Please describe a typical day from your placement.
Typical day began at 9am where I reported to my manager, and he gave me either new instructions on what to get working on, or I continued what I was working on the previous day. The majority of work was done on Microsoft Excel and involved doing further calculations on documents forwarded to me by my manager.

"Explore as many options as possible before deciding to specialise in your role."

Excel in the afternoons, periodically checking with my boss to know whether my work was on the right track. Throughout the day, I needed to be keeping an eye on my inbox for any emails that may come in and require immediate action. The day ended at 17.30 and 17:00 on Fridays (dress down days).

During your placement what skills did you gain that will make you stand out at future interviews?
Commercial awareness is definitely one of major skills that I would readily highlight at future interviews. I have learnt to look at the bigger picture when it comes to a company's finances, as opposed to just the current financial year. Knowing future trends for at least 2-5 years ahead is crucial for a company's growth and longevity. Problem Solving is another skill that I vastly improved, as I constantly had to take raw data, convert it to an understandable format and then use it to predict future trends. I also gained perseverance and self-motivation. At times the complexity of the data and calculations can be overwhelming and daunting but taking the work one step at a time and not panicking went a long way.

What were the highlights and low points of the placement?
Highlights - A company organised Brewery Tour and dinner! It was a delight to have a social event at the placement as I felt that the employees were rewarded for their work. Low Points - The duration of the placement was too short (2 weeks) and as a result I was doing the same type of daily tasks which can be a bit unstimulating.

What advice would you give other students interested in similar work?
To explore as many options as possible before deciding to specialise in your role. Commercial Finance is a wide field and involves many daily functions. Choose a role with a mixture of these functions so you don't end up doing the same thing every day.

Kadija Murray’s placement was at Airwave Solutions as a Commercial Finance Intern...