



"Coming to the end of your PhD marks a time when you need to make decisions on how you want to progress your future career. Making the move from academia to a career in industry is undeniably daunting, and with no industry connections, it can be difficult to take that first step. For me, I was keen to explore the veterinary pharmaceutical industry, and when I attended a talk given by Dechra at Durham University about career options of veterinarians in industry with focus on R&D, it provided me with an invaluable opportunity to approach Dechra regarding an internship in R&D. Having a long established history within the animal health market alongside a fundamental values system, Dechra represented a growing global market brand able to offer a unique internship experience.

Funded as part of the fully integrated BBSRC DTP PhD Internship programme, my three month placement was based primarily in the Product Development offices in Shrewsbury, UK.

During the initial phase of my internship, tasks were mainly focused on exploring published research to generate a comprehensive literature review which would determine subsequent clinical trial protocols. Moreover, I was involved in the creation of a technical training presentation which would be used for the roll out of a referencing software throughout the Group. Importantly it was during this early stage of my internship that great effort was made by all members of the Dechra team, both UK and international, to introduce themselves, their role and their wealth of previous experience. Not only did this make me feel particularly welcome but was valuable in illustrating how different industry roles are not defined by a single career path.

With a clinical team based largely in the US, Dechra allowed me the opportunity to visit teams in both Maine and Kansas. Working closely with the clinical team in this way gave me tangible experience with procedures and software that formed the basis of clinical operations. Having one-to-one discussions with colleagues working in areas including regulatory affairs, safety and marketing gave me an appreciation of the multi-faceted nature of drug discovery and development, and how each role interlinks with another.

Most notably, I was heavily involved in the formation of a final study report for the submission of pilot clinical trial data to the FDA. Not only did this allow me to assess critically and interpret clinical data, but also present this in a way that complies with current guidelines. Dechra gave me the independence of being able to approach tasks in a manner that suited my skill set, while offering continued mentorship and encouragement during processes with which I was particularly unfamiliar. Being able to participate in clinical operations review meetings highlighted fundamental drug development milestones and challenges, but more importantly, how these are handled.

The ability to overlap my internship with my PhD has allowed me to apply some of the project management and trial protocol techniques to my ongoing research. Furthermore, I was able to present my current PhD research to teams in both the Netherlands and Croatia, sharing knowledge and feedback that could develop my research to application in both academia and industry.

Before working with Dechra, I had little sense of product development processes in the veterinary pharmaceutical industry. Thanks to the dedicated team at Dechra, I now have first-hand industrial experience relating to pharmaceutical research and development, alongside a strong network of industry professionals that have already contributed greatly in my future career. It is with both the confidence and knowledge foundation gained through this internship that I can decisively progress my career toward a role in veterinary pharmaceutical product development."