

Fulbright is

fully bright

A Fulbright Scholarship is a big deal. Sarah Beaven is too. **Smart Start** reports.



Fulbright

The Australian-American Fulbright Commission promotes and supports educational and cultural exchange between Australia and America.

- www.fulbright.com.au

Sarah's key career steps

- Tastes general science at uni before transferring to physics.
- Studied then worked and travelled to recharge batteries.
- Travelling helped refocus her studies and she uses uni and practical experience to grab prestigious Fulbright scholarship and goes to the US.

Work experiences in career area

Sarah was a summer scholar at CERN, the place with the world's largest machine (LHC). She says that people may have seen it in the news: "There's a small fraction of people who think this will create a black hole and destroy the world! I worked on a project at CERN, which is just out of Geneva, Switzerland, for three months in 2005."

"I'm not exactly a planning type of person actually," says Sarah. "At school, my choice of subjects and extracurricular activities were based on doing what I enjoy. I like to be busy, so I would get involved in as much as I could, from sports and parties to charity door-knock appeals."

The big decision came for Sarah immediately after finishing school: what to study? "For me this was basically a trial-and-error kind of process, although the initial trial wasn't too far from hitting the mark."

Sarah did one year of a mathematical science/physics degree at Central Queensland University before transferring to a bachelor degree in physics in the honours program at Queensland Uni of Technology.

Then, after finishing her honours year, she had another big decision to make. "I decided to take a year off from study, and spent a semester teaching at CQU to save up enough money to spend six months in Europe."

Sarah returned to Australia, moving down to Canberra to the Australian National University.

"Then I applied for the Fulbright Scholarship to undertake a part of my PhD in a laboratory in the US. And now here I am – at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Maryland."

Sarah reckons there are great things about being on the Fulbright in the US.

"The best thing is meeting new people, and experiencing a part of the world that I've never been in before. In addition to the academic 'broadening of my horizons' that comes with being in another lab and working with a different group of researchers, I also enjoy just being here and getting a feel for how everyday life is in another part of the world."

She reckons the only bad thing will be riding her bike to work when winter sets in!