







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Practical Work Portal

Report Year 2023

-  Student Report Progress
-  Student Hours Completed
-  Student Assigned Markers
-  Marker Payment Tracking
-  Work Registration Expenses
-  System Configuration

Employment at Ey

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Report Submitted : 2023-03-13

PASSED

Assigned Marks : 25 / 25 (Grade : A)

Marker : [REDACTED]

Hours Verified : 400

Student : [REDACTED]

Specialisation : Engineering Science

Student Group : [REDACTED]

Uploaded Report

[REDACTED]

Scoring Rubric


Section One	Passed Section If you pass Section One you still need to pass Section Two.			Failed Section If you fail Section One you will be asked to resubmit the report.			5/5
Section Two	Passed Section If you pass Section Two you will still need to pass Section Three			Failed Section If you fail Section Two you will be asked to revise and resubmit the report.			5/5
Section Three Part A : Structure of the Report	Excellent	Above Average	Satisfactory	Room for Improvement	Below Average	No Marks	5/5
Section Three Part B : Quality of the Report	Excellent	Above Average	Satisfactory	Room for Improvement	Below Average	No Marks	5/5
Section Three Part C : Presentation of the Report.	Excellent	Above Average	Satisfactory	Room for Improvement	Below Average	No Marks	5/5

Existing Admin Verified hours

No additional time added.

Administrator Add Verified Hours

Administrator Details

	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]

Verified Hours

Hours Type

[REDACTED] (Department of Engineering Science)

PRACTICAL WORK REPORT



EY (Ernst & Young)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Work Period: 28 Nov 2022 – 17 Feb 2022
Date of Submission: 13 Mar 2023

1 Summary

EY (Ernst & Young) is a multinational professional services firm with its main headquarters in London, England. It is considered one of the Big Four accounting firms; providing assurance, tax, advisory and consulting services to clients.

Within these divisions, I was in the Digital and Emerging Tech subservice line branched out of the Technology Consulting division. Despite my quite specific subservice line, I was exposed to work in many other service teams, dealing with clients in both the public and private sectors.

With the trust of my tightknit team, I was able to experience life as a consultant for the very first time in my professional career. Whether it may be soft skills including interacting with clients or more technical ones such as Alteryx (data analysis software) or Microsoft Excel, my team was very considerate in teaching and assisting me in this journey.

Overall, this experience was a valuable chance for myself to indulge in a fast paced consulting environment for the first time, and this was enhanced by the way in which I was treated as an actual consultant, not just an intern. I am very proud to have worked at EY and I would definitely be open to returning in the near future.

2 Acknowledgements

EY prides itself in providing the highest quality of professional services to all its clients, hence the employees within the company are the most experienced and knowledgeable in the industry and in the work they do. Moreover, everyone that I interacted with during my time there were always willing to give up some of their busy time to discuss and provide advice on the problems I was having in regards to my work.

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my Holiday Pay team; █████ █████, █████ █████ and █████ █████. █████ and █████ who were my engagement managers, were always open to solve the smallest of issues I was facing, whether that may be a software issue or advice on writing a specific email. █████ was a graduate consultant, that I worked almost day-to-day with. Despite the high workloads that we all had to complete before deadlines, █████ always checked up and made sure I was on the right track, even offering to take some of my work to reduce my load.

Secondly, █████ █████ and █████ █████ who were my counsellor and buddy respectively. Their roles were to assist me in aspects outside of work, for example, how I was settling into my internship and providing advice on my future plans/ambitions. █████ and █████ provided me with an opportunity to step away from whatever I was working on and have a less-formal conversation – which I appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to thank the other consulting interns. Despite working in such a professional and fast-paced atmosphere, the comradery I gained from working and interacting with my fellow interns helped me achieve my goals and learn new aspects outside of work.

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3 Introduction

EY is a multinational professional services firm headquartered in London, England. They are structured as a network of member firms which are considered separate legal entities in a partnership, boasting over 300,000 employees in over 700 offices in more than 150 countries across the globe. EY's current partnership came into shape after the merger of two accounting firms Ernst & Whinney and Arthur Young & Co in 1989. Its current name "EY" was created after a rebrand from "Ernst & Young" in 2013, but both names are still referred to colloquially today.

The organisation which first began as an accounting firm have now expanded into other sectors such as tax, consulting, strategy and operations, and HR. The Auckland office where I was working from was one of three in New Zealand, although the larger EY Oceania term was more widely used for working and collaborating between offices/countries.

During the Summer break between November 2022 and February 2023, I was fortunate enough to intern in the Technology Consulting branch of the organisation, more specifically, the Digital and Emerging Tech subservice line. The role involved strategizing and implementing the latest digital tools and services to clients.

As mentioned previously, the flexibility of the types of work was never limited to just the set service line descriptions at EY. This was a pleasant surprise for myself, as it allowed me to experience an array of projects and clients during my short tenure. In fact, most of my engagements were projects outside of the Digital and Emerging Tech line, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Overall, my experience at EY solidified my ambition of pursuing a career in consulting. Alongside this, it was an opportunity to build a solid foundation on my workplace skills as well as gain valuable technical abilities which I could utilise in this ever-digitalising world.

4 Company Information

4.1 Workplace Layout

EY's Auckland office is located at the heart of Auckland's CBD, boasting a ten-story building with stunning views out to the harbour and Rangitoto Island. They use four floors which are loosely split into different divisions. Floors 6 and 8 cater for consultants, with the prior being more intern/graduate populated. Floor 7 hosts the audit and tax employees and the 9th floor consisting of large meeting/event rooms and an outdoor balcony.

As an intern, I was mainly situated on floor 6, although I did spend some time on the 8th as there weren't any strict seating restrictions. Desk floors (floors 6-8) have very similar layouts with an open plan desk layout, bookable meeting rooms around the perimeter of the floor, individual booths for concentrated work or phone calls, and a large communal cafeteria space at the end with a full kitchen, coffee machine and nutritious snacks and fruit. What was unique about each floor was the recreational facilities; floor 6 had a table tennis table,

floor 7 had a pool table and 8 had an arcade machine. There was also a mini gym in floor 6 with shower facilities, but I did not utilise them during my time at EY. A rough floor layout diagram can be seen in Figure 1.

Despite the various cafes and restaurants around the office available to buy lunch or a coffee, a highlight of EY's Auckland office was its table food delivery service. All it required was ordering on a website either on computer or phone, noting down the number of the desk, and waiting for the food/beverage to arrive. Alongside the convenience, the menu was heavily subsidised and was a great way to eat healthy and save money.

Finally, what is quite notable about EY is that one could sit anywhere on any given day. This was beneficial for interns, as it allowed for us to sit next to new people on a regular basis and build connections. There was no need to be seated with your particular team as all communications were swiftly and efficiently done through Microsoft Teams, which also allowed EY to provide a flexible work-from-home programme.

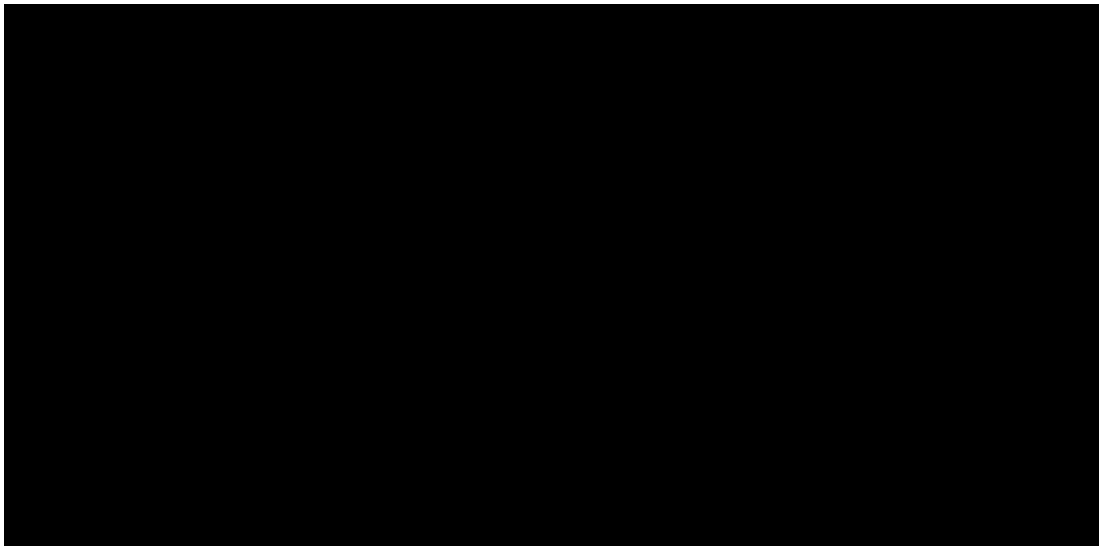


Figure 1: Floor map of Level 6

4.2 Staff Organisation Structure

Just in the Auckland office alone there are over 900 staff spread across the many service divisions ranging from partners to interns like myself. Despite the hierarchy levels and roles, EY encourages active interactions between levels. A notable event was partner and intern lunches, where we were provided with a more social environment to talk about work or other topics outside of the normal office conversations. This is definitely highlighted in EY's open and free desk sitting structure and thus removed the barrier that I initially brought regarding hierarchy levels. As visible in Figure 2, my position is highlighted in orange in the basic hierarchy structure.

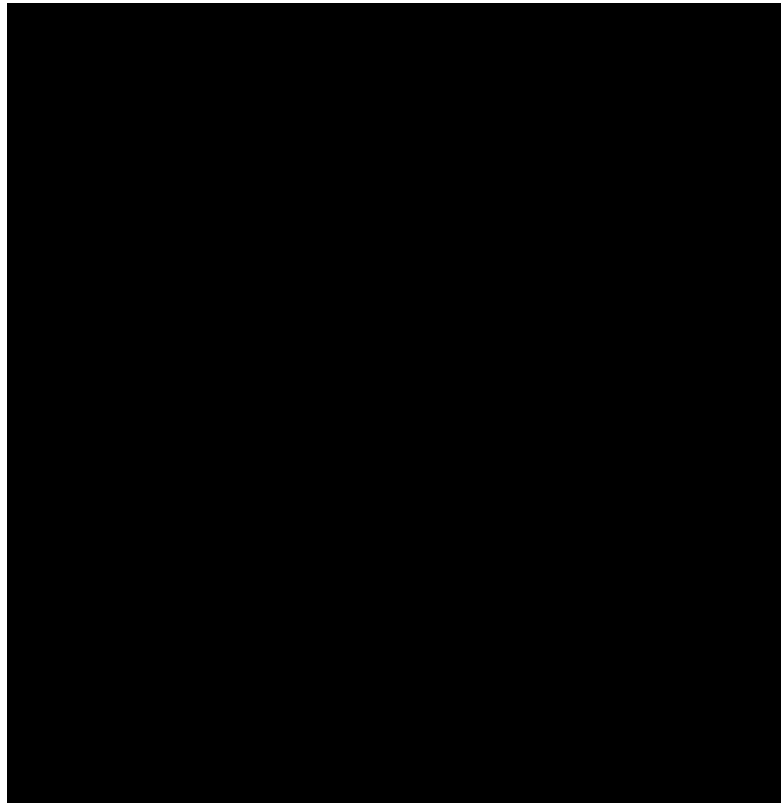


Figure 2: Snapshot of employee hierarchy structure

5 Work Experience

There were two main projects I was assigned to. Due to the sheer scale of the projects that involved large clients, there was an extra sense of responsibility, as I was technically representing my entire team, if not, EY as a company.

5.1 Holiday Pay Remuneration

5.1.1 Overview

Across New Zealand, hundreds of thousands of people have been underpaid in their salary or wages at least once, due to miscalculation of leave payments on their employers' behalf. This has eventuated in millions of dollars' worth of total underpayments to workers. Our goal was to strategize algorithms to efficiently identify the type and calculate the amount of underpayments for our client to repay to their employees. This project was a meaningful one for myself as I was technically working directly for the employees, and as someone who's been in their position, I understood the significance of the work I was doing.

5.1.2 Client Background and Targets

Unlike other engagements where clients approach EY to find ways to increase profits or revenue, Holiday Pay work was unique in the sense that eventually clients were losing money in repayments to their employees. Additionally, because overpayments to employees were ignored in the calculation process, financially, these organisations were at a loss. It was rather the moral and ethical aspect that these firms considered of higher value.

Paying their employees the correct wages would increase positive employer-employee relationships and work shine a more positive light in public.

The main client that my team and I worked with was a district health board which employed all doctors, nurses, hospital staff and other medical workers in the district. This meant that at the time of writing, was one of EY New Zealand's largest clients at the time. Subsequently, this meant that there were thousands of employees that we had to calculate our algorithm for.

Being a government owned organisation, the client's basic target was to use the master data list full of their employee payment details and dates, then identify the miscalculated employees' payments and return the necessary amounts.

5.1.3 Steps Taken

With the client's targets established, our team then built a list of sequences around the targets from the retrieval of data from the client all the way through to the handover of the deliverable for the health board to implement and carry out. The box filled in green in Figure 3 is what had been completed before the end of my internship period.

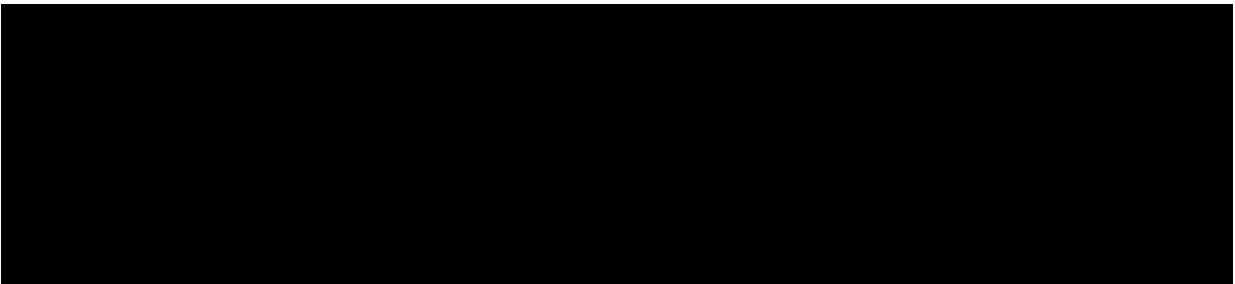


Figure 3: Steps required for completion

In more detail, the data provided by the client had multiple formatting errors and needed cleaning for us to efficiently utilise. We used a software called Alteryx to organise the hundreds of thousands of payment entries for thousands of employees. Then, the team divided into smaller groups to specialise in a specific type of payment (e.g., Annual Leave, Maternity Leave, etc.). This was because each payment type had slightly different algorithms when calculating underpayments. I was part of the Annual Leave team for most of my utilisation.

From this point, our algorithm would filter out the instances of underpayments using the provided client's data which we will need to double check for any faults in the algorithm by taking a small sample and manually calculating the amounts for. Once we were sure that the algorithm was working as should, we would present and show our work to the respective service line partner for confirmation and feedback before delivering the final product to the client.

5.1.4 Progress Made

The initial cleaning process was quite straightforward, in the sense that it was renaming, reordering column names for payment entries on the client provided files. Despite this, it held heavy importance as the cleaned data would directly be used in our algorithms and provide output to deliver back to the client.

On the algorithm itself, it involved creating workflows on the Alteryx software as seen in the example on Figure 4. We would input the cleaned data from the previous step, and reorder/filter by employee number or date depending on our requirements. From this point, we created formulae on the platform to calculate the exact underpayments using the figures provided in the data, then finally output our new list of underpayments on a separate Excel file.

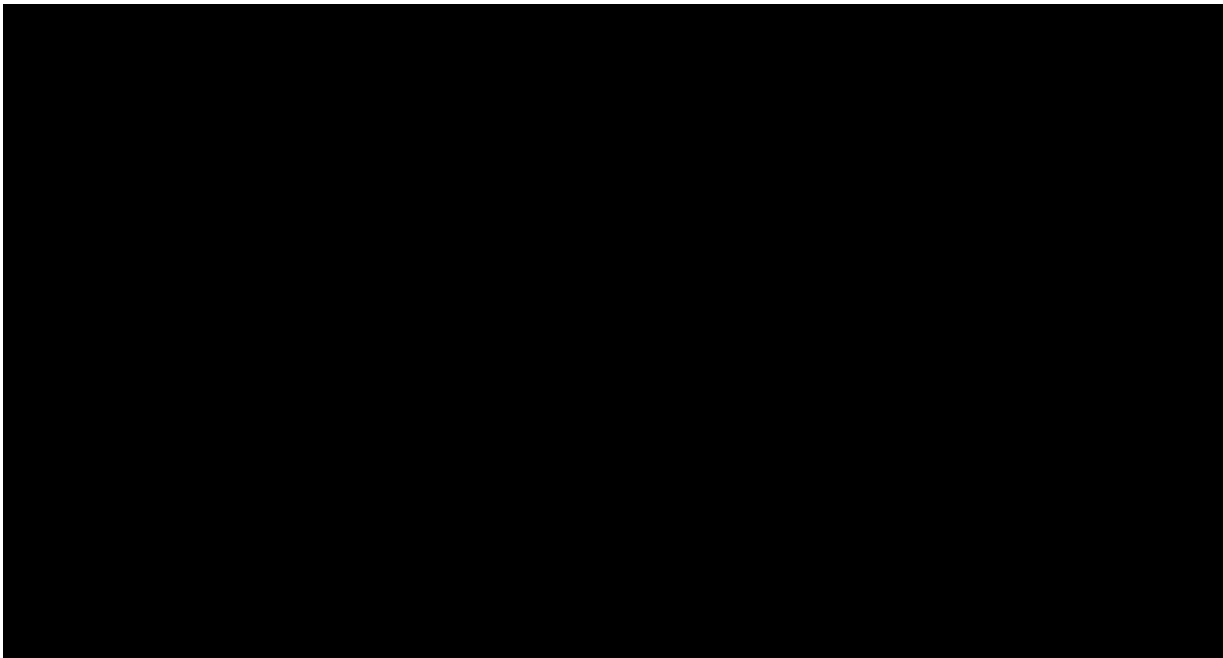


Figure 4: Example workflow on the Alteryx platform

As seen in Figure 3, by the time I left EY we were concluding the manual check step to identify errors in our algorithms. This was carried out using Excel and manual formulae to accurately double check underpayment amounts with the Alteryx output from our previous step.

Unfortunately, my journey at EY came to an conclusion before the meeting with the partners and delivery of our work occurred. However, I am confident that my input within the team had a significant impact in the success and efficient flow of our project.

5.2 Oceania All-Hands Meeting Presentation

5.2.1 Overview

Every service line at EY form their own sub-family within the firm. Whether that may be sharing tips on Microsoft Teams, or posting any engagement opportunities. Additionally for my Digital and Emerging Tech service line, every month, we had a Oceania-wide All-Hands meeting. This hosted all of the offices in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji which includes

around 200 to 300 employees. A new initiative that the team decided on was that each month, representatives from a specific office would lead the meeting in sharing information about the office and its city, alongside presenting regional accomplishments or milestones. I was fortunate enough to be asked by one of the Auckland meeting organisers to represent our New Zealand offices for the month of February.

5.2.2 Targets

Alongside my personal plans for what to include in the presentation, there were a few requirements and guidelines that had to be met/included also. After gathering all the necessary information, I laid out what my preparations would look like until the all-hands meeting, given that I only had around 2 weeks.

- Become familiar with the EY labelling, colourway, and formatting for the PowerPoint aspect of the presentation.
- Find contact points for the different project and client information in which I was to share to the rest of the Digital and Emerging Tech team.
- Recruit some guest speakers within the New Zealand offices (including Wellington and Christchurch) to talk about their role and what they have been working on.
- Create speaking notes for each slide to follow through with.
- Check with the Digital and Emerging Tech partners to ensure presentation is sufficient to share in the meeting.

5.2.3 Progress Made

Familiarising myself with EY-specific PowerPoint formatting was a relatively swift process. This was though a combination of myself already been taught this during my induction in the of the internship, and myself working on PowerPoint and client emails that required similar, if not, the same style of formatting.

The following steps, however, were the most time-consuming and stressful in my opinion. Firstly, it was very difficult to get into contact with the respective people, and due to the firm being so large and projects involving people from not just a specific team also lengthened the procedures. Moreover, many of the higher-up people were very busy, therefore it was difficult to create time to have a conversation regarding their project and client.

In terms of recruiting people to participate as guest speakers, it was not the lack of interested volunteers that was the issue, rather, the scheduling conflicts they had. The all-hands meeting was in the afternoon (New Zealand time), which was the part of the day where a lot of employees were either in client sites or in client meetings. I wanted to ask people from a variety of ranks to get insight on differing perspectives of working at EY, which may have not contributed to ease of finding guest speakers. Despite all this, I managed to successfully recruit four; one partner, one manager, one graduate, and one intern.

Creating speaker notes was quite straightforward, as they were mostly just bullet points to help myself stay on track during the presentation. Lastly, I received the positive confirmation from my partners, which meant I was ready to present!

5.2.4 Presentation and Feedback

I managed to have a few run-throughs, which helped find awkward gaps or missing information before the actual presentation.

The presentation itself went very smooth, and this was due to the significance of our guest speakers, that kept the show interesting, despite the rather short notice. A lot of the team based in Australia seemed energised by the “All Blacks are better than the Wallabies” joke I included. In general, the team were very involved, posting comments in the chat section and having a pleasant time overall.

I felt as if my contributions and hard work paid off, as instantly after the meeting concluded, many peers either emailed or messaged me with the overall feedback being “It was well run, with a good mixture of seriousness and jokes”. I felt very privileged being able to have the opportunity to represent all of Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, and I believe it was a wonderful experience for myself to increase my soft skills, whilst developing my PowerPoint and logistical abilities also.

6 Reflective Appraisal

6.1 Impressions on Organisation

The Big Four has been a group of firms in which I thought I would never be able to work for, given my mediocre grades and limited extra-curricular experience. On top of this, from what I’ve read and heard from outside people, the way in which these companies treat employees, especially ones on the lower end of the hierarchy chart, lacked in comparison to other firms overall, with work hours tedious and overloaded.

I can only speak for EY, however, after I joined the firm, I realised none of these rumours were true. In fact, it was quite the opposite. I’ve never experienced such a well organised internship program with the perfect amount of support and independence. Additionally, I personally felt the firm entrust me with responsibilities and were always open to questions to clarify any concerns or queries that I would definitely develop.

A large global organisation such as EY fully understood the returns they are presented with when investing substantially to employee welfare and lifestyle, both on and off work. From the subsidised food and beverages, state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure, and regular social events, are all perks that employees are exposed to within the business and this creates an overall atmosphere of enjoying the work they do, which would obviously generate better standards and delivery of work on a higher level standpoint

Despite its size and the large number of employees, I never felt intimidated to converse with senior employees, and I believe that is the image that EY is attempting to implement, both naturally and through programmes/social events. Fluidity in staff hierarchy leads to fluidity in work, and ultimately, results.

6.2 Skills Developed

The skills I learnt and worked on during my time at EY can be approached into two broad categories: soft skills and hard/technical skills, also both have to be intertwined for professional success.

Working in such a fast-paced environment, it is crucial to work both independently and in a team efficiently. Such aspects come with a few significant skills. Firstly, teamwork and communication. Most often than not, a consultant will be doing their own work but a part of a larger team. There are frequent meetings and stand-ups to report any issues and update progress. I find it important to be able to listen and accept differing point of views, whilst projecting the correct information to others. Secondly, multitasking. This might be more heavy focussed on in consulting, but there are often cases where I am working on multiple projects/tasks at the same time. This requires a lot of time management and division to be able to complete every task on time. Such is a skill in which I developed a lot during EY which I believe will be useful in my future career.

On top of these skills, there are a lot of technical and software-based skills which I picked up and developed. The two main software which was of paramount significance during my internship was Alteryx and Excel. The prior being the software in which I utilised the most for any data work, whether that may be cleaning, analysis, or even algorithm foundations. I did not bring any prior exposure to the program, hence having to learn everything from scratch in a short time. The latter, Excel, was another crucial piece of software in which I used almost every day. Our spreadsheets would often be open through Excel and we would do all our manual checks on it as well. Even though I had fundamental knowledge of Excel, this internship created an opportunity for me to further nurture such an important work-place skill.

6.3 Lessons Learnt

The first lesson I learnt was that things do not happen overnight. In University where most assignments are individual, it is your pace and work ethic that determines the outcome and time of completion. However, in a professional setting, there are often many inevitable steps that are required before advancing any further or to receive an answer. Often, I would be waiting a few days for a reply, and it was even difficult to find a slot in my peers' calendars to plan a meeting or an event.

Secondly, I learnt to complete tasks thoroughly and precisely the initial time rather than to speed through them as fast as possible to finish early, only to be told to make changes/redo work in the future. Despite this, there must be a right balance between the accuracy and promptness for the completion of tasks. Thankfully however, my managers and my team were very flexible with deadlines or even taking some of my workload to distribute amongst themselves to reduce pressure on me.

7 Conclusion

- 400 Sub-Professional (flexible) hours completed at EY, a global accounting and advisory firm
- Developed understanding and knowledge in technical software: Alteryx, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint etc.
- Thanks to the welcoming and considerate employees at the organisation, I was never hesitant to ask for help and often received valuable guidance and know-hows to expand my knowledge, thus improving my overall Internship experience
- I am personally very thankful for everyone that I worked with, and also EY for providing me with such a treasurable time
- This opportunity solidified my future ambitions in returning to the consulting field after I graduate

8 References

Machine learning with Alteryx: Examples (2022) Data Analytics. Available at: <https://vitalflux.com/machine-learning-with-alteryx-examples/> (Accessed: March 13, 2023).