

Leiden International Centre – Internship

Jing-Yi Magraw is currently a Religious Studies Research Master's student from England and Australia. In the first semester of her second year, she completed an internship at Leiden International Centre. During her internship, she divided her time between assisting with tasks for the Centre and working on her own research project on religion and migration that was facilitated by the organisation. Jing-Yi is currently working on her thesis, which explores religious charities and charity law in England.



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1. How did you find your internship?

I began looking for an internship by searching through different job portals and websites, specifically looking for organisations that would be willing to take on interns that were not fluent in Dutch. After some searching, I found Leiden International Centre's (LIC) website and saw that they had an internship vacancy. I sent an email to them asking for more information about the internship position, and they were very helpful and swift in responding to my questions. I wanted to work on a research project as part of my internship, and once they let me know that they were happy to facilitate that, I applied for the position.

2. What was the internship itself about?

LIC is an organisation that assists internationals in the Netherlands, both before they arrive in the country and also once they begin living here. LIC provide resources such as information sessions, social events, newsletters, and newcomer guides to people, and they partner with other

Internship Interview with Religious Studies Master's Student Jing-Yi Magraw

companies and organisations that also work with internationals. My internship involved me assisting LIC with their work in the Leiden region.

3. What sort of tasks/work did you do during your internship?

During my internship I had several tasks, including helping with social media planning, creating newsletters, event planning, and website management. Additionally, I assisted at LIC's helpdesk, meeting internationals who had just arrived in the Leiden region and giving them more information about living and working in the Netherlands. I also worked on my own research project concerning the influence of religion and host country national contact on migration and relocation permanency in the Leiden region, for which I developed and distributed a survey, interviewed internationals, and compiled a final research report analysing my findings.

4. What did you learn from the internship that you found useful for your own research (or future career)?

I learned a lot about working and collaborating with a team, which I think is something that is very helpful in any area of life (whether it is in academia or in another career). Learning how to develop and carry out my own research project was also very useful for me, as I had to experience first-hand how to adapt based on changes to the project schedule or external factors. The research project (and the internship as a whole) improved my time management, organisation, and communication skills.

5. What was your overall experience with doing an internship?

I think internships are a great opportunity to experience working in an organisation, and being able to gain work and research experience is very helpful in allowing you to explore what path you might want to take after your studies. I think that although following courses in your university programme can give you a strong theoretical foundation, learning to conduct research in an organisation lets you put your theoretical knowledge into practice and can give you a new perspective on what you learn during your programme too. For me, it definitely gave me insight into what areas of both academic and non-academic work I enjoy the most and would like to pursue in the future.

6. What advice would you give to students who are searching for internships themselves?

Don't be afraid of looking into organisations and opportunities that are, at first glance, unrelated to your degree programme – if I had restricted myself to internships that were only directly related to the study of religion then I would not have discovered LIC. Being put into a situation in which I had to learn how to adapt my research to both my internship organisation and to my study programme requirements ended up encouraging me to explore different angles, and it pushed me to be more creative in finding solutions to this.