What is the subject of your PhD?
Silicon and silicon carbide radiation detectors for alpha and neutron detection at elevated temperatures.

Why did you decide to do a placement?
During my PhD I learned LabVIEW and used it for my experiments. However, I have not used it to solve a specific problem in research or in an industrial organisation. Having undertaken a similar placement at NPL, I was motivated to secure experience of problem solving in industry using LabVIEW as a tool. As I was waiting for my PhD viva, it was a good time to undertake some further work experience and boost my transferable skills.

Describe a typical day on placement:
A normal working starts with a short discussion with my manager to review progress made so far. I then continue with the design of my program, which is the key focus of the placement. Occasionally, I made presentations to my group for advice and suggestions towards improving the project. I used many different light sources to acquire data for validation of the LabVIEW software developed. At the end of the placement I trained technical staff in the company on how to use the software.

What skills and knowledge do you feel you have learned during the placement?
I have learned to work with people from different cultures and backgrounds. I have also assumed a position similar to a consultant and this has given me confidence in moving forward to look for consulting roles of a similar type in future. Working on a challenging project and delivering to a specific deadline under pressure with very little supervision is an incredible experience.

How do you think doing a placement has benefited you for the future?
The placement has boosted my confidence and broadened my horizons beyond academia. I learnt that my PhD is one thing and the skills I can offer to the wider community are also important. In addition, my CV is richer than before and more balanced, with both experience in academia and industry.

What advice would you give to a PGR student who might be interested in seeking a placement?
Placements offer you opportunities to discover yourself prior to choosing a longer term career for yourself. This is the best opportunity for you to try something and know what works for you before deciding on your future career.