

# Apprenticeship Journey

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## How did you get into your apprenticeship?

My original plan was to become a midwife. However, this is a tough course to get onto, due to limited placements at each university. I decided to look into alternative medical career options, as I've always had a passion for working in the field.

I reviewed a few options and was quite tempted to become a dental nurse. I was told the way ahead was to do a modern apprenticeship, meaning I'd earn a wage whilst gaining an industry recognised qualification.

The website for the company providing the apprenticeship, TotalPeople, had a variety of options on there and one in pharmaceutical research caught my eye. Upon looking into this course in more detail, I decided to apply.

The application process was enjoyable, it involved aptitude tests and meetings at AstraZeneca. Whilst I was there, I toured the various life science labs offering apprenticeships and spoke with their current apprentices. AstraZeneca offered me an opportunity and I joined!

The apprenticeship was invaluable. It gave me a real insight into the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry. I would work collaboratively with multiple laboratories and gained unparalleled experience at such a young age. I am so appreciative of the two years I spent with TotalPeople and AstraZeneca.

During this period, I was employed as any other employee would be. This basically meant I was treated the same as the top class scientists I was working alongside. I was onsite four days a week and spent one day a week on a day release to South Cheshire College for my studies. This was always a busy day, as we had to fit in a week's worth of lessons into one long day. I would arrive early and leave late. It meant I had to be organised and manage my time well but that taught me great life skills that I now utilise every day.

The work-based training actually helped me a lot with my college courses. I would be able to apply real-world scenarios from my lab to the work I was completing at college. It made things like writeups for practical assignments so much easier.

I also developed team leadership skills, self-awareness and confidence through trips to The Outward Bound Trust funded by my apprenticeship programme. As well as a host of industry-relevant skills, it meant that from a young age being able to operate at a higher level than had I taken a fully academic route. At various points in my career, I have found to be working senior to some graduates.

There were a lot of options available to me after my apprenticeship. It opened doors to other companies and it gave my career a brilliant start. I was quickly able to join Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute through The University of Manchester as a Scientific Officer 2, where I have worked ever since.



## What is your job/study now?

My role at Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute is as a Scientific Officer where I carry out experimental research for scientists. This means I work with scientists of all levels (postgraduates, PhD students, research fellows, principle scientists, group leaders and even clinicians) by running experimental studies on different types of cancer.

I work with cutting edge innovative treatments such as immunotherapies and combination drug therapy as well as targeted therapies, cancer immunity and medical imaging. My job is very advanced science; the things I work on are perhaps a decade away from the treatment rooms in hospitals.

## What does the future hold?

I'm always open to specialising in different fields, so there are a lot of pathway options ahead. Some tempting options are in perhaps translational work and new areas of medical scanning. I've always found imaging work incredibly interesting.

I'm also hopeful of moving onto a more senior role in future. Currently, I do some elements of training & assessing and helping spread knowledge in the field, such as working on industry refinements, helping scientists with novel models and generally advancing cancer research.

## Many students have to take out loans and incur debt. May we enquire about your situation?

I have none! I also earned money while working on the apprenticeship scheme which allowed me to get onto the property ladder in my early 20's. I'm so thankful for my apprenticeship and all the opportunities given to me since.