

Case study - Virtual Internship with Ecoexist, Pune, India

For this virtual internship, three students from the University of Birmingham partnered with three students from Swinburne University in Australia, to undertake a 10-week virtual internship with Ecoexist, a social enterprise based in Pune, India. The focus of the internship would be around reducing the level of plastic bags in India, identifying suitable solutions to the challenges posed. Working with their counterparts in Australia, each intern would focus on 3 key areas – research, marketing and design.

Jennifer Knowles, Psychology, Masters Student



- **Research/Marketing Virtual Internship, Ecoexist, India**
- **Jennifer focused on researching and analysing the use of plastic bags in the UK, Australia and India, and identifying solutions to change consumer mind-set.**

What are the key skills you've developed from the virtual internship?

The virtual internship has been a really great experience! It has been really unique and definitely allows you to develop skills that you wouldn't necessarily develop on a "standard" internship.

In this day and age companies are becoming increasingly reliant on modern technology and virtual working, and that the fact I already have experience with this, helps me to stand out from the crowd when applying to jobs

I have developed my communication and team working skills – when half your team is across the world, it makes it really important to think about the way you communicate, how you express yourself, and the way you listen to other people's ideas. This really develops a different kind of communication skill that you would get from a face to face internship.

What did you most enjoy about the virtual internship?

One the main things I enjoyed about the internship was to meet people from around the world and learn about their culture. Working collaboratively with them, it was great to see things from their perspective and the different approaches they had.

Has the virtual internship helped with your career path?

The virtual internship has helped me to clarify my future career aspirations. I've always wanted to work in a career where my ideas made a difference to the world that we live in, and I knew that local government would give me a fantastic opportunity to do that. What I didn't know was what area of local government I wanted to work in, so through the virtual internship I learned that I really enjoy campaigning for cause, so I would really like to work in sectors such as public health or the environment sector. It has also helped me consider different career options that I hadn't previously looked at such as market research.

The virtual internship was a fantastic experience, I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such a great group of people.

Since the virtual internship, Jenny has successfully secured a graduate role with the Ministry of Justice