

M&T Scholarship Award Report

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After seeing the recruiting email, I reached out to Oliver Jenkins, an M&T junior then who had done the same internship in the previous summer. From what he described about the firm and his experiences. I realized this would be a great opportunity to be involved in something financially-oriented as well as entrepreneurial. Not long after I submitted my resume, Marcel, one of the partners, reached out for an interview, which was composed of fit-based and getting-to-know-me type of questions. Then came the offer, within a week from the interview or two weeks in total from the resume drop.

Going in I had some but limited knowledge of the stage of the firm and it turned out that Arena had just raised its initial capital right before the summer. Thus to prepare for take-off in the early fall, I spent 60% of the time working with Marcel on creating Arena's marketing materials, analyzing the competitive landscape of the hedge fund industry, and researching institutional investors. I also worked with various service providers such as the web designers and CRM providers to set up Arena's technology platform. I spent rest of the time working on a few structured lending investments. As the only intern working on investments, I was given full independence to build out the cash flow models. I directly communicated with my MD, as well as CEOs and investment banks relevant to the deals. The early exposure and independence allowed me to study closely the mechanics behind structured loans.

My internship with Arena was also very insightful to my future career path. I had been interested in finance for a while, but this experience assured this is the right path for me. Then here comes the golden question – which aspect of finance should I be pursuing after college? Though my time at Arena was extremely rewarding from a learning's perspective, I also realized that I want to be involved in larger transactions and more lively deals. Thus combining my passion in technology, I think investment banking in the TMT sector would be my immediate pursuit after college.

For underclassmen who are seeking internships with startups, I think it's important to understand what you are getting yourself into. Startups, whether they are in technology, finance, or retail, etc., demand different levels and types of work to be done at different stages. Because Arena was very understaffed during the summer, I was given many differentiated projects. Knowing where the company is and what type of work that might be required of you would be a good start.