

A Day in the Life of an International Intern In Shenzhen, China

As an international intern, there are many learning curves you will experience. Not only will you learn new skills in the workplace, but also through immersing yourself in the daily lifestyle and culture of China itself.

7:15: After much trial and error in determining the best time to leave for work, in order to arrive on time I leave Apartment One at 8am (largely contrasting to the 7.15am leaving time from the first day of independent travel to work!). Whilst there are various forms of transport, with some interns preferring the bus journey, I take the subway to work. It takes approximately 15-20 minutes to walk to the closest subway station to Apartment One which is Hai Yue. Then, a fur-



9:00: Upon arriving at work for 9am, once the office is unlocked I generally begin the day by making a coffee and conversing with my colleagues, finding out the office plans for the day and communicate what work needs to be completed within what time frame. When embarking upon an internship in China, you will quickly find out the importance of Wechat as a form of communication, both within and outside the office. Often, if colleagues are out of office, I will continue to get audio messages with tasks to complete, continuing the communication required for the office to work productively.

I am currently on a legal internship placement with Dentons in Shenzhen, working alongside a team of 8, including another CRCC Asia intern. At first I was a little anxious about the internship as I was uncertain about what was expected of me as an international intern, especially since Chinese law greatly differs to UK law in many areas. Whilst I had an interview with my current supervisor and was required to complete a written report prior to obtaining my placement, it



was not until I started working in the office and amongst the team that I felt more comfortable. I found that once tasks were set and clearly outlined, that everything else followed. The majority of the work I have been focusing upon throughout the first 4 weeks in Shenzhen is assessing law from a comparative perspective, having been required to research and analyse the US, UK and Hong Kong law for specific performance and preliminary injunctions in the context of commercial leases.

12:00: Having lunch from 12 until 2pm is a particular bonus when working in China. Everyone will choose to use this time differently, whether continuing to work, ordering in food or venturing out in the sun (or rain) during the break. Upon arrival to China, what I found most surprising was how acceptable and common it is for colleagues to take a nap during lunch – a habit of which is worth adopting, particularly upon arrival and jet lagged!

5:00: Whilst my working hours are 9am until 6pm, on Tuesday and Thursdays I have permission from my supervisor to leave work early to participate in CRCC Asia's Mandarin classes after work. In leaving slightly earlier, this provides time for the commute. Upon leaving the office at 5.30 I would generally arrive back at Apartment One for 6.45pm, allowing a few minutes to unload my rucksack, and prepare for the lesson which takes place from 7pm to 8:30pm. The lessons are quite varied and a nice way to meet other interns on separate programmes. In one session we may be learning about numbers and how to bargain in the markets, whilst the next we would be learning Chinese songs or how to order food in restaurants.

8:30: Around 8.30pm many of us interns would try to meet for dinner. Living in Apartment One, it can be rather tempting to go to Western restaurants nearby. However, within our group we try to avoid Western food as much as possible, for two main reasons. Firstly, it is rather expensive. Secondly, when in China for a limited time, we hope to try and experience as many new dishes as possible, which are not available back home in the UK.

In reflection of my overall experience in China, one of the most prominent lessons I have learnt whilst out here is to be open minded and disregard any pre-conceptions you may have of your work environment or general experience. So far as possible, I would recommend to try not to compare your internship with others. In reality, some interns will settle in quicker to work life within the office than others and many factors are also influenced by the sector of work, as well as the individual company. It is important to remember that everyone on CRCC Asia's internship programme will have different opportunities, different experiences and will experience high points and low points at different times during the programme.



Essentially, be open to new experiences, even the most stressful events at times can turn out to be the most memorable from the entire trip. It is the way you deal with and learn from these experiences during your time with CRCC Asia which is of greater importance. To those considering participating on the programme, I would most definitely say take the leap of faith. By immersing yourself into Chinese culture, daily life and work, the experience becomes so much more than an internship abroad.