

Michael Cheung

MEng Materials Science and Engineering
with Industrial Experience

Graduate Project Manager at Ove Arup &
Partners

“I monitor forecast and achieved financial performance, and update the company’s risk management plan through changing circumstances. I assist with the commercial management of day to day delivery of packages orders and programme planning on the Croyley Rail Link project. And I also establish the staff mobilisation process for the High Speed 2 (HS2) project.”



What are your favourite and least favourite aspects of your job?

Very interesting and important projects, massive opportunities to develop your skills and mature as an individual. As part of the project and programme management team within Arup, you build up a very good network across the company including individuals from external companies as I have to work with them.

Least favourite aspects would a sudden influx of work which means having to re-manage resources. This also means longer working hours at times, but that can be expected with all jobs. Overall, the good aspects of project management greatly outweigh the downsides.

How did your time at Queen Mary prepare you for work?

Careers at Queen Mary were helpful, particularly with securing work placements and internships. At SEMS, there are often opportunities to go on industrial placements or abroad provided you ask your academic tutor, and show a genuine interest.

What can current students do to prepare for getting a job in your area?

Have knowledge of the job role you’re applying for and do some research into the company as well. Secure work placements/internships (best if relevant to the field of work you wish to go into); the recruitment team and line managers often prefer someone with experience than just a graduate with a generic resume.

I worked at ExxonMobil in Brussels as part of my industrial year abroad in 2014-15 (part of the Erasmus scheme), and that was an unforgettable and eye-opening experience.

The modules I studied as part of my degree required a lot of self-study and commitment; this allows you to grow as an individual to be independent, which is crucial to be successful in a work environment.