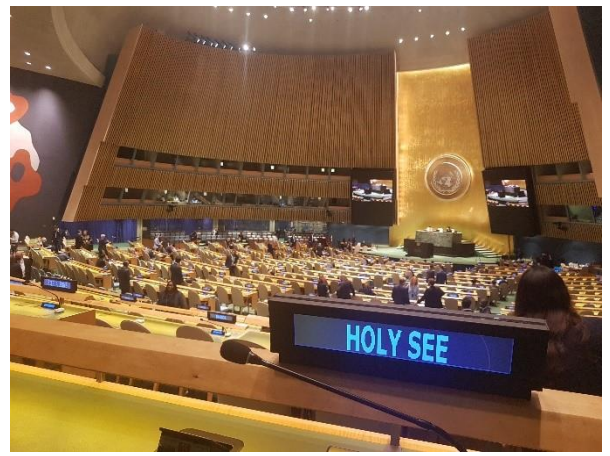


Cambridge Careers case study: Peter,

Internship with at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations

Péter Juhász studied Natural Sciences at Trinity College and is currently on an internship program at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York. The programme provides the opportunity for bright, Catholic graduates or graduate students to gain experience assisting the work of the Holy See in its multilateral work at the UN.



How did you hear about the opportunity?

Completely randomly! I was just interested in diplomacy, including the diplomacy of the Holy See. I came across the opportunity on their website which I was browsing for my own interest.

What is a typical day like?

Fitting for the Holy See, we start each day at 9am with a short prayer in the Chapel, which helps focusing attention and reminds everyone in the Mission that we are here not to advance our own agendas but to try and help the international community in striving to achieve peace, development and cooperation. We aim to do this by trying to give non-political, independent advice and maybe a moral compass towards these goals. The Holy See is well-positioned to negotiate various contentious issues, such as peace agreements, given it has no alliances to military blocks, no economic interests and almost no land.

After the short prayer, we have a staff meeting where we assign tasks for the day and check what's happening at the UN that day (there's a lot going on and things can change at short notice, so it needs to be checked daily). We then cover various meetings, for example I've just covered a session of the General Assembly on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Tests, and a colleague of mine is currently covering a meeting of the Security Council on Ukraine. After these meetings, we write reports which are then sent to the Vatican, formulating its 'foreign policy.' Furthermore, I'm also currently doing some research on cybersecurity, on which the Holy See has no official position just yet, to be able to formulate one.

What are you enjoying the most and have you found anything surprising or challenging?

I've just started the program but I'm enthusiastic about the upcoming High-level Week, where all the Presidents and Prime Ministers come to the UN to set the agenda of the UN for the year. I'm also quite excited by the fact that I can contribute to formulating the policy of the Holy See on cybercrime and cybersecurity, which is an important contemporary issue.

One thing which I was definitely new to me is writing this many reports – I'm a physicist after all, so I'm better-versed in equations!

What are the main things you have learnt?

Listening is an important skill, as well as engaging with other people constructively and respectfully. It's also good to get an understanding of international law and the workings of the UN.

Finally, I find it is very interesting and beneficial to engage with international relations from the Holy See's point of view. A country's viewpoint is inherently political and carries a constant need to compromise, whereas I very much like that the Holy See takes an independent and value-based viewpoint.

What advice do you have for other students with similar interests?

Go on and reach out to your respective countries, or NGOs with representation at the UN – or the Holy See if you're Catholic – as they might just have a similar program designed to foster a new generation of diplomats! And don't be put off by the fact that you maybe haven't studied international relations, law or similar I studied Natural Sciences and I'm a physicist for all practical matters!