THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of Physics & Astronomy

Careers and Skills

Ozioma Kamalu:
The great thing about being here is that there are lots of opportunities to apply for internships, summer abroad, study placements, work placements.

Summer Placements

Michael Hunter:
I'm here over the summer doing a career development internship at the School of Physics and Astronomy.

Rebecca Lodin:
Then I was working with a supervisor on a project in practical particle physics, where I had a detector, and I was playing with photons. I was in the lab pretty much every day playing with electronics which I've never done before. So it was quite exciting. That really helped me because you had these weekly meetings, where I had to prepare the material, make a PowerPoint slide, show the results to the group and work in a team. Which was really a valuable experience.

Study Abroad

Aleksandra Ziolkowska:
So during my third year I went for a study abroad programme in Singapore at Nanyang Technological University. It was a really unforgettable experience. It was a completely different culture, it gave me a completely new outlook, also I benefited a lot academically. Different facilities so I can see people doing science on a different side of the world.

Mike Walmsley:
I went to UCLA, University of California, Los Angeles. I really liked that I could go and study somewhere as good as Edinburgh or better. I think there are two really good things I got out of it. I think first, trying to go internationally for a year. It's your only chance to kind of parachute yourself in somewhere new and just learn how to adapt to that. Specific to UCLA, I went to a hackathon with a couple of thousand people in a basketball stadium trying to build these technology startup ideas. Which is something very far out of what I have done before, and kind of had that chance to meet major technology companies, make a lot of good friends.

Transferrable Skills

Owen Turner:
Edinburgh was really good at encouraging you to think through ideas. So if you've encountered something that you don't know anything about, then you're always encouraged to go off and learn about it, to ask questions which will enable you to understand a subject in more detail.

Emily Gould:
What my time in Edinburgh has really given me is confidence in myself and in the things that I pursue.

Owen Turner:
There's lots of times throughout the degree where you are collaborating with other people. Whether it's your supervisor throughout a Masters project or a senior honours project, or your peers when you're doing group projects. And working together in that way is something which is really going to stand you in good stead.

Emily Gould:
I helped organise the physics peer mentoring scheme, which helps younger students get to grips with the physics degree programme. I've definitely learned a lot of time management and organisational skills and teamwork and getting people to do things. It helped me secure summer internships and I think it's really going to help me to just fit into a working environment later in life.

Careers Support

Owen Turner:
The Careers Service highlighted the important things to say, and maybe to cut out as well which is not relevant to a particular job application. And once you get to the stage where you've heard back from a company, they take you through the process of going to job interviews. Even specifically understanding what a particular company does, and the questions they might ask.

Opportunities after Graduation

Jacob Longval:
There is a pretty wide range of applications that you can go into with a physics field.

Zoe Karamanide:
You can go to engineering, computing, more physics, mathematics and many people go to biology and physics.

Mike Walmsley:
It's very broad what people go into. As well as academia, people will work in finance in the city is a common thing. That sort of ability to take a big complex system, a lot of messy data and kind of pull out meaning from it, pull out predictions from it.

Zoe Karamanide:
So I'm definitely going for a Masters but first I would like to get a gap year to work and get some experience. Since I enjoyed my internship on lasers I would like something like optical engineering.

Jacob Longval:
I'm trying to get into a Masters for mechatronical engineering, which is essentially mechanical engineering and electrical engineering combined with some computer science. My physics degree on the face value may not seem like it's related to those. I learn all the laws of nature which govern all of those things as well as an incredible set of maths skills and physical understanding, which are very applicable in those areas. A physics degree gives you the choice of going into a very deep physics field which is full of high research like particle physics, or being able to branch out into other areas of science and engineering.

Mike Walmsley:
I'd like to do a doctorate in astrophysics. I'm on the theoretical physics programme here at the moment, I like the mathematical side of things, the data analysis side of things. But I've always been very interested in space.

Mairi McKay:
When I did my masters project I got really involved with the other PhD students that had the same supervisor as me. I got to take part in the group seminars and even present some of my own work to them. That was a really nice way of easing me into what became my PhD studies.

Finally…

Mairi McKay:
So it's just a great place to work and to be inspired.