

## Robyn (BA History (Ind))

I'm not going to lie, I knew I wanted to go on placement somewhere abroad, and that was about it. I wasn't too concerned about what job I was doing or how it would benefit my career path - I just wanted to go and have a great year, somewhere new- so when I got an offer, all it took was the word 'Madrid' and I was in.

I'm currently halfway through my placement as a Teaching Assistant in a Year 1 class in a private school in Madrid, and loving every moment. There are some parts of my job that I absolutely love, like working closely with the kids and watching them progress, making displays, and (of course) school trips. Like anyone else, there are parts of my job that aren't so great - long hours, minimal pay and so on. But you know what? The job itself isn't what your time on placement is all about. The rest is about **you** as a person - it's what you make of your time, where you explore and who you meet. I was stressed out in the second year at University, and I spent the first couple of months here being amazed about my guilt-free spare time, not worrying about reading for seminars or assessment deadlines and looking for somewhere to live. I have booked trips across the country and Spanish lessons; I have remembered what it was like to read for fun and re-kindled some of my old hobbies that had faded at University. It's honestly been amazing so far. I stepped off a plane and was greeted by 2 girls I'd only ever spoken to over Whatsapp, and now we do everything together- including sharing a flat and going out.



Applying was a nightmare. There's no two ways about it. It's stressful, demoralising and never-ending. It had got to February and I was without a placement after applying to millions, and I had no place to live in Leeds if I couldn't find anything, because my friends had already signed for a house. But then, I woke up one morning with an email offering me my placement in Madrid. That stress, that re-writing your CV and cover letters, all those phone interviews - they are worth it. I'd only ever done bar work before now, and I'm loving having a 'real job', although not quite so much the 7am starts! My placement has boosted my confidence, and particularly my independence, it's helping me to figure out what career path I want to take when I graduate, and it's helping my CV; I received a message from Graduate recruitment company TeachFirst asking me to apply to their programme due to my internship.

So, if I had to give you any pearls of wisdom it would be these: **Apply for a placement** – there are placements for every aspect of the working world; and if you do get a placement- soak up every moment of it - enjoy and make the most of every second!