SEPnet South East Physics Network **Employability**

# THE VALUE OF WORK EXPERIENCE

**Student:** Thomas Mann
University of Portmouth
**Placement:** QinetiQ
**Role:** Training Scientist

*"Being given a lead role and responsibility for the budget was excellent experience and has enabled me to put something on my CV that differentiates me from others"*

**Describe a typical day:**
In the first two weeks I worked on a number of interesting scientific and computational projects. This enabled me to meet members of the training group and understand what they did and how they did it. From week three I had a specific project assigned to me, along with a budget for completing it. This advanced optics project was to research an alternative 3D technical demonstration method for large groups.

My solution was to design and develop a custom 3D projection suite from scratch. The hardware research was interesting but this was matched by the software requirement of developing escalation of violence scenarios in commercial software which would integrate into existing demos.

**Why did you decide to do a placement?**
I wanted something on my CV to distinguish me from other candidates applying for jobs. I have learnt technical skills, applying my physics knowledge and common sense to the projects which I worked on. These include developing electrical knowledge, a greater understanding for engineering principles and software development of scenarios. I have given my transferable skills a boost as well as this placement has enabled me to work as a member of a team on some projects and as project lead on my main project.

**Would you recommend doing a placement?**
I would have no hesitation in recommending a placement based on my experience with QinetiQ. I gained experience, developed a good network of contacts and picked up the routine of working quickly. A successful placement shows potential future employers that you are capable of applying your current physics knowledge; developing your critical thinking skills for an industrial project and able to demonstrate that you understand what employment entails.

**What are your next steps?**
I may not have considered QinetiQ, or any company in this sector, in the past for a job, but they have opened my eyes to the many interesting career paths which are available. I have recently been asked back to Farnborough for an open day for graduates and have secured a position with QinetiQ on their Simulation Systems Engineering Graduate Scheme.

**Employer perspective:**
Thomas had learned a great deal about simulation techniques applied to training and a lot about the software packages used by the training simulation section. Thomas had come up with a novel simulation scenario to demonstrate a 3D display project he was working on, demonstrating a good level of critical thinking'
Andy Churchward – QinetiQ Simulation Engineer