

Part 2 – Careers and Lifestyle

“Rate my internship”

Student personal accounts in **finding** and **experiencing** internships

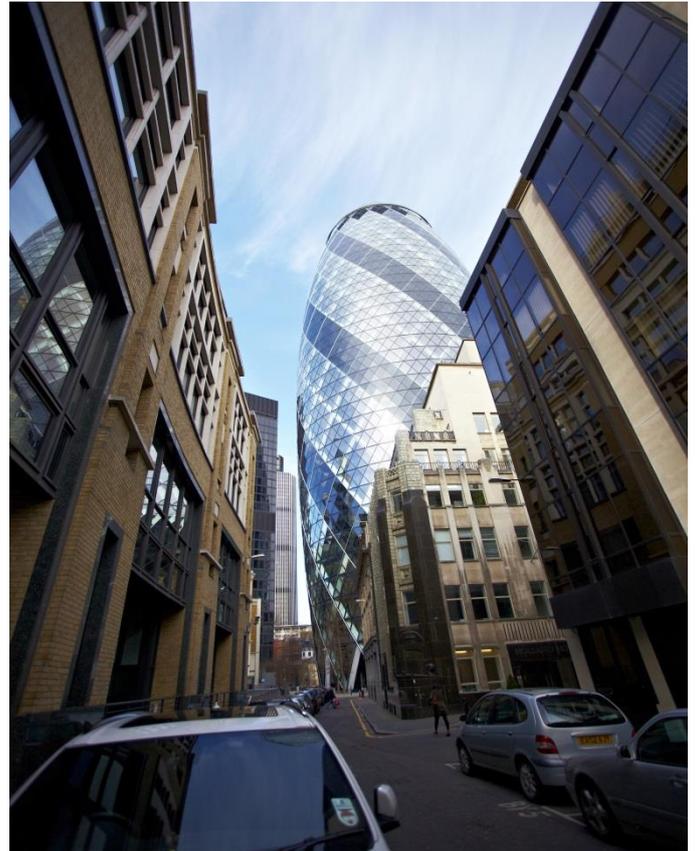
Alexander Collins (3rd Year BSc. Economics) - **Willis Re**

Through prior work experienced gained through a connection, I decided that further experience to understand the insurance industry more fully was of imperative importance. As such I pursued a contact made at prior work experience and was fortunate enough to gain the opportunity to shadow a senior Marine Broker in summer 2012 with Willis Re in London.

Whilst it may initially have been daunting working on the 15th floor of an office in the centre of the City of London (with overwhelming views), by lunchtime I had ended up out for lunch with my colleagues. This was vital to building a strong rapport, which would last for the rest of my placement.

The itinerary given to me allowed the opportunity to meet Lloyd's and Company underwriters, visit Willis' support office in Ipswich, and experience the function of the London office. It even led me to spending a day on the QBE, Marine box at Lloyd's.

My day-to-day activities ranged from tasks such as excel imputing, to more convoluted strategic planning. Through



shadowing a senior broker I was also fortunate enough to enter Lloyds of London and aid the broke to the Underwriters. Insurance, and in particular the Marine sector in which I gained experience in, is inherently connected to global macro events. As such I found it particularly interesting that events like the Costa del Concordia, MV Rena, and Hurricane Sandy are still having repercussions on the Lloyds market.

After speaking to individuals that have worked at Willis for 10, 15, and even 20 years I got the sense that Willis is a great employer, and looks after every employee extremely well. Through this experience, I have gained a further understanding of the intricacies of the insurance industry, whilst making vital contacts, which has been invaluable when applying to Graduate Schemes.

I was fortunate enough to gain my internship through utilising existing, and building up my own contacts. Being able to do this has been an invaluable asset, and would be my biggest piece of advice to gaining relevant experience beyond academia.



Donald Mackay (3rd Year BSc. Economics) – Scotia Bank

I am currently a third year economics student planning to study an MSc Economics next year to further my knowledge and development within the topic. However, whilst applying for Masters Programmes I realised that I was quite short on experience in the subject field so decided I needed to try to obtain some relevant work experience to enhance future employment prospects. Therefore, I got in touch with Scotia Bank about a potential placement over the coming summer.

I was lucky enough to be put in contact with a director of foreign exchange at Scotia Capital at the London offices who was incredibly helpful. After talking for a while he said that he would try to see if there were any openings with regards to experience in the financial services and banking sectors of the company. Furthermore, he kindly helped to refine



my CV and pointed out what possible employers specifically look for and what separates an individual from the floods of graduates all applying with similar grades and experience.

I have since been informed that it will be possible for me to work in a position shadowing a senior employee of the firm this summer, as an unpaid intern. I hope that this will improve my knowledge of the financial services as well as boost my employability. Due to the fact that I have not partaken in the scheme thus far, the only advice I would really be able to lend would be that you'll never get a placement if you don't go for it and make contact with them, after all, they were probably in the same position as you and I currently are, just a long time ago.



Advice from the editor on academic internships

As briefly mentioned in my [previous piece](#) in volume 7, I was successful in applying to an internship at an academic research unit during my second year of studies at UEA. The unit in question was the “Health Economics research Unit” based at the University of Aberdeen, which runs an annual 6 week long paid internship scheme over the summer for those keen in entering into the area. If you are keen to try out a new line of work or see what life as a researcher is like, then applying is definitely recommendable and can be very worthwhile. Hopefully this advice should apply to many similar internship schemes.

I was notified of the placement by an email sent around by ECO's careers adviser (Matthew Aldrich), which goes to show that if you're looking for experience and a way to occupy the summer, often the department has the resources and information to inform you of various opportunities. HERU's application process initially required me sending off a CV and brief cover letter - for help here, I recommend the UEA careers service. The bookable appointments are very constructive for improving such documentation. Some form of marks transcript was also required in this case, given the academic context.



I was then invited out to Aberdeen to complete a task and interview to assess my likely capabilities in the role. Again, preparation for interviews is something commonplace and accessible both online and with help from UEA Careers.

Whilst there for 6 weeks, the work itself was enjoyable and varied. It provided a new perspective on economic analysis and I was able to gain a new array of research skills. The research I conducted also took place in variety of areas of health provision, and so the job never grew old. The research fellows at the unit were all very welcoming and friendly, involving us interns in the unit very actively.

Once the six weeks were up and I returned, I was very glad that I'd had the opportunity to partake in the experience. Even for those perhaps not keen or certain on an academic route, the role is worth trying out. Note that even in the absence of a formal internship scheme, several researchers may need assistance over the summer with various projects. There's nothing to lose from Checking!

Tom Jordan,
Editor

