

Placements, Internships & Volunteering

Thank you for agreeing to share your experience with us. The Careers and Employability Service invites you to answer the following questions. Please return your completed document with a professional photograph (if included) to Louisa Lawrie (louisa.lawrie1@abdn.ac.uk).

Please indicate if you would prefer us to anonymise your name or the name of the organisation for the case study (underline yes or no): YES (anonymise) / NO (not required)

About you:	
Name	Catarina Casella
Degree programme	MSci in Genetics with Industrial Placement
Current year of study (e.g. third year)	5 th Year
Email address	catarina.casella.14@abdn.ac.uk

About your internship/placement/volunteering work	
What was your role and the name of the organisation?	External Communications and Government Affairs Undergraduate, Pfizer UK
Please briefly describe your employer (e.g. size of the organisation, the area you worked in and the location)	Pfizer is one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world with a portfolio of over 355 medicines, prescription and over the counter and with 101 products currently in their pipeline. Its headquarters are located in New York and it currently employs over 92,400 people worldwide. Its UK presence was established in 1952 with the opening of a facility in Folkestone, Kent, currently employing over 2,500 colleagues that work across five UK locations. Pfizer has several departments that range from commercial operations, research and development, manufacturing, and packaging and distribution. I worked in the Walton Oaks, Surrey, office which is where their UK headquarters are located. I worked in the External Communications and Government Affairs (CGA) team, within the Corporate Affairs (CA) department.
How did you find out about your internship, placement or volunteering opportunity?	I found my placement through the Pfizer UK placement website (https://www.pfizer.co.uk/undergraduate-vacancies), which was indicated to me by the Industrial Placement coordinator.
Describe your main duties, tasks and responsibilities.	<p>As part of my year at Pfizer UK, I worked within CA providing support to the CGA team. By being part of CGA, I assisted in the drafting of reactive media statements, which are used in response to media enquiries, reactive media Q&As pertaining to product submissions to health authorities, media briefings for upcoming interviews and meetings, which inform the Pfizer attendee of all Pfizer messaging concerning current environmental topics as well as intel around the other meeting attendees, and finally press releases regarding upcoming investments, product marketing authorizations or upcoming company initiatives. Besides the ad-hoc support detailed above, I helped to lead on three separate projects. Alongside one of the External Communications Manager, I helped develop a disease awareness campaign, which involved creating branding materials, a website, educational resources and a targeted social media campaign to raise awareness around the invisible condition that is Ulcerative Colitis (UC). The campaign development lasted around 6 months, with it being launched in June 2019. This specific project allowed me to understand the importance a communications campaign can have for patients and the need to raise the general public's awareness around an invisible disease such as UC, whilst also highlighting the compliance and legal challenges pharmaceutical companies face when trying to engage with an external audience.</p> <p>Over the course of seven months, I also solely managed the Press Office for Pfizer UK which granted me the chance to be in regular contact with journalists from trade and national publications thus gaining a deeper understanding around the type of enquiries Pfizer receives and the potential reputational issues these may bring. I was also given the</p>

opportunity to help develop reactive media statements to respond to media enquiries as well as articles and opinion pieces, to raise Pfizer's external profile whilst positioning the company as a thought leader in specific areas of life sciences.

The third project I steered on was the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Tracker and its management over the course of a year. The tool was implemented in September 2018 and documented meetings held by CA Pfizer colleagues with key external stakeholders. Recording these interactions has proved vital in planning for upcoming meetings, which numerous times requires developing briefings and internal messaging around topical external issues in advance, and in maintaining an alignment in the messaging and approach used by colleagues across the department when engaging with external audiences.

Overall my experience in Pfizer was fantastic and at the end of it I was invited to come back as a Communications Coordinator.

<p>What was the highlight of your experience? Why?</p>	<p>I think working with a fantastic team that fully trusted me and that as time passed gave more and more responsibility was fantastic. I feel that I have gained many friends but also massively expanded my network of people. My experience at Pfizer also gave me more professional visibility within the Health Policy and Communications environment in the UK, with me ending up being offered an Account Manager position at one of the top Health Policy Consultancies in London.</p>
<p>What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about completing an internship, placement or volunteering in this area?</p>	<p>Definitely do it. It will be the best year of your university life! Besides learning a lot of new skills and gaining practical experience in things you didn't have exposure to during university, you will also expand your network of colleagues and potential even get a job proposal at the end of your placement.</p>
<p>Is there anything you wish you knew about before completing your internship, placement or volunteering?</p>	<p>Perhaps be more confident in myself and know that the people you will be working with will see you as their equal and their colleague, thus you are expected to work as hard as everyone else a not be 'babied' throughout the year. It was definitely a fantastic experience which changed my life.</p>
<p>Additional comments</p>	

CONSENT FORM: CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

The University of Aberdeen may wish to use the information you provide and photograph(s) (if provided). This information may be made publicly available in any University media including publications, University website (www.abdn.ac.uk) and social media pages. I understand that the text supplied, or extracts from it, may be edited according to house style.

We would be grateful if you could sign below to confirm that you consent to the above use:

Your name (print): Catarina Casella

DocuSigned by:
Signed: *Catarina Casella*
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Date: 01/02/2020