

EDUCATION

On cloud nine at CERN



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Burning at a scorching 40°C, I was sitting in my office, close to the border of Switzerland and France – countries where inhabitants are accustomed to doing things that helps their spirit dance with nature. And yet, I was tucked away in the confines of an empty building. I was constantly wondering how I ended up getting an internship at the world's largest and most revered physics laboratory – CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire – a European organisation for nuclear research). Rather than trusting my credentials and believing that I truly deserved to be there, I thought the selection committee had a terrible mix up while selecting me.

Dare to dream

Maybe, it happened when a scientist from CERN came to talk about her experience as a nuclear physicist. Her words kindled my excitement. CERN sounded fascinating! Perhaps, it was the review paper that I wrote on quantum cryptography in my junior year at college. I read about CERN while researching on the topic and it led me to a posting for *Openlab Summer Student Internship* there.

Maybe, I had a chance to intern there. After all, I had worked on a project on data visualisation using Java, and built a humble version of a private cloud in my sophomore year. Also, I worked as an intern for about two years. I studied concepts and theories outside my curriculum. Rejections from internships at MSU and Alberta International were a reminder that I wasn't a genius worthy of such a mighty organisation's interest. I may not have much to boast about, but I never fail to try.

It was just two days before the deadline that I answered those hauntingly introspective questions on the application form. I had no qualifications to embellish my answers with trendy tech words but I had to try because I owed it to my deep reverence for CERN. On April 12, 2016, I received an acceptance email from CERN. I had been selected to work on a project on *Visualisation of Cloud Resources* at CERN. I was beyond happy. Amid the turbulent tornado of self-doubts, I stood on stage at CERN to give a presentation and won the second prize.

As to how my internship experience was – it included fine food, fancy cars, incessant dancing, extraordinary people, lively parties, amazing and generous supervisors, diverse workplace, breathtaking views, and free visits to Zurich and Lausanne. I loved every moment of it and I am going there again – this time, for a year, to work on another project. The selection committee could not be wrong twice in a row, right?

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