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Next week, the first 2017 CERN openlab summer students will arrive at the laboratory. For the 37 students selected, a summer of enriching work ? with fascinating lectures, exciting trips, and hands-on experience with the latest ICT hardware and software ? awaits.

CERN openlab has been running its summer student programme for 15 years. During this time, roughly 300 students from across the globe have come to CERN to spend the summer working on cutting-edge ICT projects. Aided by the skills and knowledge developed during their summer at CERN, many of our student alumni go on to exciting careers in the ICT industry. Some of our students also return to CERN, in roles that may or may not be directly related to the projects they carried out over summer.

Our 2016 summer students enjoyed their time at CERN so much that nine of them are already back working at the laboratory! ?The summer student programme is a unique experience,? says Kristina Satara from Serbia, who has returned to CERN to work in the Controls Group in the Beams Department. ?It?s a great introduction to life at CERN; it really gives you an insight into the wide range of roles that exist and how you could participate.?

‘Working on a project over summer was a great experience,’ says Emil Kleszcz from Poland. ‘I realised that, even in the limited nine-week period we spent at CERN, it is really possible to develop something that will be put to use at the laboratory.’ Kleszcz, who is now working on asset management and maintenance in the Engineering Department, continues: ‘Working on my project over summer helped me to believe in my own skills.’

‘As a summer student, you get to work with – and learn from – leading ICT experts,’ says Ahmad Hesam from the Netherlands, who has returned to CERN to work on a project called BioDynaMo. ‘CERN is a place where you’re surrounded by knowledge and expertise; there’s no limit to how much you can learn.’

As well as developing their technical skills in a challenging research environment, the CERN openlab summer students are able to pick up new ‘soft skills’ that can be of great use in their future careers – at CERN and beyond. For many, it is their first time working in such a large, international context.

‘It was my first taste of living and working abroad,’ says Dimitrios Christidis from Greece, who is now back working on a project related to the Worldwide LHC Computing Grid. ‘Having gone through the CERN openlab Summer Student Programme gave me more confidence when applying to return to CERN in this new role.’

‘One of the most important aspects is the multicultural environment,’ says Jelena Banjac from Serbia, who is also now working with the Beams Department, after having spent last summer with the LHCb experiment. ‘It is amazing to get to interact with and learn from all these people with such different experiences.’

Thus, if you’re a student aspiring to a career in ICT, the CERN openlab Summer Student Programme is the place for you. It can help you to gain unique experience and develop key skills that could be vital to launching your career – at CERN, with one of our collaborators, or beyond!

More information about the CERN openlab Summer Student Programme is available on [our dedicated page](#) [3]. Be sure to check our website in December to find out how you could apply to become a summer student in 2018. In the meantime, you can get a flavour of the programme by following the summer students’ lecture series over the coming months (more information can be found in [our event calendar](#) [4]).

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