

A Study Abroad Internship at Parsons Brinckerhoff, London by Gabrielle Tsang

Words by Gabrielle Tsang, a University of Pittsburgh student, who studied abroad with CAPA International Education in London during Spring semester 2014.

Before she headed back to the States at the end of the term, she wrote this post about her internship experience with Parsons Brinckerhoff.



The moment I heard about the opportunity to intern while studying abroad in London, I knew this was going to be a great semester. One of the major motivations behind me coming to London was the fact that it is one of the three largest financial centers in the world. As a finance major, I knew this could greatly boost my resume and it would provide me with a fantastic opportunity to gain more international experience. Currently, I am interning with Parsons Brinckerhoff, a multinational engineering firm, and I could not be happier with this placement.

Parsons Brinckerhoff was founded in 1885 in New York, and since then it has grown enormously, with over 150 offices located all around the world. As a large multinational, PB has worked on a variety of projects with presence all across the globe. It was one of the first companies to help consult on the New York Subway and it is active here in London, where PB has consulted on many of the tube lines we ride everyday. PB has also worked on projects such as the High Speed Rail in the UK, the Beijing Olympics Convention Center, Heathrow Airport, LAX Airport, Taiwan High Speed Rail, and many, many more.

At PB, I serve as a Business Development Intern in our Rail & Transit sector. While at PB, I have had the opportunity to be involved in a variety of projects covering several different areas. My core responsibility is to proof the CVs from our engineers to ensure they are well-written and formatted to standards. Since these CVs are essentially the selling points for our clients, it is imperative that they look and sound professional. Typically, I will start my day by checking my mailbox for any CVs that need to be proofed

and uploaded to our database, and after that, I usually spend some time catching up with my supervisor and figuring out what projects need to be completed next.



My day-to-day work never gets boring as I am almost constantly working on two or three or more projects at one time. One of the major projects I worked on was helping to launch our Graduate Development Program. This was a program intended to enhance the experience of our graduate engineers and to make them aware of the resources PB has to offer to help them towards career success. My role in this was proofing and editing the framework document that was to be distributed to all our engineers, setting up/scheduling the dates for lecture sessions across our Manchester, Godalming, and London offices, and uploading all related content onto our intranet site. It was such a satisfaction to see this program come together because I could see the real impact I had made, especially when I sat in on the lecture session in our London office.

In addition to the graduate program, I have also completed a project on a welcome pack to be sent to the employees that will be relocating to Tel Aviv for a project. I am currently working on a research project regarding the renewable energy industry and just a couple of weeks ago I helped to plan the High Speed 2 conference in Manchester. Along with the planning, my supervisor even invited me to go on a business trip to Manchester (all expenses paid for) and sit in on the conference. I got to stay overnight in Manchester and then attend the seminars, which were very educational in terms of discussing the impact of HS2 and the controversy related to its construction. That was definitely a highlight of my internship, because I saw how my planning had helped to bring this conference together and make it successful!

On top of the projects, I also write social media announcements for PB's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and internal bulletin pages. PB is very dedicated to its employees and

we like to promote what our employees are up to. So, if we have an engineer who will be speaking at a symposium in the UK, I would be the one to research what that symposium is about, what our engineer will be presenting, and then write up a couple of sentences about what it's all about and submit that to be published on our social media pages. At first it was a daunting task, knowing that those couple of sentences would be published globally, but it's also a great sense of satisfaction seeing my work published. In addition to everything I have mentioned above, I'm involved in Blueshoots, which is essentially our internal club for organizing fundraisers and social events. I usually take the minutes for the meeting and sometimes I'll also be involved in planning the events. We have a ping pong social and rugby match coming up, and we're currently fundraising for a local charity called Help On Your Doorstep.

Being here in London has been fantastic, but getting the opportunity to work for PB has made it even better. With all the projects and events, it can get overwhelming sometimes, but it has also been highly rewarding. My supervisor is always keen on getting me involved with socials after work, or providing me with fun opportunities, like going to our Godalming office and on the business trip to Manchester. PB has such a great culture and I really admire the company's mission to build sustainability in the world. Thanks to PB, my supervisor and CAPA, I've truly made my time here in London worthwhile and memorable!