

## **A UROP perspective by Mengjie Zhang**

Summer 2023 (undertaken in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**Mengjie** was a year 2 undergraduate at Imperial College London in 2022-2023: MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

**UROP title:** Artificial intelligence and machine learning

Initially my aim was to try to find a company to do a hardware robotics engineering internship but I later decided to do a research project instead, mainly because I felt that I could gain more valuable experiences by doing so.

My choice didn't let me down at all, with my supervisor and the people whom I worked with being really encouraging and supportive. Consequently, I learnt so much in the two and a half months, much more than I believe I did during my 2<sup>nd</sup> year group project.

The working hours were much more flexible than I had imagined; I remember I was having the feeling that I was racing against time to get my secondary research done so I could make some actual progress but my supervisor was telling me to slow down and take a step back in order to digest. This created a completely pressure-free working schedule and I was able to really enjoy my research.

Since I was a complete beginner in the field that I wanted to research, I was reading a great deal while I also watched a lot of tutorials to solidify my fundamental understanding. The time spent on the reading and the tutorials have proven to be completely worthwhile and have helped me a lot during the rest of my project and will possibly help the rest of my study too.

Overall, I greatly recommend doing an undergraduate research project. Clearly, you need to make sure that you are truly passionate about what you want to explore because you need to be highly self-motivated. What you should not worry about is if you suddenly have to deal with a lot of huge research problems on your own – UROP is supposed to enhance your independent working ability and you'll definitely get more used to it towards the end.