



**Student:** Jessica Schonhut  
University of Hertfordshire  
**Placement:** HCL/Xerox  
**Role:** Statistician/Process Engineer

*"I gained valuable engineering skills which I otherwise would not have."*

### **Describe a typical day:**

On a typical day I will be working on my statistical model for several hours, building different simulations. For this I am mostly left to my own devices to work out the software myself. This is how I like to learn, however I always know there is support close by if I need it. Some days (mostly towards the end of placement) there will also be a meeting to discuss how I am getting on. I also work with other process engineers to do hands on tasks such as fixing machines and during my time have completely dismantled and reassembled a machine - this was valuable engineering experience you do not gain with a Physics Degree.

### **Why did you do a placement?**

Because I wanted to gain experience outside of study time to enhance my CV and help me to have an edge when coming to choosing my career path. It is also useful to have the extra income in the summer months.

### **Would you recommend a placement?**

YES! They are invaluable to gaining knowledge and skills that you cannot gain in the classroom! Employers also seek people with experience and the company you work for may even suggest you come back when you finish or invite you back for a further placement.

### **What benefits have you got from this placement?**

I have gained valuable engineering skills which I otherwise would not have. I have also learned to use complex statistical modelling programs both of which will be helpful in my chosen career in astrophysics.

### **Your next steps**

To complete my degree and move on to a PhD.

### **Employer perspective**

The main reason for employing a student is to get fresh ideas, to use those new ideas, to raise the profile of the team internally and to become a centre of excellence. It also looks good for the student on their CV so HCL like to support the student's improvement. HCL are on the SEPnet employer panel and strongly support the ideas and strategy.

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