



**Student:** Ela Poplawska  
Queen Mary University of  
London

**Placement:** Tranquillity  
Aerospace Ltd

**Role:** Software Electronic  
System Programmer

*“It showed me how PhD  
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transformed and used  
within an industry or  
commercial  
environment.”*

**What is the subject of your PhD?**

Particle Physics, Neutrinos: “Study of the neutral current interaction with a  $\pi^0$  in a final state in the ND280 detector of the T2K experiment”.

**Why did you decide to do a placement?**

I wanted to learn about the space industry.

**Describe a typical day on placement:**

There is not a typical day, every day is different depending on a given task. The only routine is that each day starts with coffee, then I discuss my plan with Ray and begin to implement it. This involves brainstorming sessions, programming, electronics hardware assembly and system design. This is followed by connection of the new sensors and communication devices, revising many ideas in terms of rocket design and architecture of the data collection and analysis framework.

**What skills and knowledge do you feel you have learned during the placement?**

I have learnt about the importance of networking and discussing aspects of the ongoing project with other industry representatives. I was encouraged to learn new software languages including MATLAB and Arduino Libraries and develop Excel macros.

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

It has showed me how PhD skills can be transformed and used within industry or a commercial environment. This has helped me increase my confidence for future job searches. I have met a number of new people and observed how business communication works.

**What advice would you give to a PGR student who might be interested in seeking a placement?**

Go ahead, do not hesitate. Work out your accommodation and travelling plans before the beginning of your placement. It’s far more relaxing than PhD work!

**Employer perspective:**

Though the work undertaken by Ela is slightly different than originally advertised, Ela tackled the changes head on. From almost no knowledge at the start and through self-learning she has achieved the goals set out.