**Jenna Macaulay – Towers Watson Benefits Actuarial Summer Intern Profile – Leeds**

**Why did you choose Towers Watson?**

I’d been interested in applying for Actuarial Internships for a couple of years, but had no idea where to even start looking for companies that might be good. I had a list of 5 or so companies from a friend who’d applied the year before, but no background to any of them. When you’re looking on the internet at these things all the words sound very similar, but the more I looked into it, the more the Towers Watson Internship programme stood out. It’s very well-structured and it makes such a difference that it’s so well-established as they know how to settle you in and how to get the best out of you. It’s also 6 weeks long which is quite different to other schemes; I found that this meant that it’s quite intense while you’re there, which I much preferred rather than being sat trying to find ways to fill my time. It wasn’t until the assessment centre though that my mind was really made up. It was professional, but still felt warm and welcoming, it pushed me but meant that I was forced to step up and show what I could do.

**What did I get up to during my internship?**

Over the 6 weeks the variety of work I was exposed to surprised me, they really made me feel like I was a part of the team and it was helping them out that I was there. I was involved in calculations, helped with several quarterly funding updates and got the chance to sit in on some meetings and conference calls. I was involved in a whole range of things that people at all levels in the office do, their aim was to show me how the career progresses and to give me a real insight into what I can expect if I become an actuary, which was really useful. It meant I wasn’t just learning something specific like carrying out calculations and doing that over and over for 6 weeks. The internship is as much for you to see whether Actuarial work is right for you as it is for TW to see if they think you’re right for it and TW understand that and they make sure you see as much as possible, so you’re fully informed at the end of the internship.

Of course it isn’t all work and there were several results celebrations whilst I was there and I was invited to lunch with the people I worked with, so there are lots of opportunities to talk informally with people and ask any questions you have. There was also a whole team race night evening organised which was really fun, lots of people attended and it’s a very sociable office. Every week we also played sport on a Wednesday which was often ultimate Frisbee which really made you feel a part of the team and get involved. They make every effort to get you involved.

**What did you learn during your internship?**

One of the main things I learnt was that I enjoyed the work of an intern and I experienced the day to day job at first hand. Don’t be put off by intern stereotypes, it was a really great experience and you don’t just get coffee all the time! Something else I learned was that you can’t please everyone all of the time, despite wanting to get involved in as much as you can. If you have too much work on then it’s better to say it, rather than spreading yourself too thinly and not getting anything finished. Similarly I learnt that it’s better to get on with one job and see it to completion then starting on the next, instead of doing small parts of each all at the same time. This just leads to you spending more time changing between the jobs and nothing gets finished. I guess it all comes down to having a clear plan in your mind at the start of the day and then sticking to it and having the discipline to not dip in and out of other projects, knowing that your plan is realistic.

**What are you currently doing?**

I am currently about to go into my 4th year at the University of Warwick studying Maths and Physics. I will graduate in June 2014 and hope to go on and work in an actuarial position.

**Do you have any tips for students who might seek to obtain an internship in the future?**

Ask questions! You may feel like you’re annoying people but they do prefer it if you ask a lot of questions and get it right in the end, this also made me feel more like a part of the team. It’s important to get involved with the team, there were a number of socials throughout my time there and attending them meant I settled in much more easily than just trying to talk to people while in the office.