

New Perspectives and Experiences from SeAMK and Company Collaboration with International Students in Kauhajoki

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Vu Anh Tuan, Kiet, is an international automation engineering student at SeAMK. He is doing an internship in Kauhajoki at Pinomatic Oy. Pinomatic Oy is a supplier of mechanization for non-settling log, glued beam, and CLT production, as well as for the LVL and plywood industry.



Photo 1. SeAMK’s automation engineering student Kiet at his workstation at Pinomatic (photo: Janika Hautaviita, 2025).

Kiet is from Vietnam. He chose Finland as his study destination and thus Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences as his place of study because of the clean environment and air. How did Kiet end up doing his

internship in Kauhajoki and at Pinomatic?

Last autumn, SeAMK Regional University organized a visit day for SeAMK's international students in cooperation with the city of Kauhajoki, the municipality of Teuva, and a few companies from Kauhajoki and Teuva. Kiet participated in this visit and got to know Pinomatic. During the visit, he met Pinomatic's CEO Matias Rantala. The day after the visit, Kiet sent his CV and internship application to Pinomatic. Soon after, he was invited for a job interview and was selected as Pinomatic's first international intern-student.

Kiet is studying to become an automation engineer at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. He is currently in his fourth and final year of studies. His thesis is already in progress and is well on its way to completion. Kiet's supervisor and mentor at Pinomatic is Programming Manager Teuvo Lager:

– Kiet is the first international intern at Pinomatic, so this is a new experience for us as well. An international student brings a new perspective to work and improves our language skills at the same time. At the beginning of the internship, we focused on the exchange of information between the optimization saw and the scanner.

Kiet is doing his thesis on this new communication data transfer for Pinomatic. Currently, Kiet is programming the planing line and gaining experience in carrying out the project programming through different stages.

Kiet lives in Seinäjoki, where he studies, and commutes daily either by his own car or with a colleague from the same company who also lives in Seinäjoki.

When asked about the challenges he has faced in his work, Kiet praises the excellent working conditions at Pinomatic. He shares an office with his supervisor. His work computer has all the programs needed for his internship. The only thing that sometimes poses a challenge is the language. The working language in computer programs and in practice is English. Kiet knows and has studied some Finnish.

Regarding his career aspirations, Kiet could consider staying in Finland. I asked if he could consider moving to Kauhajoki for work. The answer is yes. He hopes that after the internship period, which lasts 5 months, he will get a permanent position at Pinomatic. The company also shares this thought at this point in the internship, as they have been satisfied with Kiet's work contribution. But time and the future will tell how it goes.

Kiet gives a few tips to other international students who would like to do an internship at a company, for example, in a small town like Kauhajoki. According to him, it is of course good to have a command of the Finnish language. In addition, he encourages them to boldly get to know the company in advance before sending an internship or job application to the company.

Kiet's best experience in Kauhajoki is the delicious waffles at Katja's waffle café. In Finland, he especially enjoys moving around in national parks, being in nature, and berry picking. The best thing is the clean nature. Seinäjoki appears to him as an important place to live, but also because of the diverse shopping opportunities. Regarding hobbies, he mentions a change that happened after moving to Finland. Previously, in his home country, he spent a lot of time on computer and other games, but he said he wanted a more sensible hobby. So in Finland and Seinäjoki, he has started playing badminton and swimming.

Pinomatic's marketing manager Sanna-Mari Vakkuri says that Kiet is their first international intern.

– Pinomatic Oy is the market leader in its field in Finland, and about half of the production is exported. Internationality is also a very important potential resource in the near future, which the company wants to invest in.

Therefore, including Kiet and possibly other international interns in the future is important for the company. According to Vakkuri, the possible obstacles for companies to take on international students are of course the language barrier and the fact that one of the company's employees has to take responsibility for the intern.

Finally, Vakkuri concludes:

– We encourage companies to give international students the opportunity for internships, as international students bring new ideas and even working methods to the company. Due to globalization, SMEs face international competition even in the domestic market. The skills and cultural knowledge of international students can be a significant resource for the company's development.

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