

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.

Katherine Maloney, Bioscience with Business Management, Undergraduate student



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

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

One of the main skills I've gained from the virtual internship is increased confidence using on-line communication tools. I think this is really important as these are becoming more popular and a requirement in most careers.

I developed technical skills of using new software, including Trello, Skype, Picktochart, and how much you can do with Word to make reports more visually appealing. I have never written a professional business report before, and it was a great experience to complete one and see how it comes together.

What did you most enjoy about the virtual internship?

The best part of the internship was the team that we had – a friendly atmosphere that motivated us to work beyond our scheduled hours as we were enjoying what we were doing. Working on a current and important issue where the solutions presented will make a difference has been extremely rewarding.

Has the virtual internship helped with your career path?

Working on the virtual internship has opened my eyes to the scale of the issue (the environment) and how much more work there is to be done. I would like to continue doing similar projects and work in the sustainability sector, stay in touch with Ecoexist and even visit them to see what things are like on the ground over there. Overall, it would be great to continue doing work with a purpose.

Since her virtual internship, Katherine self-funded a trip to Ecoexist and volunteer with them to further support their work.