

Harwood Levitt Consulting has given me excellent insight into the 'Brussels Bubble'



At the Brussels Careers Fair co-organized by LSE Careers and Sciences Po Careers on March 23rd, 2018, Cyriel Pelletier – International Careers Manager – met an atypical recruiter, Yaxin ZHANG, Junior Consultant in Public Affairs at Harwood Levitt Consulting and...a third-year student from Le Havre Campus! Because of her strong interest in European affairs, Yaxin chose to do an internship in Brussels during her third year abroad! Discover her story!

What do you do as a Junior Consultant at Harwood Levitt Consulting (HLC) ?

[Harwood Levitt Consulting \(HLC\)](#) is a boutique consultancy specialised in strategic counsel for political risk. We bridge the gap between public affairs and management consulting. At HLC, I am proud to be a real member of the team. Brussels is full of interns, some of which have very little responsibility. At HLC, my work is interesting and challenging, including public affairs and communications strategy, political risk analysis, and communicating with different interest groups. I work with multi-national corporations, industry associations, and NGOs on medical technology, biotechnology and environment policy. I also participate in the business strategy, marketing and capacity building of HLC. I even had the chance to run a workshop for Master's students from LSE and Sciences Po! Working as a Junior Public Affairs Consultant is very inspiring: I learn a lot from my daily work and our cross-specialty team.

How did you get accepted to HLC?

I first read about HLC on Sciences Po Career's website and contacted them by email. Unfortunately, they did not have an open position at that time. A few months later, a Junior Consultant position was advertised, and I immediately reached out. Once I was offered an interview, I prepared by reading HLC's articles and expertise online, and learnt more about HLC from Sciences Po alumni I met in Brussels. My research combined with my academic work and interest in public policy paid off: I was hired as a junior consultant at HLC.

What is the most important thing you learnt from this experience?

HLC has given me excellent insight into the 'Brussels Bubble'. Beyond concrete knowledge and skills, I've also learnt several life skills. First, follow-up is very important. My proactive approach helped me land the first interview and made a good impression on the HLC team. Second, I was glad that I followed my interests. I heard that the Brussels job market is extremely competitive, even for candidates with advanced degrees and language skills. During the interview process, I expressed my interest in policy issues and actively engaged in conversations about dossiers HLC was working on. My ideas and analysis were valued more highly than my languages or degree level. Third, I got out of my comfort zone. I was born and raised in China. I moved to France two years ago without speaking French, and I was the only student from my campus to move to Brussels. At HLC, I work entirely in English on very technical policy issues. Honestly, I face daily challenges - I still do not understand the meaning of many medical terms! I learnt to adapt quickly and to think about the big, strategic picture rather than focusing too much on technical details.

Do you already know which Masters' programme you are going to choose? What is your professional project?

I was offered to stay at HLC for another year, and I am happy to spend more time learning and taking on more responsibility. After this, I will pursue a Public Policy Master's at [Sciences Po School of Public Affairs](#), with a better idea of how to link academic knowledge to real-life policy work. As for my professional project, I have realised that I enjoy helping organisations with strategic advice, policy analysis, and facilitating dialogue among different interest groups.

Do you want to add anything?

Yaxin: I would like to thank Sciences Po Careers, in particular Ms. Christine Laloy for supporting me throughout my third-year, and [Sciences Po Alumni in Belgium](#) for sharing their experiences with me.

Learn more

[Contact Yaxin ZHANG on LinkedIn](#)

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*Yaxin ZHANG during Sciences Po / LSE Brussels Career Fair
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