

Emma York

Technology and Innovation Sustainability Placement - Centre for Process Innovation

Why did you decide to do a placement?

To gain experience in the office, to develop my personal and workplace skills, and to understand more about my desired career path. The main reason was to improve my ability to get a graduate role, as this can be difficult without experience in the field.

What was your typical day like?

My typical day consisted of independent desktop research, collaborative team meetings (mainly with my manager), some laboratory work, and then more independent research. I always felt appreciated by my team, and had new work or projects to contribute towards. My role was very varied, so I gained both practical experience and knowledge of the sector. I also had the opportunity to attend many food sustainability conferences which was a great networking opportunity to meet others interested in the topic, and with free food as a bonus!

What have you gained from your placement and how has your placement influenced your thoughts on what you would like to do in the future?

My placement reinforced my passion for sustainability and allowed me to understand what career path I would like to explore after university. It greatly enhanced my communication and teamwork skills, with opportunities to lead teams and present posters to colleagues. I gained many professional connections in the field which will be very beneficial when moving back to the company to my graduate job.

What's your top tip for making placement applications?

My top tip is to alter your CV and cover letters to the specific company, to show how eager and interested you are. Make sure to thoroughly research the company website before attending an interview, to ensure you can pick out key interests you have in their company projects or values, and how you aim to contribute positively to their goals. You need to stand out, by showing you have gone this extra mile in this background research. Other than that, just make sure to not get too disheartened by any rejections, it can take a while to get accepted to any placement, the process can feel difficult at times, but as long as you persevere and keep trying you will find something eventually. Once you have an offer, accept it! Even if its not exactly what you wish to do in the future, it might surprise you, and even if its not the career path for you, you will still gain so many incredible skills and experiences during the year, as well as a salary! It is definitely worth it!

