24 august 2017

To: Sandra Stark

From: Weihao Zou

Computer Science Co-op work report

Non-confidential

Over the summer, I have worked for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), formerly known as Canadian Immigration and Citizenship (CIC) for the period of time between June 5th and August 18th. During my work term, I worked for the Domestic Network under the supervision of Leanne Nguyen, who was tasked with assigning me projects pertinent to my abilities.

IRCC is a government department with a mandate of: linking immigration services with citizenship registration, promote the unique ideals all Canadians share and help build a stronger Canada. It does so by developing and implementing programs and workflows that oversees the arrival of competent candidates into Canada while seeing to the protection of Canadians. It is tasked with overseeing the migration of immigrants and people in need of protection without compromise. Furthermore, IRCC is also responsible for the issuance and seizure of official travel documents, such as passports, should the need arise.

During my work term for the position of Visual Basics developer, I was given two projects requiring the skillset I’ve acquired from the Computer Science program. The first projects was something called a “Placemat”, which was a central location where employees could find and travel to links or documents pertinent to their work. The project first started with a requirement-gathering period during which we determined which links were relevant enough to be put on the placemat. During that period, I was put in touch with someone who had done something similar before. We discussed the requirements and I developed the page, which I then passed back to them for comments before making the suggested changes. For this project, I’ve had more social interactions than I expected to have for this position. I was expecting a linear project development but it was similar to agile development in that I continually went back for feedback and comments. For this project, I had made a simple HTML page with CSS and Bootstrap that housed the links to the relevant pages and documents before presenting it to the Director General.

The second project was something called a “Referral form”. It was a form which would be filled by another department highlighting the reasons why a file was transferred to the Domestic Network. For this project, I was also put in touch by my supervisor with someone who was giving me feedback and suggestions as to what the form should have and look like. With their suggestions, I made a form with a JavaScript backend that would validate user input, raise errors, and print the summary of the inputs and selections when submitted. For this project, I worked with HTML and CSS for the creation of the form itself and JavaScript for the backend validation.

During my work term, I’ve also worked for a different branch, the Client Experience Branch, due to having too light of a workload in the Domestic Network. While there, I worked on the project Blueprint 2020 Employee Idea Fund, which was a project that took employee’s suggestions and made decisions as to whether or not they should be funded. During that time, I was tasked with designing a layout for the home page of the project on their website as well as conduct research on stories that featured employee innovation. While my work there did not specifically require any technical skills related to coding and programming, I was still satisfied with the quality of my work.

The technical environment of the workplace was rather simple; the stations had windows 2007 and while the programs were strictly need-to-have, I was not overwhelmed as they were something I’ve used before (Adobe Dreamweaver). During my work term, I’ve learned to quickly communicate a project’s requirements and features as well as how to ask questions pertinent to the project. While I have not learned any new coding-related skills or languages, I’ve acquired some skills that would be helpful to have in project development groups.

I am satisfied with my work term, the projects I’ve completed and the work experience I’ve gathered. I was not overwhelmed by work I didn’t understand and feel like the program has prepared me thoroughly for the kind of work in that position. I am glad we have co-op preparation classes where we’re asked to write our resumes and are given constructive feedback on our CVs. Furthermore, I am also satisfied with the interview preparation process. All in all, I believe the preparation we’ve received is excellent and helped us greatly in prepping us for the workplace.