

Real-life story - Bamidele Farinre

Bamidele's fascination with science started from a young age as her mum was a registered nurse and her aunty a qualified doctor in Nigeria.



Bamidele Farinre Specialist biomedical scientist - virology

Employer or university Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust

Salary range £30k-£40k

How I got into the role

I graduated from Brighton University in 2006 with a BSc in Biomedical Science and gained experience as a support worker in a local young people's centre, working with young adults with learning disabilities. I also volunteered in my spare time as a youth group leader.

I was looking for NHS jobs where I could follow a promising career path in science. I worked in the commissioning support unit (CSU) at Hammersmith Hospital and then as a medical laboratory assistant at St George's Hospital in Tooting.

In June 2009 I was offered a trainee biomedical scientist post in the microbiology and virology department of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. During the subsequent years of intense training, I completed my higher specialist diploma and specialist diploma in Virology and an MSc in clinical microbiology at Queen Mary University.

I have been developing my scientific/leadership skills over the years post registration and have steadily advanced in my career as a specialist in my field of practice. I am an IBMS CPD officer for my department, a WISE STEM ambassador, a British Science Association (BSA) Crest assessor and a mentor to trainees.

What I do

A typical day in the lab is from 8am to 5.30pm and also additional hours over the weekend. My working conditions vary from day to day, depending on which section of the lab I'm rotating in. My usual routine entails selecting and carrying out appropriate virology investigations on pathology samples, using molecular and serological techniques.

I work unsupervised and take responsibility for the quality and accuracy of the results I produce. It's important that I follow and adhere to standard operating procedures of the laboratory.

One myth about my role is that it's boring when in actual fact it isn't. No ordinary day is the same.

The best bits and challenges

The best bit of the job is when I'm able to produce diagnostic results in a timely fashion that enables prompt patient management. Occasionally there can be a delay in releasing test results when routines are disrupted due to unforeseen circumstances. That can be overwhelming, especially when you know clinicians are waiting on that particular result to diagnose a patient.

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I have attended a variety of training sessions, conferences and seminars that have helped develop my professional skills. I am proud of my achievements so far and still aspiring for more challenging yet fulfilling opportunities.

Life outside work

I love to sing, dance and have a laugh. I spend quality time with my family, going on holidays and doing activities with my children in the evenings and weekends.

I know when to say "no" and take things one at a time, getting a helping hand and not stressing over things I have no control over. All these allow me to focus on my work and enjoy what I do.

Career plans and top tips for others

I hope to continue developing my skills as a senior healthcare scientist and apply for leadership roles in the near future. I recently attended an interview for the Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) WISE Fellowship Programme.

My career goals for the next five years involve continuous professional development (CPD) through evidence-based practice. My ambition is to progress to senior management level with the aim of making a positive and effective contribution to the biomedical science workforce by contributing through a professional body in influencing policies.

One of the steps I've taken to reach my goals is studying for the IBMS higher specialist portfolio in virology, coupled with my roles as a CPD officer and a mentor.

I would encourage people considering my role or area of work to keep believing in their abilities. They can achieve whatever they put their mind to do, with the right resources/information, positive attitude and perseverance.

Don't be afraid to ask questions even if they sound stupid to you. You can only acquire knowledge when you seek it. Aim high and don't allow any outdated norms to navigate you off course!

To be suited to this role, you need to be articulate, passionate and open-minded.

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