

My Step Experience – IT

The year of development – Jonathan

Jonathan, a University of Kent student studying Computer Science, tells us about his year in industry placement as a Software Developer with Sensible Development a well-established web-development company based in Brighton.

I found out about the opportunity through my University's placement office, and I applied immediately. I received a call from Step a few weeks later, and they informed me that I had been shortlisted for the job and was invited to attend an interview. The interview was scheduled during exam season, which wasn't ideal but I prepared myself as best as I possibly could and travelled down to Brighton.

The interview went really well, and a week later I received a call from Step informing me I had been offered the place. Fast forward a month and it's time to move to Brighton and start my placement. On my first day I was nervous, but mainly excited to start this great learning experience. I set up my computer and spent the first half of the day installing software and setting up accounts. The boss then took me out for lunch and showed me some of Brighton, before we returned to the office and I finished with some testing.

I spent most of the first week testing web pages and searching for bugs, which was interesting and made me want to learn more. I was moved on to some coding, which was quite scary at first as it was vastly different to the code I had experienced at university. Understanding the differences between my university work and real life work will probably be the most important thing I will learn during this placement.

After a few weeks of getting to know the system and doing small bug fixes, I found myself doing more complicated work. I was being trusted more with projects and being given more and more complex tasks each day. I am now in regular contact with clients through email and phone, and handle their requests and issues.

The main languages I have been coding in during my placement include: Java, JavaScript, PHP, HTML, CSS, JSPs. I also had the opportunity to learn some Python in the fourth week of my internship, something I now enjoy using very much. Learning about Git and how to use it, has been very important in my understanding of version control, and the necessity for it.

I have learned so much in the four months I have been working here, and am looking forward to learning so much more in the future (and drinking as much tea as possible).

I am very grateful to the lovely people at Step for making all of this possible, and would recommend them to anyone who is looking for an internship.

A warm welcome – Gbenga

Gbenga, a Computer Systems Engineering graduate from the University of Northampton, tells us about his internship with B.I.G. (Brackets and Bolts) a manufacturers and distributors of metalwork and fixings throughout the UK.

Nothing beats starting your first day of an internship overdressed and looking like you are about to take over the business; as you may have rightly guessed, I arrived with the full works, trousers, shirt, tie, pointed shoes and even a smart jacket that said “look at me, I’m somebody”.

My first day was a delight, as I opened the doors, the director was coming down the stairs with the biggest smile that screamed out ‘excitement’!

After the building tour was done, I was shown my desk and left to get acquainted with my new computer and desk. My first two days were more or less the same, pretty laid back but informative; I figured the director wanted to allow me some time to get my head around the task ahead and integrate myself back into society as I had been away in America for three months teaching slam poetry at a remote camp in upstate New York.

My third day started off the same as the first two, but by the afternoon the office had branded me a technology hero and were directing all their computer issues towards me. Flattered at first, I soon felt the pressure as it sunk in that I was no longer a student but an employee in a company who looked up to me to solve their IT issues. Luckily I was prepared for such an occurrence and after a panic trip to the restroom, I re-emerged and submerged myself fully into the tasks ahead and was delighted at the over outcome; I was able to retain my super hero status and lived to fight another day. By the end of the week, I felt a sense of accomplishment knowing I had completed a week and had successfully integrated myself into a company where I hope to stay long term.



Overall I am impressed with the recruitment process for the internship as Step were extremely patient with me from start to finish. The interview process was straightforward and it was useful to have regular updates, I felt as if I had a whole team working towards getting me into an internship and ensuring that I succeed in it. As I was able to start my internship after my trip to America, I was delighted Step was able to accommodate my needs and ensured everything ran smoothly.

Cherry, an Information and Communication Technology student from Southampton Solent University, talks us through her year-in-industry placement as a support desk administrator at a software company

My role is support desk administrator at a software company. The company customises Priority ERP software for businesses. ERP software is enterprise resource planning software (look it up if you are interested, it's worth a read as ERP is such a great and complex idea). 'Priority' is an ERP system which helps a business manage all aspects, including finances, inventory, manufacturing, sales and purchasing. It is fully customizable and flexible.



Our customers have a maintenance contract with us, meaning that if something seems wrong with their system they can get support. That is where I come in. I am mostly responsible for communication with customers and investigating customer problems. I have been involved with other aspects of the business, including training customers and helping the company prepare for a website redesign.

Step were very helpful during the application and interview process. I had a friendly voice at the end of the phone at all STEPS of the process... I have been able to develop all of my skills in this job role, including everything from communication skills to my organisational skills.

I had the opportunity to get stuck in, get involved and learn. I jumped at the chance and managed to succeed. The internship has been such a valuable experience to me and I have now ended up with a long term job from doing this, which is great. I definitely recommend doing an internship through Step as it helps set you up for the future.