

INTERNSHIP



Entrepreneurial Students

Davide Sarandrea, a Solvay MA2 student from Politecnico di Milano, undertook a Credited Internship Program at CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research). In this interview, have access to his thoughts about this great opportunity.

Solvay Credited Internship Program: How it feels to be an intern at CERN

by Genduso Giuseppina

Bibliography

Davide is a student of the Double Degree Program in Business Engineering from Politecnico di Milano and [Solvay Brussels School](#). His bachelor degree in Management Engineering at Politecnico di Milano provides him a quantitative background, resulting from math, physics, and statistics classes. During his Master degree, he had the opportunity to focus on more business-related courses – such as strategy, marketing, leadership and data analysis.

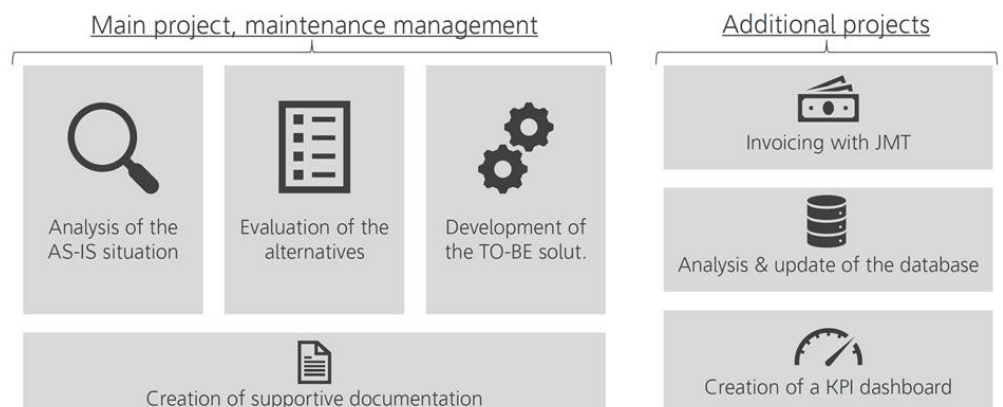
About his Credited Internship

I worked for the European Organization for Nuclear Research, CERN, the largest particle physics laboratory in the world. During my 6-month internship I was integrated into the machining and maintenance section (EN/MME-MA), which is part of the Engineering department and is entrusted with the execution of high-precision and high-quality manufacturing in the main workshop and manages the CERN-wide maintenance of machine tools.

The whole internship was focused on the improvement of the traceability of information within the section and the group, both the information related to the machine inventory and the one related to the interventions performed on these machines. This project took place in a context of change:

a change required due to the necessity to respect the new requirements set by GSI-M6 (an internal safety regulation) and the choice to attempt to make the maintenance process “smarter”.

My activities during these six months can be separated into two different categories: the main project, related to maintenance management, and some side assignments, which enabled me to deepen my knowledge about the status quo.



Why did you choose to study at the Solvay Brussels School?

I applied for the Double Degree Program as soon as I heard about the possibility to study abroad and I opted for the Solvay Brussels School, among the alternatives, both because of the reputation of the University and because of the positive experience of other students that took part in the exchange before me.

How did you decide to apply for this kind of internship?

One of my main criteria was the attempt to leave my “comfort zone” and do something different. This is the main reason why I applied for an intern position in a non-profit organization: to learn something new in a context I was not used to.

What differences did you discover between theory and reality?

The first working weeks were somewhat strange to me, because this was my first working experience. Once I got used to my new daily schedules, what turned out to be useful were the projects I carried out during my studies as well as seminars, rather than classes themselves. The knowledge I built over time surely played a role, yet I find that the ability to work in teams, the analysis methodologies and other soft skills – present in front of others, support an idea, etc. – are much more important.

What was the biggest challenge you encountered?

For someone with a management engineering background as me, working for a large-scale non-profit organization was confusing because of a change of focus. While most of the classes I attended over time were related to the maximization of the economic results, an organization as CERN is interested in maximizing the results achieved given the budget granted by the Member States. These differences gave me the opportunity to assume a different perspective.

What was a very bad day for you as an intern?

Honestly, my whole experience has been exciting, and I cannot complain about a single day.

What was a very good day for you as an intern?

One of the best days was probably the one in which I got the opportunity to present the results of the work my team and I did in front of our colleagues, other groups and the chief of the EN/MME group. The audience was really interested in the presentation, and I was really satisfied about the results we achieved.

What did you consider as your strengths and weaknesses?

Among the strengths, I would list the organization of work, communication, and the presentation skills. As far as weaknesses are concerned, something I should work on are feedbacks. Normally I tend to carry out my tasks asking for a feedback only once the work is complete: comparing my opinion with others’ while the work is being done could improve the final result.

What is your career reflection? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Thanks to this working experience I learned the importance that a proper work-life balance can have, as well as the relevance of doing something satisfying. Our professional career will cover most likely a great share of our existence, it is important to do something that has an impact – on the company, on the society, or why not on the world – and that makes us feel good.

As for the future, after this experience I would like to change again, and maybe apply for some marketing positions or work for a consultancy firm. I do not have a long-term plan yet, I would like to travel and to gain experience.

Do you have a last advice for students who want to pursue a CIP?

Do something for yourself, not just for your CV. Differentiate yourself, leave your comfort zone, try to grow as a person and not just as a future worker.

ABOUT OUR CREDITED INTERNSHIPS

If you are a company or a student interested in our Credited Internships, contact our Solvay Career Services:

PASCALINE FLON - CAREER SERVICES OFFICER :
Pascaline.flon@ulb.ac.be