For my summer placement I was lucky enough to spend two months in Msida, northeast Malta. Malta is a beautiful country with stunning coastlines and warm sunny weather every day during the summer. My project aimed to assess the seasonal changes in meiofauna assemblages and to use this data to assess human impacts on the sand beaches of Maltese islands. My project was based at the University of Malta with IOI Malta Operational Centre.

Much of my time was spent in the lab in the chemistry department extracting meiofauna from sediment samples. The remainder of my time was spent collecting samples from beaches around the island and working on my data and literature search in the office at the university. Although my project was primarily lab and desk-based, I still had plenty of free time to go explore the island.

Two other students from the MEM course were based at IOI-MOC doing other projects, so I was able to accompany them on their fieldwork when time allowed. The island is great for diving with loads of dive centres to choose from; I took advantage of the warm Mediterranean waters to get my open water and advanced qualifications.
during my placement. But if you’re not a diver, there are lots of great snorkeling spots too.

My project was a bit monotonous at times and it was largely office-based. However my work will contribute to a paper due for publication next year and it will be good to see my work pay off. Another drawback with the project was that my work was limited and I felt that I had to push for more work to make my placement more challenging.

Malta was an amazing place to visit for my placement and I would definitely recommend it so future students. But my advice would be to ensure that the project is extensive enough to keep you busy for 8-10 weeks and that the content is something you are passionate about to keep you engaged in the project. The summer placement is one of the things that drew me to the MEM course and it is, in my opinion, the most important (and fun!) part of the course. I also didn’t realize just how much I had learned during the first two semesters until I put everything into practice during my placement. If you are like myself, who went straight into the MSc from undergraduate, it is a good introduction to the real life world of work!