



Student: David Price,
University of Southampton

Placement: Snowflake
Software

Role: Data Analyst

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What is the subject of your PhD?

Space Physics – Measuring the neutral temperature of the upper atmosphere.

Describe a typical day on placement

At the beginning of each day our team would take part in a 15 minute 'stand up' session, where we discuss progress and plans for the day's work. This meant that the team were always up to date with my work and able to provide insight easily. A typical day involved applying my programming and data analysis skills to an extremely large dataset of weather observations from flights belonging to airlines all over the world. This work was supplemented by regular meetings with the clients to ensure I was moving in the right direction. Lunchtime often involved a friendly game of ping pong with members of the office from different teams – great fun!

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

Technically my programming and statistical analysis skills were developed a lot during the placement. I was given access to a vastly different and significantly larger dataset than during my PhD allowing the opportunity to explore a variety of new analysis techniques. I also learnt a lot about the day to day workings of a modern and successful software development company.

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

I was given further insight in what careers outside of academia can offer and lucky enough to be given some incredible opportunities, including attending and presenting at an international airline safety conference in Chicago, Illinois. As a result I have developed not only my technical skills, but also my networking and presentation skills, both of which will prove useful during my PhD and for opportunities in the future.

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

I would encourage any PGR students to have a look at doing a placement during the course of their PhD. My placement was interesting and rewarding and overall I had a really positive experience – definitely worth doing!