

Paid Intern experience: A summer working with APIsFirst

Intro

[APIsFirst](#) is a specialist consulting business based in the UK and a founding member of [The API Collective](#). We provide clients with access to globally recognised API thought leaders and experienced practitioners. As a global, remote, inclusive and progressive company, APIsFirst employs senior consultants with decades of API experience, as well as university students through schemes such as the University of Exeter's [Student Business Partnership \(SBP\) scheme](#).

By way of introduction, my name is Tegan Forwood and I joined APIsFirst in March 2022. I worked ten hours a week alongside my final year at university studying LLB Law with Business; and then 35 hours per week throughout the summer holidays. I wanted to share this article to highlight what it has been like working for APIsFirst as an analyst and to encourage others to seek similar opportunities.

Why I applied

Deciding where to direct your career is a tricky decision to make fresh out of uni. I have always found completing some sort of work experience to be completely invaluable in helping me to decide whether to pursue a career in that industry or not. Having really enjoyed studying business modules at university, and with a keen interest in a consulting career, I decided to apply to APIsFirst as an analyst.

What initially attracted me to my particular role at APIsFirst was the broad range of professional development opportunities up for grabs. I gain exposure to the consulting industry in a role where I feel that I can really make a difference. Of course, being remunerated for your work as an intern is also a huge advantage. If not paid for the time I had spent working in this role, I couldn't otherwise have possibly afforded the opportunity!

What I do

My role is a predominantly operational role. However, as APIsFirst is a fairly new company, the tasks I complete evolve to best benefit the company and support the leadership. This means that I get to make the most out of the experience by being willing and adaptable to many different roles. I've never learnt so many skills in such a short space of time before! So far, I

have helped to prepare for interviews for new joiners, (and interviewed them!), built content for the website and created policies and staff manuals. Consequently, I have added marketing, administrative and employee-support experiences, to name a few, to my CV.

Working on a part-time basis alongside my final year of university and then full-time throughout the summer holidays has meant that the tasks I worked on changed as I became full-time, and as I had more available time to work. The role is largely flexible to match your free time! Another intern who I work with on a daily basis expands on this by saying:

“As a student and young person, being in such a flexible working environment has made it so convenient to get a fantastic experience, while not compromising on staying in one place to accommodate work. Claire is very understanding as a boss - she encourages us to fit our work around our lifestyle and doesn't monitor us like some employers I've worked for.”

I agree with this, in that as long as you're willing to work flexible hours to meet client schedules and time-zones when needed and meet certain deadlines, you have the freedom of working around other life commitments. Personally, I enjoy planning and structuring my days around the usual office hours. But when I do have appointments etc, I have the freedom to start working earlier or finish working later to enable this. Likewise, whilst I was studying in my final year of my degree, I had the opportunity to work around my seminars, lectures and deadlines. I particularly love this work-life balance that APIsFirst supports.

What I've learnt

I, like many other students, have spent years working in hospitality/customer service roles, both for the money and for the work experience (and references!). However, I feel that this is the first role that has given me a real sense of responsibility and opportunity to really make a difference within the company. On a daily and weekly basis, I work with and meet experienced professionals from all around the world, which provides endless opportunities to learn from professionals that I wouldn't usually meet within my network. I love hearing about their past experiences and bits of advice that they often offer to share!

I've also learnt many practical skills. Whilst I learn general start-up business and consulting methods of working, I also gain insights into methods of learning, thinking, working and tips that will benefit me in all other professional and non-professional environments and situations. Part of the learning experience involved learning and adapting to using new tools such as Google Workspace, MURAL, Trello, pivot tables in google sheets and more. I will certainly be using these tools going forward, whether for professional purposes or not.

How I will value what I have learnt

This opportunity has hugely benefited my employability. Not only has it helped me to develop my knowledge of businesses and the consulting / tech industries but also provided me with networking opportunities and invaluable professional skills that will stay with me throughout my career. I have also really appreciated the support. The support provided by the APIsFirst leadership as well as other people I have worked with has been really encouraging and invaluable in developing my confidence and skills within a professional environment. Entering the workforce and developing confidence in a professional setting is definitely something that I think graduates struggle with. A reason I've enjoyed this role so much is how far it's helped to build my own confidence. I look forward to using and building on these skills in future roles!

Tips for people looking for internships

Looking back, there are some things that would have been good to hear from someone before I started out in this role. These would be my tips:

- Apply for a role even if you do fall short of a few advantages or even requirements, you never know!
- Ask questions and feel/be intrigued!
- Get involved with as much as you can
- Network and build relationships!
- Research and read around the company/industry
- Sign up to industry newsletters and podcasts

Where this internship has led me

The skills and knowledge that I have developed throughout this internship have landed me the graduate legal role I have been looking for. I believe that demonstrating the transferable skills that I have developed whilst working with APIsFirst, such as being inquisitive, self-starting, using initiative and being a diligent researcher, have helped me be successful in attaining this role. I look forward to applying these skills in my next position!

Wrapping up

Good luck and get in touch if you think you would be a good fit for a role with us and want to increase your skills and employability whilst earning an income to support university life!