## DATE: 01st October 2018

BlackRock

Student Work Placement | Initial Report

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2018

## WORD COUNT: 2962

**Introduction**

BlackRock is a United States global asset management corporation (BlackRock - 1988). It is a premier provider of global investment management, risk management and advisory services to institutional, intermediary and individual investors around the world. In 2017, the company became the largest and most trusted asset manager in the world, with over $6.3 trillion in assets under management. Being the industry leader, with its power and amount of responsibility, forces BlackRock to always keep up with the emerging technologies. This means that it is the perfect place for people like me to dive right into the centre of it, use and improve our skills. I believe that this company will give me relevant experience in the industry and help me grow beyond my expectations.

The InfoSec Development Team is a global team based out of India, United Kingdom and United States. The fast-paced environment requires different software implementation techniques to achieve the development objectives. The suite of application developed and maintained by my team are used to ensure compliance with information security, internal and external requirements throughout the firm while also providing solutions to improve efficiency, automation, active monitoring and reporting capabilities within this environment and technology division. We ensure the environment security and its adaptability to new technologies.

My team is responsible for developing web applications and engineering solutions with third party products. The members of the team work directly with clients to source, design, implement, test and close our projects. We individually take ownership of a project, ensuring all aspects of the software development lifecycle. I am lucky to have joined an energetic fast paced team.

\*Who do you report to

**Introduction and Expectations**

Work based learning is a great opportunity for students like me to get an inside look at the industry and learn about this field of work. It is a chance for me to understand if this kind of environment and company is something that I would want to pursue in the future and to expand my network with exceptional and dedicated people. Additionally, BlackRock provides an internal learning platform and benefits for employees. The materials and regular conferences offered cover all field of work from different industries and give people the environment to expand their knowledge and interests.

I would argue that one of the most important aspects of my placement is that the people treat interns like employees and not a simple student. Keeping me accountable for my work and including me in their environment makes this experience extremely realistic, offering a unique perspective. I work independently and as a part of a team, implementing targeted solutions. All this combined, boosts my confidence and rises my expectation level of delivery without being influenced by my superiors.

**Training**

I believe that student work placements are, in most cases, about what you make out of them. I learned that an important difference between small companies and corporations is the learning curve. As an intern and a new member of their team, I spent the first month of the internship just learning and understanding the company’s tools, principles and infrastructure. In order to start a project, as a software engineer, I had to understand the overall business and client’s requirements. It offered me a perspective different from university programmes. Despite all of the lessons and extra hours put in the subject area during the two university years, there was a palpable gab between what I learned, and what I have to do in the industry and the specific working environment. From tools to complexity of a task, it is always a process of learning. For example, compatibility with the environment, dependency issues, libraries and frameworks used in the industry, were only touched in the classes. Their importance was not emphasised enough in my opinion. I had to spend a significant amount of time learning to deal with those issues and understand how to fix them. But it is expected to continuously learn in this area of work and it was a welcomed introduction in this lifestyle. The separation from a theoretical and practical controlled environment of the university, provides maximum exposure and real-life experience. I have the opportunity to acquire first hand industry knowledge and apply it in complex projects.

The INFOSEC Software Dev team provides me the opportunity to make a difference with my work. By assigning real projects with impact on their clients and employees, it urges you to get out of the comfort zone, step up and grow with the pressure. This is an exciting change of phase that could result in significant future improvement.

**Working on a project**

At the end of the training period, I emerged with new skills, learned in order to accomplish certain goals. For example, I learned to use new frameworks, custom APIs and languages. These specialised skills of choice were taken in consideration when I received my first project. I will have to rewrite and develop a legacy application that is several years old and used by a big percentage of the company users. This process includes deadlines negotiation, learning to work with my team and understanding the requirements. Coordinating with the team is a key aspect of the development process. I had to set my priorities for the project in order to deliver expected incremental results and work along the application development life cycle. During this time, I encountered extraordinal circumstances where we had to work as a whole team to solve given issues, switch my focus to a different task concerning security vulnerabilities and fix them while dealing with clients and life cycle of a product. I experienced planned update releases while considering others work and project compatibility. Dealing with other teams helped me understand better the environment and the projects I was working on. Getting external feedback is a valuable asset in fixing issues. Working in a corporation means working for a manager and presenting progress on a regular basis. This includes regular team meetings, writing detailed reports, chances to discuss difficulties and opportunities.

My responsibilities call for a diverse range of expertise and requires me to apply the knowledge of each phase of software development lifecycle (SDLC) and take directions from a different region while collaborating with colleagues around the globe. This process includes gathering requirements, design and presentation of the requirements, developments and implementation, documenting the progress and testing it, deploying the solutions and release publications. It provides countless of opportunities to research, develop and implement solutions using learned and new technologies. This experience enhances my self-learning capabilities, teaches me where to look for industry information and it teaches me how to improve my ability to prioritise, manage and perform under heavy workload.

Every Wednesday, BlackRock has a developer meeting where every development team gathers and shares their work and perspective. This offers an insight on what the company is focused on, what other people in this field of work are doing and a chance for us to ask questions and learn.

**Conclusion**

The overall experience so far, helped me learn more about myself. Adapting to the environment, made me improve my lifestyle, making most of my hours and working on my habits. Working daily a considerable amount of hours on my skills provide an immeasurable amount of experience and knowledge. I can focus on my personal development and understand my limits. This way, I can know what I can do and where do I have to put additional effort and time to achieve my goals.