

Jack Gunner-Hooper
Placement Student



In the interview below, Jack Gunner-Hooper tells us about his Undergraduate Placement experience at Centerprise.

What attracted you to a one-year placement with Centerprise and what did the role entail?

The variety that the job offered was a big bonus. Working in the project space, no two days are the same as the projects are constantly progressing and eventually changing.

It also gave me a lot of exposure both internally and externally due to the size of the business. The layers between myself and senior management were much smaller than they would've been in a larger company.

What knowledge did you gain and which skills and disciplines did you develop which you will take away from your placement and utilise in your final year of studies?

I have significantly greater knowledge of Project Management. Having studied it at university and then undergoing my placement in it, it is very different as a job. Which I was pleasantly surprised about!

I have developed my organisational skills during my placement, this happened naturally over the year as a result of working closely with our Project Manager. I have also developed my ability to communicate to different layers of staff in the company and how best to work with them, from fellow undergraduates to the Chairman and CEO. It goes without saying that I developed my understanding of Project Management methodology and how to run a project autonomously.

What have you learned at Centerprise that has stuck with you the most?

Being able to communicate effectively with colleagues at different levels within the business is very important, being personable will get you a long way. But ultimately being professional and accurate with the work you produce is what will give you a good reputation in the business, and is recognised internally when you do well.

Looking for new ways to work that will make you more efficient is always good and welcomed in the business. Saying yes to opportunities to meet customer too, as it takes you out of the bubble that is the office.

What was your greatest achievement from your time at Centerprise?

Completing my first customer facing project for the UK Government Investment Building on behalf of the HMT support team within Ci's Services department. This was a big challenge for me as I had only been in the business for 6 months or so. I was tasked with coordinating four members of staff who were in more senior positions than myself, ensuring they arrived in London for a weekend deployment and finished the work ready for the customer to return to the office on the following Monday, this was a great achievement for me.

What was your favourite part and the most challenging aspect of your placement at Centerprise?

The most challenging part for me was getting used to the IT jargon and the systems that we were implementing in each project. This is because I had no knowledge of the networking side of IT before joining Centerprise, it's safe to say I had a steep learning curve after joining Ci.

My favourite part of my placement was going out to meet customers, this is because it expands my network that I can reach out to after university and it offered some real variety to the working week. Working on customer sites also allowed me to practice working alongside them and using my initiative on site if anything strayed from the project plan.

How does working in a full-time role compare to your expectations prior to commencing your placement?

I never took into account the amount of time that you spend with your colleagues and how important it is to get on with them! Working in an office environment was a bit of a shock at first, I had never been in one consistently before and this is definitely something which took some adjustment.

How does your placement year compare to other employment or work experience you have undertaken?

It is the most professional job that I have had, and also the most relevant to both my university degree and what I'm looking to go into after university. It has given me a greater understanding of how businesses work and how each department links together in order to have a fully operational organisation.

What advice would you give to an undergraduate joining the business in a similar role, especially someone new to the IT industry?

Do your research into IT infrastructure and networking! And throw yourself into your role, the more you put into it the more you will get out. Be proactive and always look for opportunities to do different things e.g. meeting customers. It gives you great experience and becomes second nature after a while.