



ATLAS
TRANSLATIONS

Feedback from some of our work placements in 2006 and 2007 – Updated Nov 2007

It's **very** important to us to have feedback from all our work placements so that we can ensure we keep our placements as productive and successful as possible. We also like to stay in touch with all our placements and hope that we will work with them again. Our very first work placement from 1992 works for Atlas regularly on a freelance basis! And at the time of writing (November 2007), one of our 2005 and one of our 2007 work placements are employed by Atlas in-house as Project Managers.

We are pleased that after completing their time at Atlas, so many of our placements have secured full-time positions in the translation industry, which can be so difficult to break into.

Kate – 4 October to 22 December 2006

I have to say that I found the first week the most challenging, in terms of not really knowing what to expect from the programme and experiencing a few doubts in terms of whether or not I would get much out of it! However, I soon started to get to know the other team members, and as more responsibility was given to me I really started to enjoy the placement and feel like a real part of the team. The Asian Games project obviously gave me a real point of focus, I found it both challenging and extremely rewarding and, although at times I certainly did feel the pressure, both in terms of time constraints and the nature of the tasks I was assigned, I really enjoyed working on this project and got so much out of it.

I particularly enjoyed the translating, proofreading and amending tasks I was asked to do; I also really liked dealing with clients. I was not so keen on dealing with the database and doing word counts (but I did understand that these are important tasks and like in any other business situation there are always boring tasks, which must be done.)

I got so much out of the placement, and was especially happy to be promoted to Team Leader. I have to admit that what I took away from the placement was less related to the field of translation than I had expected. However, I think the skills I actually gained are more transferable and will serve me far better in a business environment and in terms of finding future employment.

I had a fantastic time working for Atlas. I loved being part of such a strong team and really appreciated the level of responsibility handed over to me. Lastly, I would like to add that one of the best things to come out of the placement for me is certainly the fact

that I will be able to maintain a future working relationship with Atlas by writing the newsletter!

Where is she now? – We recommended Kate to a London subtitling company we work with, and in March 07 she started a new job there. She is still doing some freelance work for Atlas. .

Kasia – January to April 2006

I have spent four months in Atlas and I have to admit I learnt a lot. It was an extremely good and useful experience for me. When you graduate from a university you know little about real translation world and therefore I believe it was very helpful to have this opportunity and do a work placement.

I remember myself to be very excited on my very first day in Atlas. It was all new and I did not know what to expect....

When I arrived I met all employees and other placements. Everyone was very friendly so I did not feel out of place. During my placement I had a chance to get to know everyone better and I really liked working with Atlas Team. All PMs were helpful and always tried to answer my questions and dispel any doubts. They have taught me a lot and I do appreciate this.

The most enjoyable thing for me was dealing with private individuals and doing project management. Thanks to the placement I discovered it was something I would like to do in the future. Little did I know about project management and I did not even consider this as one of the possibilities for my career path.

I also had a chance to gain more experience in administration and acquire some receptionist skills, which I believe was useful as these were parts of any office job.

Another positive aspect was responsibility I was given. I did enjoy days when I dealt with PM's projects. I could check myself if I was able to manage different situations and solve problems.

Where is she now? Working in the UK for a large translation agency – and working with Atlas sometimes!

Rebekka – 2 May to 29 September 2006

I have to say that I had a great time at Atlas Translations and learnt a lot, so to my mind, there is nearly nothing you have to improve...

What you learned during your placement? Lots of things, especially how to work properly with diverse computer programmes. Language skills.

How/if you felt you fitted in to the team. I felt accepted and comfortable.

Were you given responsibility - too much, too little? Yes, I was given responsibility and it was enough.

What sort of tasks did you carry out? I was team leader of the WP's and dealt with PI's (and all the other stuff around).

What surprised you about us? Your kindness and the way you worked.

At the end of the placement, did you feel you had learned a lot? Was it all worthwhile? I felt very good, because it was more than worthwhile!

And what are your plans now? I'd like to finish my studies.

How do you look back on the placement? In a satisfied manner...

What can we do better? What would have helped you in any way? There's nothing, which comes to my mind.

Where is she now? Back in Germany, completing her studies!

Valeria – 19 June to 24 November 2006

GOOD AND BAD POINTS

I learnt gradually and it was nice to be given something different to do each week/day, it allows you to build on what you learnt before but day by day.

The things to do are so many in the first weeks and being busy at the beginning really helps breaking the ice.

HOW WAS THE TRAINING?

The training was good, well organized and precise. All of you helped. You actually have THE "solution" when nobody knows. Rebekka was great also. And the PMs are always so helpful. It is definitely a plus.

WHAT YOU LEARNED DURING YOUR PLACEMENT?

Definitely all of it. I just knew how to use the PC quite OK but now I am a master in Project Management and Admin! Really, I discovered I can do a job, and hopefully well? :)

HOW/IF U FELT FITTED IN TO THE TEAM

When I became TL. I showed what I was able to do and that made the difference.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE THE BEST AND LEAST? WHAT SORT OF TASKS?

Obviously I LOVE training people, organizing files (labels!) and project management + translations of course.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU ABOUT US?

The way you were so friendly and easygoing. I never felt I was JUST a WP among all of you. This is really essential for working in a team in harmony.

And what are your plans now?

I try to finish my MA ASAP and possibly find a) a job as interpreter b) a job as a PM c) both in UK!

How do you look back on the placement?

I owe so much to Atlas.

Where is she now? – back in Italy, working full-time as a translator and interpreter.

Verena – 01 March to Friday 30 June 2006

Before starting my work placement in London, I expected to have the opportunity to get to know the structure of the professional translation environment and administration work.

In the first weeks, my tasks consisted of writing and sending invoices, dealing with the incoming post, archiving, answering the phone and maintaining suppliers' and clients' databases. The trainings I received were useful and every single one of them was quite easy to understand.

After one month of these administration tasks, I had the opportunity to learn how to deal with Private Individuals (PIs). I received training on project management and was very happy to finally directly deal with clients.

Beside our usual tasks in the office we always had special projects to be worked on in groups or independently. One of my projects was to find new interpreters for public services for "unusual" languages. I found most of these projects very interesting and I had the impression that I had really done something useful for Atlas.

After two months of working at Atlas Translations I was promoted to Work Placement Team Leader for the other WPs. In this position I was responsible for working out weekly schedules in which I decided on who is doing which task each week. I held informal WP meetings in which we discussed different projects completed by the WPs and allocated new ones. Furthermore, I maintained records for any absences, gave training and first day instructions to all new Work Placement students, including health and safety instructions. I enjoyed being Team Leader as I had more responsibility and even if I was dealing with administration work and not with PIs, I had enough work to do to fill the whole day.

All in all, I enjoyed working at Atlas because the staff was really nice and friendly and I had the feeling to be welcome in the office from the first day on. They were always

willing to explain certain things twice if I did not understand it after the first time. I certainly improved my English by speaking to the staff but also by writing and reading emails and phoning.

Wenyi (Sophia) - 10th October 2006 to 12th January 2007

1, How did you feel when you arrived, your first week - good and bad points?

I felt people were very nice especially Carine, because she was the first person I saw on that morning. She talked with me for a while before we started to work, telling me what generally we were going to deal with and also allow me to ask her questions. I think it is a very good way to begin, a short casual talk between any of the WP and the new comer. The first week was quite busy, so many things to remember, for myself I have taken a note of every details I need to follow in every work.

2, How was the training?

I do like the training in Atlas, especially from you Clare. You are very patient and your explanations are quite clear to follow.

3. What have you learned during your placement? Was it all worthwhile?

A lot! Interpersonal skills, how to deal with client, how to keep on challenging myself when I have already get used to do every work (Normally I limit myself a certain time and within that time I need to finish a certain amount of work), coordinating (Asian Games), interpreting experience and also learn from you, how to be a leader of a team. Your calmness, business manner, well-organization and kindness to employees have given me very deep impression. It is definitely worthwhile to do this placement.

4. How/if you felt you fitted in to the team?

I came from a different culture, so not every system in this country I can understand as well as a local person, such as post, cheques, remittance and so on. So sometimes my questions were little bit more that others and some of them are quite easy or silly for the PMs. Most of the time they were quite nice to help me even when they were quite busy. Some conversation in the office sometimes I found it was not easy to join as it was all about local movies or operas or music. I didn't know that much about these things.

5. What are your plans now?

Now I am going to China in 3 weeks time and I plan to look for a job there. At the same time I may apply another MA course here in the UK and I will see how things will go later this year. I may not come back anymore; I may come back for another course. No matter where I am, I will keep in contact with Atlas and you Clare.

Carlo - 12 February to 11 May 2007

I spent three months working for Atlas and it was a great and useful experience. Although the first week was for me the hardest one - I felt overloaded with so much information, all the staff was very nice and helpful, especially Laure who was the WPs leader and trainer. She was always available to clarify my doubts. I really learned a lot during my

placement. I carried out all sort of tasks, from clerical administrative to doing first draft translations, dealing with private individuals and helping out the project managers. I have to say I never felt bored as I was always busy. In fact, I was given some responsibilities as I was assigned a couple of projects like the Atlas Supplier Network and the Voiceover project.

My favourite tasks were dealing with private individuals and doing some project management, whereas what I liked least were working with the supplier database and doing word counts.

I found very useful having WPs meetings every other week to discuss and clarify with our team leader any issues we might have.

I have to say thank you Atlas and Clare for this experience because I did not think it was going to be very productive!

Iwona – 6 November 2006 to 09 February 2007

When I arrived the first day I was really stressed and did not really know what to expect. But I remember from that day that everybody was friendly and helpful. The atmosphere at the office is so friendly and relaxed that I decided to stay. I knew that I will learn more with time as I will get more responsibilities. The training done by Kate was really good. I learnt how an agency works from the inside, I learnt how to deal with customers.

Most of all I was scared of the telephone but I discovered I am good at answering the phone so it boosted my confidence, which was great. The team is very friendly and I like all of them without any exception. They are helpful, patient, encouraging and open. I think I fitted well in to the team, I felt great working with them. The responsibilities were given gradually, which I think is a good idea.

There were times I was not busy and there were times I was extremely busy. In the end I found joy even in doing invoices because I felt I am part of the team and I am doing something important as well. I liked dealing with PIs and answering the phones, talking to people and solving the problems. I did invoicing, follow ups, dealing with PIs, signing off, helping PMs. I liked PIs and helping PMs. I thought it would be a bigger company and I was surprised about the warm atmosphere at the office. I felt I learnt a lot not only I acquired new skills but I learnt a lot about myself. I could see I am good at some things and that I have to work on others. It was worthwhile. I work as a freelancer so all the knowledge I acquired will be helpful.

I am proud of myself and I regret it was so short ☺

Iwona is now working as a translator and interpreter in London, and regular works for Atlas on a freelance basis.

Laure - 06 November 2006 to 31 May 2007

My first week was very weird, because I was starting in a company I didn't know, but I was also discovering London, and my English left a lot to be perfect, so I must say it was quite hard at the beginning. I felt a bit apart from the rest of the team, and even the other placements, especially because of my weak English. I first thought I may never manage to do the same as the other placements did. Answering the phone on my first week was a big big challenge for me, consired my English level! Contacting the suppliers as well. I have had other challenges later, as the translation by phone, very challenging as well!

As most of the previous placements say, the first weeks are quite boring as you can't do anything else than admin tasks. When you start to deal with the PIs, it is starting to get more interesting. And I think I have been very lucky to be team leader for 5 months, which has allowed me to know almost everything in the way the company runs. I felt useful and that's pretty rare in a placement experience!

My experience as a team leader was unexpected and really great! I have liked to organise the other WPs' tasks, and to have been able to answer their questions (I really liked when they asked me questions!), and to have been a kind of link between them and the staff and directors. Even if sometimes it is quite hard to hear remarks for things you are not responsible for. I think it is important that someone is here and is able to know the things from both the placements' and the staff's point of view and I have tried to be this one. I wouldn't have thought about a team leader but I think it is a good idea.

I was very happy to have the opportunity to do some translation work, as it is what I really like. I knew before signing my contract that I wouldn't necessarily have translations to do so it was not a surprise that I didn't do a lot, and I can't complain. I really enjoyed the translations I have been able to do and I am really happy I have had good feedback, which encourages me to keep going in that way.

What made my placement a good experience is also the staff, and other placements and the directors. I have really enjoyed to work in such a good atmosphere. I was happy to help Accounts and the PMs when they needed my help and I really found their answers to my questions useful, as well as yours of course. I have appreciated that, even when busy, everybody was available to answer all my questions, from the beginning to the end of my placement, be they very basic or harder questions.

So, of course, my experience in Atlas has been very useful and I hope it is going to help me in the future. I feel like I know every aspects of the work in a translation agency and I am really happy to have been able to do so many different experiences, such as admin, project management, translations, proofreading, fairs, team leader and so on.

I have still one year of university to do, and then I will start to work, ideally in the translation field!

Anna R - 25 June to 31 August 2007

How did you feel when you arrived, your first week – good and bad points?

I received a very warm reception. Everyone was very friendly and courteous. You all answered my endless questions with angelic patience and tried to help me in every possible way.

How was the training?

The training was very well-organized, well-structured and varied. Gradually I learnt how the translation business works.

What have you learned during your placement? Was it all worthwhile?

I learnt a lot during my placement. Thanks to Atlas, I gained experience in administration, acquired receptionist skills, dealt with clients and database and even tried my hand at project management. Furthermore, I learnt not to get stressed, no matter how busy one gets. All in all, this training was extremely useful.

How/ if you felt you fitted in to the team?

I felt accepted and sometimes even useful.

What surprised you about us?

I am really impressed with how well-organised, professional and businesslike you are and how respected you are in the industry. Furthermore, I am very impressed with Atlas' gentle, calm and respectful manner towards its employees.

What are your plans now?

I would like to finish my studies.

How do you look back on the placement?

I have very pleasant memories of my placement. It was an extremely good and useful experience for me. I am very thankful to Atlas, especially to Clare, for giving me this opportunity to do a work placement and to make these useful experiences at such a respected company. It was very helpful in every respect.

Marta - 23 July to 28 September 2007

I felt quite comfortable upon my arrival. I kind of liked that I was given a challenging task at the very beginning, and that at the same time I didn't feel pressurized.

I learned how a translation agency works from inside out, i.e. the whole process from contacting the client, to coordinating the payments for translators, how to try to deal with 'impossible jobs', and that hardly any job is impossible. I improved my multitasking skills and my phone manner. I also saw how important flexibility is.

There was no time when I felt left out. Even when doing administrative jobs, I had a feeling that we work as a team. I think this was owing to the mutual readiness to help. I liked the office atmosphere a lot

I liked the fact that I was given responsibility from the very beginning, but at the same time that the degree of it fluctuated within the placement. I liked the fact that I was given quite a lot of responsibility. I liked the atmosphere at the office, especially towards the end of the placement, when we got to know each other very well. I liked the mutual readiness to help and general cooperation in the office.

My tasks included: invoicing, follow-ups, signing off, dealing with the post, going to the bank, doing quotes, dealing with PIs, dealing with some bigger translation projects, checking translations, contacting the suppliers and placing jobs, doing word counts, working on the suppliers' database, chasing late payments, and answering various enquiries.

At the end of the placement, did you feel you had learned a lot?
Yes, definitely.

Was it all worthwhile?
Yes, more than definitely.

What are your plans now?

I'm planning on working as a freelance translator and Trados trainer for some time, at first in London then maybe in Berlin. At some point, once my fingers are not that 'itchy' and I start feeling that I want to have more to do with people; I think I would like to work as a project manager.

How do you look back on the placement?

I had a feeling that I didn't want to leave. I had great time, learned a lot, had lots of different experiences, I met a few very nice people. This is what I had hoped it to be like. I liked the fact that I was being taught by a fellow WP, because of the way things were explained. The WP leader will usually be speaking out of her/his fresh experience, so from a very practical angle.

Marta is now working as a freelance translator and interpreter in London, and also runs Trados Courses for Atlas!