



Student: James Gale
University of Sussex
Placement: Royal
Holloway University
Role: Characterising BPMs
for installing in Front End
Test Stand at Rutherford
Appleton Laboratories

"I now have specific hands-on experience, a place that showcased my skills and a valid talking point for any future interviews I may have."

Describe a typical day:

At the start of the placement I had to write a Python script for analysing the scans data, so spent most of the day at a lab desk working on that. Lunch would be taken around 13:00 with some of the staff and other students on placements for an hour. The days were largely made of scans and alterations, though sometimes I would make trips down to the workshop to get some things machined specifically for the set up. I would leave anywhere from 17:00 to 18:30 depending on how much work I needed to get done that day or how long I wanted to stay; the hours were very relaxed, as was the entire department.

Why did you decide to do a placement?

I wanted to get experience in the field. I am interested in particle and accelerator physics, and really wanted to know what it would be like actually working in those fields. The work was similar in form to what I would do in a PhD, so it was also to help decide whether that would be an option afterwards too. Plus, a placement is a great addition to a CV and I wanted to make some good contacts and friends in the field.

Would you recommend doing a placement?

Absolutely, it was fun, incredibly productive and I managed to get a lot from it. You get contacts, experience, something to do and you get paid. With the future as uncertain and competitive as it is, it is really important to do something to show that you are above the crowd and a placement is perfect for that.

How do you think doing a placement has benefited you for the future?

I have something that gave me skills you don't get from a university course. I now have specific hands-on experience, a place that showcased my skills and a valid talking point for any future interviews I may have.

What are your next steps?

I am still uncertain about the exact position I want to be in, but I know for sure I will not apply for a PhD this year, though I am not ruling it out in the future. I will be looking for work or placements in likely a similar field when I graduate, as I have experience and perhaps even good contacts for it.

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