



Robin Palmer – Towers Watson Retirement Intern (Actuarial Consulting)

Why did you choose Towers Watson?

At the start of my 2nd Year at Leeds University I applied for summer internships at a number of companies, not just for Actuarial Consulting. I first heard of Towers Watson at a careers fair, and it was after talking to a member of the Graduate recruitment team that applying here really appealed to me. All of the associates at the fair were very welcoming and talkative, and this was my first experience of the emphasis that Towers Watson puts on the social side as well as the office work. There are many reasons why I chose to apply to Towers Watson, the main ones being their focus on client satisfaction, as well as hiring the most talented graduates. The study package

for the Actuarial exams Towers Watson provide is both comprehensive and competitive, and I was also drawn to the global nature of the business.

What did you get up to during your internship?

I felt like a part of the team right from the start, getting involved with a variety of both client work (which mainly was for trustees of defined benefit pension schemes) and in-house work in the Leeds office. On the client side I calculated individual member transfer values, produced Quarterly Funding Updates, and carried out a mortality experience analysis study to name a few. All Towers Watson interns attend 3 'intern days' in the offices in London and Reigate, in which team projects are introduced and presented. I am currently in a team with interns in Leeds, London and Reigate, working on a Campus Ambassador Program. The projects are a great way of improving essential skills such as chairing conference calls, managing workflow and presenting, all of which I feel I have improved on massively during my time so far. In addition, we have received some local ad-hoc training from the members of the team in Leeds on various topics, for example on pension scheme valuations, and current affairs in pensions.

There is a great emphasis on social events in the Leeds office, and so far I have played in the 5-a-side football league team, been to the 'Race Night' team social, and been on various pub/cinema/BBQ evenings (not forgetting Friday pub lunches).

What did you learn during your internship?

To be honest, I don't know where to start, I have learnt so much. First and foremost, I have learnt that the working environment in the office is very open and all associates are friendly, making it far easier to develop my skills. It turns out Excel has a multitude more functions than I first thought, and my technical ability using Excel has improved dramatically, through the help of the rest of the team. I have learnt to manage and prioritize work in order to meet deadlines, and I feel that my confidence has grown a great deal in the six weeks I have been here. I have been introduced to actuarial notation, as well as many tools such as software to track the liabilities of pension schemes. The whole experience has really given me an idea of what it would be like to work as an actuarial consultant, and confirmed that this is the career path I would like to pursue after graduating.

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

From my point of view, there is no better way to experience what a career would be like than to do an internship, so it is definitely worth putting in the time in second year to apply. Having said that, do research thoroughly which career paths suit you best so as not to waste any time applying for jobs you wouldn't want. It is paramount that you do your research for the phone interview and the assessment day.

Towers Watson are interested in you as a person, not just in academic ability (though this is an important factor too), so don't be afraid to apply if you don't have a perfect academic record!