

Coventry University: Technology Transfer Intern Programme



About the programme

Coventry University's Intellectual Property Commercialisation Office has developed a Technology Transfer Internship Programme allowing participants to learn about and contribute to technology transfer processes operated within the University.

Between June and December 2014, having obtained a 'Higher Education for support to research and innovation' fellowship from the three Tuscan Universities - Pisa, Siena and Florence, six interns took part in the programme at Coventry University.

"I was interested in joining Coventry University to gain a deeper understanding of good practices for the transformation of research into innovation, to support the launch of start-ups through the participation of the University, and also to learn how to support start-ups and develop innovation-led, high growth and knowledge-based businesses"

(Pamela, University of Florence).

The group were guided and mentored by members of the IP Commercialisation Office, whilst working on both team and individual technology transfer projects within one of the University faculties or institutes. In addition, the programme incorporated work with the wider Coventry University Business Development Group and Coventry University London Campus, as well as guided visits to external companies including MIRA, Mercia Fund Management and the British Library.

The interns also took part in numerous training courses, including three offered by PraxisUnico on 'Research Contracts', 'Fundamentals of Technology Transfer' and 'Essentials of Business Development'. Each course was useful to the participants in different ways.

"I especially appreciated the Research Contracts course, because I think this familiarity will be very useful in order to be able to prevent any kind of mistake and/or legal protection tied to a contract. The knowledge assimilated in PraxisUnico's courses is definitely what I hoped to obtain"

(Luisa, University of Siena).

"Fundamentals of Technology Transfer was really in step with what we were learning at Coventry University, so it strengthened my knowledge in IP protection, licensing and negotiation skills"

(Marco, University of Florence).

"My favourite course was Essentials of Business Development. It taught me how to manage networking events and helped me understand the difference between Business Development and Technology Transfer. In Italy, where this process is not yet so well defined, the two terms are often synonyms. Now I am able to fully understand the role of each and it's involvement in the Knowledge Transfer process"

(Alessandro, University of Pisa).

Benefits of the programme

The whole experience has provided participants with a good level of knowledge and working experience of technology transfer projects. It has also prepared them for the posts they will take up/return to at their respective Universities in Italy.

"Throughout the six month programme I have extended my knowledge, learnt new things and the gained an understanding of the reality behind applied research and business management which I will be able to apply to my post at the University of Pisa. It will also result in improved collaboration between the Universities of Florence and Siena"

(Teresa, University of Pisa).

"Overall, the experience at Coventry University, combined with the PraxisUnico courses, has provided me with a broad vision on technology transfer and acquisition of related technical skills.

The process was facilitated by the competence and support of the Coventry University team and by the innovative environment at the University. Future collaboration between Coventry University and the University of Siena will be highly encouraged"

(Chiara, University of Siena).

The programme, and the work produced by the participants has also been greatly beneficial to Coventry University. The interns attended over 10 training sessions and completed desk research in order to submit homework from trademark, patent, designs and copyright courses. They were given individual projects, all of which delivered useful and detailed data, and submitted a fully researched business plan for a health and life sciences opportunity. This involved a concerted team effort and produced a workable and accurate business plan, which Coventry University will consider for a spin-out company in 2015.

Brian More, IP Commercialisation Director at Coventry University commented:

"We have been very impressed with the interns' work ethic, enthusiasm and dedication to learning about the different aspects of technology and knowledge transfer. They all contributed a great deal to the team's need for background due diligence in both individual and team projects. They all attended the training sessions and asked probing and well informed questions about the processes and procedures used in UK universities, taking on board the compromises necessary in order to get end results acceptable to a broad stakeholder group. They were a delight to host, and we gained insights into aspects of technology transfer and company incubation previously not considered, based on their Italian experiences"

The intern programme is open to any EU-based university who would benefit from the training and experience provided. Interns must possess a higher degree and be proficient in spoken and written English. For more information, contact Brian More using the details provided below.

