a sense of both personal growth and belonging during my time abroad.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship in Lusaka left a profound and lasting impression on me, both personally and professionally. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience: it was intellectually engaging, practically challenging, and culturally enriching. Working on curriculum design for the Liberal Arts and Leadership programmes gave me the rare opportunity to apply academic expertise in a real-world context, and I found it deeply rewarding to see abstract ideas translated into concrete educational frameworks. I gained significantly from the experience, not only in terms of technical skills – such as curriculum mapping, framework design, and strategic planning – but also in broader personal development.

The internship sharpened my ability to work cross-culturally, to adapt quickly in a dynamic environment, and to collaborate effectively with a diverse team. I also developed greater confidence in balancing independent initiative with collective decision-making, an ability that will be crucial in any future role. Perhaps most importantly, the internship confirmed my commitment to pursuing a career at the intersection of education, research, and social impact.

I have long been motivated by the transformative potential of education, and my time in Lusaka reinforced my conviction that innovative, contextually grounded curricula can play a pivotal role in shaping future generations. At the same time, it broadened my horizons by showing me the possibilities of working in an international and cross-cultural setting, which I had not experienced so directly before. Overall, I came away from the internship with a sense of having contributed meaningfully to an ambitious educational project, while also gaining clarity about my own path forward. The experience strengthened my desire to combine academic research with practical educational initiatives, and to pursue opportunities where I can continue to shape institutions and ideas that empower others.

# ZIMBABWE

## ECONET WIRELESS ZIMBABWE

MSc International Health and Tropical Medicine, Final Year

Postgraduate, in person

### Work Projects

During my internship with the Global Health team at HLF (July–October 2025), I contributed to a project focused on strengthening maternal and newborn health (MNH) data systems and



supporting the development of the MNH Country Plan. The internship was designed to provide both strategic immersion and technical engagement, with opportunities to contribute to real-world health policy and data initiatives.

My main tasks and achievements included conducting a gap analysis

of MNH data collection tools and sharing findings with the Global Health and MEL teams. Designing and developing components of the MNH dashboard, including HTML templates and GitHub repositories. Supporting the costing and budgeting of the MNH Country Plan and contributing to drafting investment memos. Assisting with the development of the Global Health two-year budget and the MNH equipment catalogue. Participating in planning meetings and supporting consultants with data requests and project logistics. Initiating a capstone

project concept note focused on regression modelling for maternal mortality and developing a project tracker to coordinate tasks with the team.

Throughout the internship, I received consistent support from my supervisor and the broader Global Health team. I was encouraged to take initiative, and my contributions were valued in collaborative planning and technical discussions. I also benefited from mentorship by senior consultants and access to institutional tools and resources, which enhanced my learning and professional development.

## **Daily Life**

My in-person internship at Econet Wireless in Zimbabwe was a well-organised and engaging experience. I settled in quickly, thanks to the structured onboarding and the welcoming atmosphere of the workplace. Each day, I was transported to the worksite by Higherlife Foundation, which made commuting smooth and stress-free, allowing me to focus fully on my tasks. Outside of work, I explored Harare, attended a few local events, and socialised with other interns and team members. These experiences gave me a deeper appreciation of Zimbabwean culture and helped me form meaningful connections.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship with Higherlife Foundation and Econet Wireless left a lasting impression both professionally and personally. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, it was intellectually stimulating, well-structured, and offered meaningful opportunities to contribute to real-world public health initiatives. I gained valuable technical skills in data analysis, dashboard development, and strategic planning, while also deepening my understanding of maternal and newborn health systems. One of the highlights of the internship was a trip to Victoria Falls organised by Econet Wireless. It was my first time visiting the Falls and also my first time going water rafting, which was an exhilarating experience that pushed me out of my comfort zone and reminded me of the importance of balance between work and personal growth. These

moments of adventure and connection added a unique dimension to the internship and helped build strong bonds with fellow interns and colleagues.

### **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would highly recommend this internship to future candidates. It offers a unique blend of technical learning, policy engagement, and real-world exposure to public health programming. My advice would be to approach the internship with curiosity and initiative—there are many opportunities to contribute meaningfully if you're proactive.

Make use of the mentorship available, ask questions, and don't hesitate to propose ideas. Also, keep a personal tracker or journal to reflect on your progress and lessons learned—it helps you stay organised and makes it easier to compile reports later. Finally, embrace the full experience, including the cultural and social aspects. Some of the most memorable moments, like the trip to Victoria Falls and water rafting, happened outside the office and added depth to the overall journey.

## **MSc in Sustainability, Enterprise and the Environment, Final Year Postgraduate, in person**

### **Work Projects**

During my internship, I worked at the intersection of AI, strategy, and sustainability. The experience centered on advancing the company's AI strategy through both client-facing and internal initiatives. One of my projects involved drafting a commercial proposal for a new AI-powered customer service chatbot designed for a major telecoms client. This required me to analyze market needs, develop a clear value proposition, and design a pricing and deployment strategy that aligned with both the client's requirements and Cassava AI's broader growth ambitions.

Alongside this, I led the drafting of a whitepaper on Africa's infrastructure readiness for AI and sustainable digital development. This work involved extensive research on issues such as data center energy use, connectivity, and the continent's readiness for AI integration, as well as positioning Cassava AI as a thought leader in this emerging field. I also delivered a financial reporting Power BI dashboard, serving as the single source of truth for on revenue and product performance across the board.

Throughout the internship, I received strong support from my supervisors and colleagues. Senior leaders took time to provide guidance on structuring proposals and gave constructive feedback that improved the quality of my output. I was encouraged to engage in open conversations about the company's long-term strategy, which gave me valuable insight into decision-making at an executive level. This supportive environment made the internship a formative experience where I was able to contribute meaningfully while developing my own skills.

## Daily Life

My internship was based in Harare and the host organisation provided accommodation in a lovely home just a short walk from the office, which made settling in very easy. Being able to walk to work each day gave me a sense of routine. The workplace itself was located close to a lively part of town with plenty of



coffee shops and restaurants. This became a natural meeting point for interns and colleagues, and I often enjoyed lunches and after-work coffees with fellow interns from Oxford as well as students from local universities who were also placed with the company. These informal interactions were a great way to build friendships and exchange perspectives.



Outside of work, I tried to make the most of my time in Zimbabwe. With friends I made at the office, I took up paddle and running, which became a welcome way to unwind after a day in the office. I also made a conscious effort to explore new experiences across the city, from cultural events to trying out new food spots. One of the highlights of my stay was travelling to Victoria Falls over one of the holiday weekends.

## **Lasting Impressions**

My internship left me with a lasting appreciation for the pace of innovation and the opportunities emerging at the intersection of technology and sustainability in Africa. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, both in terms of the projects I was trusted with and the supportive environment created by the team. The internship gave me practical exposure to how strategy is shaped within a leading organisation, from building commercial proposals to developing thought leadership pieces that influence broader conversations around digital infrastructure. I gained valuable skills in stakeholder engagement, research, and communication, and I was able to see firsthand how impactful ideas can be translated into actionable business strategies.

## **What practical advice would you give to future interns?**

I would recommend building relationships with both fellow interns and local colleagues. Some of the most memorable parts of my internship came from conversations outside of formal meetings, whether over coffee, lunch, or while exploring the city. These moments not only made the experience more enjoyable but also gave me a richer understanding of the local context.

Finally, make time to explore beyond the workplace. Zimbabwe has a vibrant culture and stunning natural beauty, and I found that travelling, even on short weekend trips, really enriched my overall experience. Balancing work with exploration helps you return to the office refreshed and with a broader perspective on the region you're working in.



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