



Nuffield Research Placements case study: *Ellie Kovachka* – NRP Student

What is your current role?

I am taking a gap year to continue with my Nuffield Research project in more depth.

What was your project about? Did you gain any new skills, both scientific and general work skills, from undertaking your placement?

Cool brown dwarfs within binary systems. I learnt many new calculations, as well as facts about brown dwarfs and how they function. The placement introduced me to many new programs, which were used to determine the nature of the object and its speed.

What was the highlight/best bit of your placement?

The best bit of my placement was learning how to use the programs Gaia and DS9 to determine the speed of the brown dwarfs. Those were incredibly interesting, and they diverted from the A-Level Physics syllabus.

What path did you take after finishing your placement and how has that led you to where you are today?

After finishing my placement, I continued studying for my A-Level exams, which were at the end of the year. Due to this, I have been given the opportunity to continue developing this research further.

What are your future plans? Did your Nuffield Placement have an effect on the choices that you made after finishing school/college/university?

As an aspiring researcher, I hope to pursue Electrical Engineering at Imperial College London in the next academic year. My placement helped me determine I would like to work as a researcher, and hence persuaded me to take a gap year to continue with it.

Did you stay in touch with your supervisor?

I have stayed in touch with my supervisor and am currently conducting research with him as part of my gap year.

If you could give one piece of advice to Nuffield students who are thinking of applying or are about to start a placement what would it be?

The most important part of the application process is to show your true determination for the subject you are choosing and what helped you decide to choose this field, as well as why you are motivated to work within it.

What would your advice be to young people thinking about a career in STEM?

STEM can be hard, and it will take a lot of hard work and determination, but once you have realised it is something you want to dedicate yourself to, do not quit and continue on.

Do you have any other comments?

Thank you once again for the opportunity to do a Nuffield Placement. It has opened many doors and has determined me to pursue a career in STEM and research.