

# Experience Report

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Armagh, Northern Ireland, GB  
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Now in my fifth semester, I am studying Information Technology at the ZHAW in Winterthur. Coming from a different background than the average IT student (I completed a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science at the UZH) I wanted to gain some experience in my new field and applied for an IAESTE-Traineeship. I was fortunate and got accepted for an internship at the Armagh Observatory in Northern Ireland. The whole process of applying, filling out all the necessary documents and getting in touch with my supervisor was straightforward and whenever there were any questions Victor Varga - the IAESTE outgoing exchange coordinator - could help me out.

I arrived in Armagh the weekend before my internship officially started. Even though my arrival caught everyone at the observatory by surprise (apparently there was a misunderstanding about the date I was supposed to arrive) I got a really warm welcome and could move right in to the observatory's guest house. On my first day I got to know my supervisor Apostolos, a Greek astronomer who has hosted numerous IAESTE students before. My task was to sort through and clean up meteor observation data that Apostolos had gathered manually over 13 years, compile it into a coherent dataset and produce some statistics and plots from the data. During my eight weeks stay I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to not only work on my programming skills but also organise a little coding workshop, be shown around in the observatory, get to know many brilliant scientists, post-docs and PhD students and take part in a family fun day workshop held at the planetarium as part of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.



I first got in touch with the other students and the people from the IAESTE Local Committee when I attended the IAESTE Summer Reception in Belfast. From there on I got to meet awesome people from all over the world with whom I got to share unforgettable memories... Along the way I visited places of interest throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland, came to love a freshly tapped Guinness, learned about The Troubles, got visited by friends from home, slept on couches, drove cars on the “wrong” side of the street and last but not least learned some English as well.



My internship at the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium has been an incredible experience throughout and I would highly recommend applying for one as well. The people from work, from the Local Committee as well as the international students have all been wonderful and made my stay unforgettable.

If you have any questions about an internship in Northern Ireland (or at the Armagh Observatory in particular) or if you need any advice about which places to visit, feel free to contact me at [raphaelgurtner@gmx.ch](mailto:raphaelgurtner@gmx.ch), I would love to help out.



Armagh Observatory and Planetarium <http://www.armagh.ac.uk>