

TESTIMONIAL- BEING AN INTERN AT FUTURE CITIES CATAPULT

I managed to secure a new role with Future Cities as an Integrated Urban Planning Researcher after successfully completing my internship!



Role: Built Environment Intern

Year: Summer 2016, 3 month-internship

Responsibility:

- Conducting independent research to discover key areas of innovation within the built environment, and identify gaps and market opportunities within each key area.
- Providing supporting research for the Global Review of Smart City Strategies project.

- **What did you achieve during your internship?**

- A research report- the Built Environment Portfolio, and a series of thematic studies.
- A summary of the key themes of smart city strategies among 50 cities globally.

- **How would you describe your work relationship with Erin, your supervisor?**

Erin has been a very good supervisor and a great colleague to work with. We met on a weekly basis to review the work I had done. Her patience and encouragements gave me a lot of freedom in framing and developing my research. She gave me very clear guidance and always helped me out when I was facing difficult situations. Her suggestions were always straight-forward, on point and helpful.

- **How has it impacted your professional and personal development?**

The research topic suited my background very well, thus I could make full use of my expertise and develop it further. It helped broaden my horizon in urban innovation and provide me with a better understanding of the UK planning and built environment market, as well as the global smart city strategies. Apart from work, I learned a lot about cultural differences by interacting with colleagues from all over the world and how to strike a healthy work and life balance.

- **How would you describe the culture of the organisation?**

With a diverse bunch of people, Future Cities Catapult is an ideal place for conducting innovative work in urban innovation. When exploring something new, there are always colleagues with relevant backgrounds who can assist you. The atmosphere here is collaborative and relaxed, colleagues are all very friendly.

- **What advice would you give to future interns willing to join the Catapult?**

It is a challenging but rewarding experience to work as an intern for the Catapult. You might find it difficult at the very beginning, just like any other explorative work. As your knowledge and experience grow with time, you will gradually gain confidence in your own ability. You should be proactive and bold in proposing new ideas. There is always room for trying. What you gain in return is far more than just a specific set of skills but a much deeper and wider perspective on the topic you are exploring.

- **What is the next step for you?**

I managed to secure a new role with Future Cities as an Integrated Urban Planning Researcher after successfully completing my internship. The internship experience has prepared me well for starting this new phase of career. I am now ready to embrace the opportunity and challenge. There are many interesting projects ongoing and a lot more ideas to be explored, and the Future Cities Catapult is an organisation that can make these things happen.

“ **Bin’s work has been very helpful to-date and will be used to inform the next stage of the theme waves for Future Cities Catapult!** ”



Role: Head of Urban Strategies – Bin’s supervisor

Responsibility:

- Setting up clear expected outcomes from the internship project (milestones, project goals and plan, timeframe, reviews and evaluation methods).
- Making sure the project is valuable and keep the intern engaged with real-life assignment that can benefit the team and the wider organisation.
- Helping the intern navigate the culture and the work environment.
- Supporting the intern when possible on their future development and career path inside or outside the organisation.

- **What project was Bin asked to complete and how was this project supporting Future Cities Catapult’s goal?**

Bin was tasked with carrying out research into the built environment of cities and to break this umbrella theme down into 3 to 4 key theme areas. The key aim was to identify where there are current gaps and opportunities to make cities better, as this is part of our mission at Future Cities Catapult.

- **How did Bin’s contribution help and support the team’s efforts?**

Bin’s work was thorough and very well structured as he developed a strategy on which his research was based. His work has been very helpful to-date and will be used to inform the next stage of the theme waves for the organisation.

- **What skills did Bin develop during his internship?**

Bin developed a greater understanding the built environment and how it plays a major role in the successes and failures of our cities. He developed analytical, communication and reporting skills throughout the work of his internship.

- **How did you facilitate Bin’s experience and ensure he was set up for success?**

At the outset, Bin was provided with an overview of the challenge and research areas. He was provided the space to develop his own methodology to meet the goals set. We met on a weekly basis to discuss and review the work carried out and to ensure he was on the right path. Bin was very resilient and effective in coming up with a creative and robust strategy to research and analyse the research themes.

- **What advice would you give to prospective interns?**

This is a great organisation to undertake an internship with if you are passionate about cities and how innovation can play a positive role in their future. It is hard work from day one and you are provided full responsibility for your work with guidance along the way. It is extremely rewarding as you are given the opportunity to own your work and to take the lead. Following an internship with Future Cities, there are many avenues to explore for developing your career within cities and potentially within the organisation.