



Undergraduate Opportunities at CERN

Application advice for Students

Applying to CERN

CERN has two application deadlines per year; these are October for a placement beginning in spring/summer, and April for placements beginning in late summer/autumn. The application process primarily comprises of an online form at www.cern.ch/jobs; once the application is complete you will be asked to upload a CV (make sure it matches everything you've said in the application), your transcripts, and details of referees.

Before starting an application to CERN you must first consider the following:

- Motivation
Your motivation for applying to any role is key and should clearly come across in your application. A section in the application process is devoted to this subject and you should not leave it blank (or fill it with generic text)! Avoid highlighting or commenting how impressive CERN is; they want to know about you, not your perception of them, so it should be personal. Think about why you are interested in the specific position for which you are applying.
- Time
To complete any application to a good standard takes more time than you might think. Don't leave it to the last minute; a rushed form will always have a much lower chance of success. The application doesn't need to be completed in one go, each step can be saved in turn and then returned to at any time.
- Honesty
It may seem obvious, but it should still be stressed, everything you submit in your application should be factual and truthful. Your answers to questions should be your own opinion and not what you may think they want to hear. You should only outline skills and qualifications you currently hold, and not ones you plan to have acquired by the time you're appointed. If you are interested in a specific area or skill, mention it but do not mislead the reader!
- Legibility
Take your time to go through each step; the web-based form has no built-in spell checker. Consider writing any answers into an external word processor and copying the completed reply to reduce spelling and grammatical mistakes. It is advised you utilise an adept English speaking person to re-read your responses to ensure it is clear and concise (especially if you are not a native English speaker).

Key questions you are asked to answer are as follows:

Educational history

This section is not as critical as you may think, CERN are looking for keen, engaging students parallel to good grades. List all relevant qualifications from A level (or equivalent) to present date, including any and all current qualifications you are working towards. No grades are requested online as your academic transcripts are attached to the application later on. If you wish to highlight any of your grades you should do so in later sections and/or in your CV.

Available dates

You will need to put down a set of possible starting and ending dates, remember CERN rules state that a studentship can last from 4 to 12 months. Students who can offer a full 12 months are very much favoured and extensions to 14 months are not uncommon, so the bigger the spread the better. You are unlikely to be considered for a placement beginning more than a few months after the application date. Therefore, it is heavily suggested that if you are applying to go to CERN in summer you should wait for the March application deadline to increase chances of success.

Fields of study

If you have practical experience through your university in any of the areas you should highlight them here! For example: Information technologies opens up options for elaborating on programming languages, databases and IT applications, each with an accompanying 1750 character limit box to describe your experiences and applications of the areas. Take this opportunity to mention relevant coursework, lab work, experimental and theoretical studies you have been involved in. You could also highlight specific modules you have taken that are applicable to the position you are applying for, or ones that you will be taking in the future!

What is your motivation for applying for this position, relevant to your respective field of studies?

Here you should give information on what your academic/professional interests are and what you have done so far which relates to those interests. Reference all your previous experiences that have sparked your interest in CERN's activities and encouraged you to apply. When reviewing applications, they will be looking for keywords which show that the student has interest in and/or competencies in the right area for their project. Try to pack information in and NOT waffle or make general statements about how wonderful you are or how committed you are. Highlight any modules of your course so far which will be useful to CERN, any software you know and use, applications you use for interest at home, team work you have done etc. (There is an 1800 character limit on this section).

Within your studies, which are your preferred topics for gaining work experience?

Similar to the section above, this should be highly elaborative within the 1800 character limit. What are your own objectives in your studies and in your career, and how you think your time at CERN can help you get there? Here you should note all your areas of interest at CERN and how it relates to the areas of study you wish to do in the future. Note experiences that you have had that sparked your interest; it is an opportunity for you to say more about yourself and your experience, skills and abilities and how you want to develop them through your time at CERN into your future academic life.

If you have any additional comments to support your application, please provide this information.

Use this to highlight any committees you have served on, conferences you have attended, activities you have organised, etc. and say what you learned from these. Give specific grades for highly relevant modules you have done, give details of any projects you will be completing before your time at CERN starts and any relevant extracurricular activities. You can talk about foreign travel, but only if you keep it focused and say what the experience taught you. If you have been class representative, or run a debating society, or run for charity, this is where you put it. And for any position you have held or role you have fulfilled, think about what that has brought to you. If you have led a committee, this is worth more than one line; what did you do? Did you convene meetings, organise events, deal with outside agencies, win sponsorship, increase membership or make any improvements? Anything you did which has developed you as a person should not only be mentioned but explored fully. You are only given a 450 character limit in this section so you need to be direct and to the point!

Once your application form has been submitted, you will receive an acknowledgement e-mail which contains a link to the CERN "Report on candidate" form. You must forward this link to at least one referee (Professor preferably or supervisors from a previous internship are also accepted). Reports older than 6 months at the deadline will not be considered. Students must also upload their most recent academic transcript (official document giving an overview of their marks), as well as a CV. **Candidates are required to apply online before 28/04/2015 (23:59 CET) and submit the required documents by 03/05/2015 (23:59 CET) - If any document is missing, the application will not be considered during the selection process**