

# Careers in a Research Environment - Information for Biomedical Scientists

## What roles are available? ...What BMS graduates do

Each year, a number of Sheffield's BMS graduates go on to pursue a higher-level career in research. For many, the starting point is a Masters and/or PhD which will enable them to develop the necessary in-depth knowledge and research experience (ask your tutor about MSc, MRes and PhDs or see [www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/flipbooks/pgstudyresearch/files/assets/basic-html/index.html#1](http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/flipbooks/pgstudyresearch/files/assets/basic-html/index.html#1) to get started). A small proportion of new graduates go straight into lab-based work, usually at a lower entry level point, as research assistants, or technicians, trainee scientists (eg, clinical, research, process, production) or analysts. Employers include:

- Universities and other research institutes ([www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk))
- NHS inc. Scientists Training Programme (managerial role) or science practitioner / healthcare science associate roles (technical) ([www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk); [www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/NHS.pdf](http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/NHS.pdf))
- Medical research charities ([www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/working-in-industry/977/careers-in-medical-research-charities](http://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/working-in-industry/977/careers-in-medical-research-charities); [www.amrc.org.uk](http://www.amrc.org.uk); [www.charitychoice.co.uk](http://www.charitychoice.co.uk); [www.sheffieldhelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldhelpyourself.org.uk))
- Contract research organisations ([www.icr-global.org/careers](http://www.icr-global.org/careers); [www.ckra.org.uk](http://www.ckra.org.uk))
- Pharmaceutical companies ([careers.abpi.org.uk](http://careers.abpi.org.uk); [www.pharmafile.com](http://www.pharmafile.com); [www.pharmaceutical-journal.com](http://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com))
- Biotechnology companies, especially SMEs ([www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/sme.pdf](http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/sme.pdf); [www.bioindustry.org/membership/member-directory](http://www.bioindustry.org/membership/member-directory))
- Government and other public bodies ([www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi); for a list of departments see [www.gov.uk/government/organisations](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations) eg [www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk); [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk); [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england) and [www.nibsc.org](http://www.nibsc.org). Police services provide opportunities in forensics, as do many private sector providers ([www.forensic-science-society.org.uk/Careers](http://www.forensic-science-society.org.uk/Careers))
- Broaden your search by looking at less obvious sectors, which could range from the (health) food industry ([www.societyofbiology.org/careers-and-cpd/careers/make-a-difference/food](http://www.societyofbiology.org/careers-and-cpd/careers/make-a-difference/food)), cosmetics and personal care production ([www.catie.org.uk/facesofscience/meet\\_the\\_faces/default.htm](http://www.catie.org.uk/facesofscience/meet_the_faces/default.htm); [www.scs.org.uk](http://www.scs.org.uk)) through to utility companies or water / environmental testing ([www.ciwem.org/information-and-resources/careers.aspx](http://www.ciwem.org/information-and-resources/careers.aspx))

## Exploring jobs and careers

In addition to the web links outlined above, to find out more about what's involved in a range of occupations, investigate [www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs.htm). You will find information for a wide range of jobs. This information includes a job description, salary, entry requirements, training, career development, typical employers/vacancy sources and related jobs. Also see [targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors](http://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors). Useful blogs dedicated to careers after biological science: [biosciencecareers.wordpress.com](http://biosciencecareers.wordpress.com) and <https://blogs.jobs.ac.uk>.

The Royal Society of Biology ([www.rsb.org.uk/careers-and-cpd/careers](http://www.rsb.org.uk/careers-and-cpd/careers)) has a useful careers section for students which includes 'Make a Difference' career ideas. For added inspiration, see New Scientist Careers Special: [jobs.newscientist.com/en-gb/landingpage/1401410893/careers-guide-uk](http://jobs.newscientist.com/en-gb/landingpage/1401410893/careers-guide-uk). Also useful are Guardian Careers: [theguardian.com/careers](http://theguardian.com/careers) and Professional Network: [www.theguardian.com/guardian-professional](http://www.theguardian.com/guardian-professional). Societies, professional associations and research institutions can be a good source of careers information as well funding for scientific work experience or PhDs. Most occupational areas have at least one society and/or a professional body associated with it. Some are listed in the above section, others are set out below:

- Society for Experimental Biology: [www.sebiology.org](http://www.sebiology.org)
- British Society for Cell Biology: [www.bsccb.org](http://www.bsccb.org)
- Institute of Biomedical Science: [www.ibms.org](http://www.ibms.org)
- Physiological Society: [www.physoc.org](http://www.physoc.org)
- Genetics Society: [www.genetics.org.uk](http://www.genetics.org.uk)
- Pathological Society: [www.pathsoc.org](http://www.pathsoc.org)
- British Neuroscience Association: [www.bna.org.uk](http://www.bna.org.uk)
- Society for Endocrinology: [www.endocrinology.org](http://www.endocrinology.org)
- British Society for Neuroendocrinology: [www.neuroendo.org.uk](http://www.neuroendo.org.uk)
- Society for General Microbiology: [www.sgm.ac.uk](http://www.sgm.ac.uk)
- Society for Applied Microbiology: [www.sfam.org.uk](http://www.sfam.org.uk)
- British Society for Developmental Biology: [bsdb.org](http://bsdb.org)
- Biochemical Society: [www.biochemistry.org](http://www.biochemistry.org)
- Society for Reproduction and Fertility: [www.srf-reproduction.org](http://www.srf-reproduction.org)
- British Pharmacological Society: [www.bps.ac.uk](http://www.bps.ac.uk)
- BBSRC: [www.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk) and MRC: [www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)
- The Wellcome Trust: [www.wellcome.ac.uk](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk)
- Sanger Institute: [www.sanger.ac.uk](http://www.sanger.ac.uk)
- Nuffield Foundation: [www.nuffieldfoundation.org](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)
- Francis Crick Institute: [crick.ac.uk](http://crick.ac.uk)
- Scientists for Global Responsibility: [www.sgr.org.uk](http://www.sgr.org.uk) (search the 'Publications' for the keyword 'career')



This list is by no means exhaustive – search for professional bodies via the Trade Association Forum: [www.taforum.org](http://www.taforum.org) (look in the 'Directories' section), which also has the latest labour market news. Also ask your tutor or lecturers.

## Useful science-based jobs websites & recruitment agencies

- Scientific journals eg [www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com); [www.the-scientist.com](http://www.the-scientist.com); [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com)
- Online vacancy databases such as [sciencecareers.sciencemag.org](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org); [www.careerscene.com](http://www.careerscene.com); [www.emedcareers.com](http://www.emedcareers.com); [www.selectscience.net](http://www.selectscience.net); [www.jobsinscience.com](http://www.jobsinscience.com); and [www.totaljobs.com](http://www.totaljobs.com)
- Recruitment agencies including [www.kellyscientific.com](http://www.kellyscientific.com); [www.sci-search.com](http://www.sci-search.com); [ckscience.co.uk](http://ckscience.co.uk); [www.seltekconsultants.co.uk](http://www.seltekconsultants.co.uk); [www.matchtech.com](http://www.matchtech.com); [www.paramountrecruitment.co.uk](http://www.paramountrecruitment.co.uk); [www.strgroup.co.uk](http://www.strgroup.co.uk); [www.kuborecruitment.com](http://www.kuborecruitment.com) and [www.zestmedical.com](http://www.zestmedical.com). For links to other agencies: [www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sitephar.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sitephar.htm) and search the Recruitment & Employment Confederation website for recruitment agencies by specialism: [www.rec.uk.com](http://www.rec.uk.com). Also see Agency Central: [www.agencycentral.co.uk](http://www.agencycentral.co.uk)
- New Scientist Careers Special: [jobs.newscientist.com/en-gb/landingpage/1401410893/careers-guide-uk](http://jobs.newscientist.com/en-gb/landingpage/1401410893/careers-guide-uk)
- Guardian Careers: [theguardian.com/careers](http://theguardian.com/careers) and Professional: [theguardian.com/guardian-professional](http://theguardian.com/guardian-professional)

## Some general job-hunting tips

- Make use of online, searchable databases for a wide variety of jobs suitable for students from any degree discipline, including biosciences. Start with Career Connect: [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs). Also see [targetjobs.co.uk](http://targetjobs.co.uk) and [www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs.htm) (choose a relevant occupational area, such as 'Science and pharmaceuticals', and then look for the links to 'Employers and vacancy sources').
- Don't limit your chances by only looking at online jobs databases or vacancy listings. Use professional associations, learned societies, web search engines or Yellow Pages ([www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com)) to find out which organisations operate in your area of interest and check out their websites. If you can't find a jobs page, contact them directly. A professional, tailored speculative application (CV and letter) is recommended to tap into the 'hidden' jobs market: [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs/creative](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs/creative). Use social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/gettingajob/media](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/gettingajob/media).
- Don't just aim for the big, well known organisations. Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) make up a good proportion of graduate employers and can offer lots of early responsibility. Find details about SMEs in a locality by contacting intermediaries such as Chambers of Commerce ([www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)), science parks ([www.ukspa.org.uk](http://www.ukspa.org.uk)) or bioscience networks. Some universities, including Sheffield, create 'spin-out' companies that employ a small number of staff, look out for bioincubators: [www.bsc-biopharma.org.uk/placements/opportunities-in-smaller-bioscience-companies](http://www.bsc-biopharma.org.uk/placements/opportunities-in-smaller-bioscience-companies). Watch our DVDs for more information on working for an SME: [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/worktypes](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/worktypes).
- Talk to potential employers directly. Whilst many of us dread the idea of 'networking', try doing simple things like attending talks and fairs run as part of the Careers Service's What's on programme ([www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/events](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/events)) or those running within your department. Be prepared – find out which employers will be at the event, research them on the web first and maybe even take a copy of your CV along with you, so that you can try to chat with employers after the formal part of the event. They will be happy to share your enthusiasm. Go along to information-sharing events like Café Scientifique ([cafescientifique.org](http://cafescientifique.org)). Talk to your tutor as they may have some useful contacts for you to follow up - to search for UoS research supervisors: [www.shef.ac.uk/researchsupervisors/view](http://www.shef.ac.uk/researchsupervisors/view). Also check out the annual Life Sciences Careers Conferences organised via the Royal Society of Biology: [events.societyofbiology.org/LSCC](http://events.societyofbiology.org/LSCC). Check social media.
- For jobs further afield, check out 'MyInternational Career': [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/inter](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/inter).
- Competition for jobs is often strong so get help with applications from the Careers Service: [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/gettingajob](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/gettingajob). Previous research-related work experience is often vital. If you think you need to add some experience to your CV, the Careers Service can help you make a start. Be flexible in terms of the length and type of experience you seek. For example, you may find it necessary to seek several short placements with different organisations in order to gain a good level of experience. A day or two work shadowing is a useful way into an organisation and may lead to further experience or contacts for graduate job hunting.
- Have realistic expectations. You may have to serve your time doing what you might think are repetitive tasks in the lab for a year or two after graduation, in order to gain experience and a true insight into the scientific field before you can progress. This can be particularly true of smaller companies.
- Explore your options. Although you may start off your career in industry, you could transfer your experience into a job in academia, or vice versa. Both can offer quite different, and rewarding, ways of working.
- Explore alternatives where you can use your science in a lab or research environment but in alternative ways such as bio informatics, clinical trials administration, regulatory affairs, health & safety and quality assurance – see 'Career Ideas for students and graduates in Biomedical Science': [www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/careersdegree/bms\\_careerideas.pdf](http://www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/careersdegree/bms_careerideas.pdf)

## Need more help? Visit the Careers Service:

[www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students) | Level 1, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield | Tel: 0114 222 0910 to book an appointment