

Jennifer Booker, Consilium Strategic Communications



'My best bit of advice to a PIPS student would be: Ask around for contacts, network as much as you can – I got my placement through a colleague.'

I carried out my placement at Consilium Strategic Communications, an agency that manages communications and public relations for a number of public and private healthcare companies.

During my placement, I:

- Aided the team with wide a variety of tasks including:
 - Drafting press releases and Monday Bulletin articles
 - Competitor research and analysis
 - Data analysis
 - Media communication and publicity
- Attended client meetings and conferences
- Gave a teach-in session to the team covering relevant topics in biology
- Helped with Consilium's Healthcare IR conference organisation
- Tweeted on behalf of Consilium with relevant news from each panel at the Economist War on Cancer Conference

In several instances, my work was presented to the client and influenced decisions about their PR strategy.

I was interested in Consilium Strategic Communications as I wanted to work within communications and find out about the biotech industry. Working at an agency meant I worked with a variety of companies and gained a good understanding of working outside of academia.

During the placement, the biggest challenge I came across was the pace of work compared to academia. I found that there were a large amount of tasks to complete which had tight deadlines to meet. However, I feel this has improved my time management. On the other hand, I found that you would see the outcomes of your work a lot quicker than you would in the labs, which was very rewarding!

Overall it was a very positive experience working for Consilium. I now have a better understanding about the field of communications, about how a business operates and is structured and also about financial markets and investment.

The placement has taught me that I'm very proactive and will always suggest new tasks and projects to increase my development. However, I sometimes take on too much work and become overwhelmed by work load. Therefore, I need to learn to prioritise my time more wisely, to see the best results.

Whilst I enjoyed working in communications, I now know that it is not for me. I did however very much enjoy working with Biotech companies, and would be interested in pursuing a career in this sector when I complete my PhD.

Top Tips for other PhD students?

1. Ask around for contacts – I got my placement through a colleague