

Global engineering internship for AUT student

Life is about to change pace for one lucky student currently in his final stages of an engineering degree at AUT. Babcock International Group, a major UK headquartered business who specialises in defence and aerospace, has confirmed the awarding of a global internship placement to a well-deserving student, which is a rare opportunity for any graduate.

After rounding out his final exams of his undergraduate degree, 21-year-old Mitchell Donnelly will be packing his bags for an internship that will involve maintaining and refitting naval vessels 18,000 kilometres away in Plymouth, UK.

Mitchell's 12-week placement with Babcock will get underway with the company's Engineering Support Services in Plymouth. This workshop provides engineering support for the highly esteemed British Royal Navy, where Babcock works in partnership with the UK Ministry of Defence to ensure warships and other critical naval assets are mission ready.

The opportunity for Mitchell's life-changing internship and scholarship was set in motion through a partnership between the British New Zealand Business Association (BNZBA), Qatar Airways and AUT - who between them are funding Mitchell's travel expenses to the UK. From there, Babcock NZ will sponsor Mitchell through the internship in Plymouth, which will provide him with opportunities to test and build his skills in major civil engineering facilities on the largest naval base in Western Europe.

AUT's unique internship programme '*Internz*' has been providing international career starts through industry partnerships since 2014, but Mitchell will be the first engineering graduate to join the programme and the first programme participant to undertake an internship in the UK.

The Mechanical Engineering major says he is excited about the opportunity to apply the skills he's developed at AUT in such a practical environment.

"One aspect of the work that Babcock undertakes, which I am particularly interested in witnessing and understanding, is how the work is managed on assets that are of the size and scale of naval war ships," says Mitchell.

With Babcock being one of the world's leading providers of engineering and operational solutions, as well as being a significant UK employer of engineers and highly skilled trades, the young graduate's career will be fast-tracked on a level not accessible in New Zealand.

Rebecca Lowery, Director of Development at AUT, says "I am immensely proud of the teaming arrangement between BNZBA, Qatar Airways, Babcock NZ and AUT. Together we are able to develop and invest in New Zealand graduates."

As a critical member of the teaming relationship, the BNZBA has demonstrated great convening power. They bring together British and New Zealand companies to strengthen existing links and forge new ones, helping to boost two-way trade and investment and pave the way for an even stronger trading relationship in the future.

BNZBA President Phil Wood highlighted that "one of the most valuable links between the UK and New Zealand is a long history of the movement of people between the two countries and the exchange of ideas and experience that brings. For the BNZBA this was a great opportunity to continue that linkage and we are grateful to our members and AUT for joining with us to make this internship possible".

The close link between the United Kingdom and New Zealand, is something most Kiwi's would be familiar with. In fact the two countries have always had an extremely close relationship, and this relationship is closer for companies like Babcock, which has offices in both locations.

Babcock understands that travel is in Kiwi's DNA and it is choosing to invest in its people right from the start. They know that the experience and investment will not be lost on Mitchell - he will return to New Zealand with a fresh perspective, new skills and great growth as an individual, which will serve him incredibly well if he decides to continue his career at Babcock New Zealand.

Chris Saxby, Managing Director Babcock New Zealand, said "I'm extremely proud of the role Babcock will play in Mitchell's internship. As we send Mitchell from the Dockyard at Devonport NZ to the Dockyard at Devonport UK (Plymouth) for a unique opportunity to gain a truly global experience in maritime engineering, we will also be offering further internships locally. In fact, this year we will be offering 15 paid places. We are continually investing in local talent understanding that one day they may well be our future workforce, so it is in our best interest to develop excellence and broaden the experience of our best students. We wish Mitchell all the very best and we hope he enjoys the cultural exchange."