



Student Placement Case Study – Dheeraj Chawla, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

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**Dheeraj Chawla – BA (Hons) Business Studies
with Finance**

Can you tell us about the placement opportunity you were involved in?

I undertook a 12-month placement with the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) in the Finance and Procurement Unit as a Procurement Officer from August 2020 to August 2021.

Can you tell us more about what your role entailed?

My role entailed supporting and leading contract development and management activities. I led end-to-end procurement projects for low to medium-value goods and services, from the development of initial documents, the tender process, and contract awards. Throughout the projects, I communicated with various stakeholders internal and external providing specialist advice and guidance. I also supported Procurement Specialists with higher value contract development. I supported a range of key contracts and suppliers including Personal Protective Equipment, Cash Collection, and Services & Uniforms, each varying in value, complexity, and risk. Contract management duties included monitoring supplier performance against contract requirements, ensuring clarity of the roles and responsibilities, improving KPI's & SLA's, and service delivery through honest, open communication.

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How do you feel that your studies at Edinburgh Napier University prepare you for this placement?

My studies have contributed to developing my technical skills and social skills which I was able to apply in my placement. Not only did the modules prepare me for the analytical and critical thinking required for a profession in procurement, but the emphasis on group work and real-life case studies placed in the modules supported my confidence in communicating with so many different stakeholders and managing various projects in my placement.

Do you think your experience(s) from the placement affected your future career plans or last year of university?

My 12-month placement has been extremely valuable in that it allowed me to discover that procurement is definitely a career I want to pursue after graduation. As a result of excelling and enjoying procurement, the SCTS extended my contract to work with them in procurement on a part-time basis throughout my final year of university.

What advice would you give to someone considering doing a placement at university?

I would recommend for anyone to take the opportunity and do a placement; there is much to gain from it on both a professional and personal level. Once in the placement, be open for any task no matter how challenging and be comfortable with failing sometimes. You are there to learn about yourself as much as the career, so embrace the opportunity as much as you can!



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“I would highly recommend a placement to others. It is an excellent opportunity to gain work experience, expand your network, develop in-demand skills and apply the theoretical knowledge gained from your degree.”

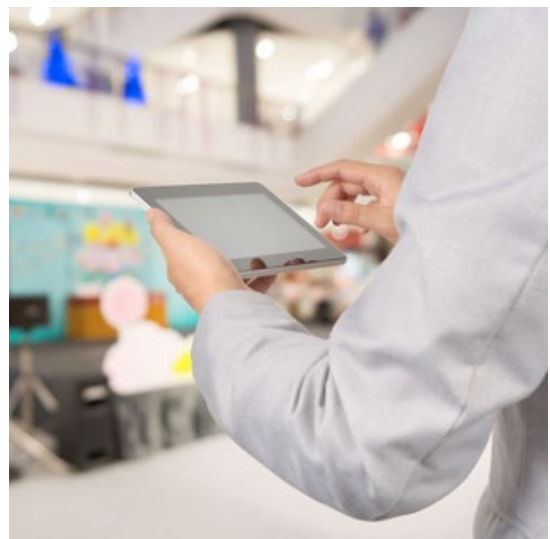
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What were your highlights and key successes of your time on placement?

Within the duration of my 12-month placement, my key successes include: 1: Procured replacement adult pads, paediatric pads, and batteries for all defibrillators across SCTS's estate from an SME supplier. 2: Supported the establishment of a subsequent generation contract for cash collection services. 3: Led on a new contract with an SME supplier with the Communications Team for Media Monitoring and Analytical Tools. 4: Led on the establishment of a contract with a local SME supplier in Aberdeen and Inverness for jury meal catering at the remote jury centres in Aberdeen and Inverness respectively. 5: Led on the creation of a comprehensive Specification Writing Guide for stakeholders new or experienced. 6: Developed and automated various internal registers including the Contract, Pipeline, Lessons Learned, and Risk. This has improved the efficiency and reporting capabilities of the Procurement Team. As a third-year BA (Hons) Business Studies with Finance Student at ENU, study workload has been managed simultaneously with job workload where a first-class was achieved on all the coursework for this year. These successes resulted in the contribution of one of the best experiences of my placement.

Did you face any challenges during your time on placement?

One challenge I did face was working remotely, on the other side of the world! In December of 2020, as I had not been able to see my family in Curacao for over a year due to the pandemic, I decided to visit them but due to lockdowns both locally and in Scotland, I was not able to fly back to Edinburgh. However, planning for such an extreme case beforehand, I brought my work laptop with me. I communicated to my manager and explained the situation and she completely understood. Due to this situation, I had to continue my placement in the Caribbean. I had to learn to adapt, be flexible, and be resilient. To mitigate this challenge, I started work from 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM local time to match normal UK working hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Even though in distance I was far away, it was almost like I was in Edinburgh as I was present in every meeting, completing my projects as usual and excelling, nonetheless. From video calls to instant messenger, I was in constant communication with my line manager, mentor, and the rest of the team. Before I knew it, borders reopened, and I was back in Edinburgh. Reflecting on this situation, although challenging at first, I was able to adapt to ensure business as usual activities went ahead.



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