

FROM FRESHER TO FINALIST: SETTING OUR STUDENTS ON THE RIGHT TRACK

As well as focussing on academic study, QM Careers recommends that SBCS students aim to undertake at least 40 hours of work experience in Year 1. The nature of today's job market makes this key to ensuring that students are in a strong position to compete for more substantial (200+ hours) work experience in Year 2, such as an internship. This will, in turn, help students get the job they want on graduation. Below are some practical tips to help you advise your students, but don't forget the Queen Mary Careers Team can support you and your students at any stage.

Contact QM Careers on 020 7885 8533 or careers@qmul.ac.uk.

YEAR 1 – DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS AND BUILD YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE

Aim to get around 40 hours of work experience. This doesn't have to be linked to your subject, but is in addition to any lab time related to your course. Work experience should showcase skills like teamwork, initiative and communication skills.	
Join clubs and societies – this shows you're actively involved with the university and helps develop skills.	Check out www.qmsu.org for societies, sports and clubs. Societies, groups and clubs outside of university count too.
Write a CV – it'll help you focus on skills and experience and serve as a record of your activity, if kept up to date.	Book on to a CV clinic at QM Careers then have your CV checked in a short appointment. For online tips on how to write a CV, see the resources page www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/resources
Look for part-time work and/or volunteering opportunities – all work experience is good but particularly positions or responsibility or that challenge you (eg. team leader, supervisor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the Experience Works Fair for on campus and local opportunities. • Search the QM JobOnline vacancy database for part-time/casual work and work experience. www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/jobs • Contact QM Provide Volunteering www.qmsu.org/provide • Read the QM part-time work leaflet for information and tips.
Get work experience – find out whether a job or industry is right for you	Some companies offer insight days for first years - check QM JobOnline or individual company websites. Work shadowing and field trips, seminars and events can be useful. Join professional bodies and become a student member to find out what's happening and when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) www.ibms.org • Royal Society of Chemistry www.rsc.org • Society of Biology www.societyofbiology.org • British Psychological Society www.bps.org.uk • The Zoological Society www.zsl.org
Make the most of your summer – do an internship, travel, write blogs, enter science poster competitions	Research labs at Queen Mary and other universities/research institutes take on some students during the summer vacation. Look at research groups' webpages to see what interests you : www.sbc.sqmul.ac.uk/research
Reflect on your experience – Think about your course and any extra-curricular activities you have taken part in this year and consider what you have enjoyed and what you have been good at. Have you discovered a passion for writing or research for example? If so, you could use this as a starting point to think about jobs which might suit you. Book an appointment with a QM Careers Consultant to explore your ideas in more detail.	

YEAR 2 – BUILD ON YOUR SKILLS AND WORK EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS

Obtain more substantial and challenging work experience. Aim for about 200 hrs which is the same as 6 weeks during the summer or one day a week during term time. This will give you an insight into the world of work, help you decide what to do next and develop the skills valued by employers.	
Apply for upcoming summer internships - Many internships specify penultimate-year students only. Use the autumn term to find out about opportunities and apply. Some deadlines are as early as November, so keep an eye out. Internships are only one form of work experience (and there are not enough for everyone!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for undergraduate research opportunities such as the UROP programme at Imperial College www3.imperial.ac.uk/urop • Consider medical charities such as Wellcome Trust www.wellcome.ac.uk and Cancer Research UK www.cancerresearchuk.org • Look for roles using biological and chemical sciences away from the bench in places like Centre of the Cell www.centreofthecell.org • If considering Graduate Entry to Medicine then get ready early by attending the Exploring Graduate Entry to Medicine course hosted by The Careers Group, University of London www.careers.lon.ac.uk/output/Page114.asp
Attend careers events - Talk to employers, employees and alumni in person to find out more about different jobs and companies. It'll also help you decide what to do after university and to find out about work experience opportunities. Keep your eye on the SBCS Careers Events Calendar.	Take part in employer led, skills training sessions, department talks and go to fairs, on and off campus, like Big Bang Fair www.thebigbangfair.co.uk/home.cfm Google Science Fair www.google.com/events/sciencefair/ London Science Festival www.londonsciencefestival.com/ The Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition royalsociety.org/Summer-Science/
Explore on campus opportunities – Student ambassadors, PASS mentoring, course reps, positions of responsibility for clubs and societies. As well as research opportunities within the department.	XING www.learninginstitute.qmul.ac.uk/ee/enterprise_education/xing SIFE www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=112436539565 PASS www.qmul.ac.uk/undergraduate/schools/educationliaison/wp/pass/ Student Ambassador www.learninginstitute.qmul.ac.uk/ee/qmcsa/student-ambassadors

<p>Research jobs and employers - Start exploring different jobs and graduate schemes that you can apply for in your 3rd year. Read the QM Jobs blog for news from different sectors and employer visits.</p>	<p>NHS Careers www.nhscareers.nhs.uk NHS Scientist Training Programme www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/details/Default.aspx?Id=2105 ABPI careers.abpi.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx Prospects.ac.uk www.prospects.ac.uk Targetjobs targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/science-research-and-development</p>
<p>STUDY HARD FOR YOUR DEGREE - <i>Although work experience is important to recruiters, many jobs will require at least a 2.1. degree, so don't neglect your academic work.</i></p>	
<p>Prepare for interviews and assessment centres – You may not get a lot a notice before being called for interview, so be prepared.</p>	<p>QM Careers offer online practice psychometric tests and mock interviews please book in advance. There are also online resources as well as books and DVDs in the Careers Information Room, Queens Building, Room WG3.</p>
<p>Create your own work experience – Use contacts in your personal network to source possible work opportunities. Make full use of University facilities to up skill and learn new things.</p>	<p>Look out for sessions in your department that will teach you how to network in person and using social media, more effectively. www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/events Learn a language with QM Language and Learning Unit www.languageandlearning.qmul.ac.uk/language Improve your IT skills by attending IT Services training courses www.its.qmul.ac.uk/training/</p>

YEAR 3 – APPLY FOR JOBS AND PREPARE FOR THE SELECTION PROCESS

<p>With some good work experience on your CV you can start looking for vacancies and practise recruitment and selection methods.</p>	
<p>Search for job vacancies – there are many websites which advertise science-oriented job opportunities. Now is the time to start submitting your first applications for that important first job.</p>	<p>Keep an eye on QM JobOnline and ask us for feedback on your applications before you submit them. www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/jobs . Other sources of vacancies are: www.NewScientistJobs.com/graduate www.sciencecareers.sciencemag.org www.nextwave.sciencemag.org www.naturejobs.com www.newscientist.com/graduates www.abpi-careers.org.uk www.bioscience-jobs.com www.srq.co.uk (for laboratory staff) www.pharmajobs.com</p>
<p>Apply to SME's - Most opportunities for graduates are in small and medium sized businesses, so don't overlook these. Check science parks for opportunities with smaller companies.</p>	<p>UK Science Park Association (UKSPA website)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridge www.cambridgesciencepark.co.uk • Oxford www.oxfordsp.com • Warwick www.warwicksciencepark.co.uk • Manchester www.mspl.co.uk/ • York www.yorksciencepark.co.uk/metadot/index.pl
<p>Networking - 30% of vacancies are sourced through networks. Discussion boards and forums and sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook allow you to network online.</p>	<p>Look out for employer-led sessions in your department and attend and fairs to network in person. You can also use discussion boards and forums, sites like Facebook and Linked In to network online. Sign up for a LinkedIn Lab to learn how to use this media more effectively. www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/events</p>
<p>Proactive jobhunting - Up to 60% of jobs never get advertised so you have to be proactive with your job search. This approach is particularly useful if you're seeking laboratory or psychology work.</p>	<p>For online tips about job hunting in general or making speculative applications specifically see www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/students/jobhunting</p>
<p>Apply for postgraduate courses – Most scientific research, including academia will require postgraduate study and many pharmaceutical companies or psychology employers will expect it.</p>	<p>If you need help deciding what to do pop in to see a Careers Consultant Attend open days to find out about the courses and the institutions that offer them www.careers.lon.ac.uk/postgrad. You'll need an academic reference so think about who you'd like to provide this. Ensure that you ask permission before adding names to your application form.</p>
<p>Practice for interviews and assessments centres - Although you may have impressed an employer with your application, make sure you prepare well for the interview so you can continue to make a good impression!</p>	<p>See online resources for tips on how to prepare for interviews including a list of sample interview questions. QM Careers also offers an online practice psychometric test and mock interviews – please book in advance.</p>
<p>Grad Club – continued careers support for up to two years after graduation. Also stay in touch with the University and its activities by joining the alumni association or becoming a Career Ambassador for your department.</p>	<p>Grad Club www.gradclub.co.uk/Membership/WhyJoinGradClubUniversityofLondon.aspx The Queen Mary Alumni Network www.qmul.ac.uk/alumni SBCS Alumni Career Ambassador Contact SBCS Careers Consultant, Sabrina Wedderburn s.wedderburn@qmul.ac.uk</p>