

# Biosciences Careers Day - My Experience

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Mid-semester, I sat working through my coursework. There was the familiar “ding” of an email arriving in my mailbox. I read; “Funding for Liverpool students to attend the Royal Society of Biology Biosciences Careers Day” at Middlesex University.

I scrolled through the information sent out by our CareerHub and I saw who was exhibiting. I found a variety of companies, research universities and societies from a wide range of areas. These included; The BioChemical society and AstraZeneca, to name a few. As well as the fair itself which offered the chance to talk to these exhibitors, there was a selection of talks on career advice. An opportunity like this, I thought to myself, cannot be missed! I opened up the application form and filled out my details and a short paragraph on why I thought this would benefit me.

After several days, I was asked to attend a short briefing, hosted by Careers and Employability, on how to get the most out of this event. We were given a manual on the day’s speakers, who was attending and some quick hints and tips. The Careers Team explained how the event would play out, the logistics of the travel down to Middlesex and how we could prepare to present our best self to these potential employers. Included in the manual was a preparation checklist. This detailed several steps that we could take to be as ready as we could be to impress.

It was advised to print copies of CVs to hand out, undertake practice interviews at the Careers Studio and research particular companies/societies that interested me. I found this especially important. Sometimes it is difficult to think of what is best to do before these types of events and I felt this outlined clearly what was recommended.

The day of the event finally arrives...and the 5am wake up call for the coach to Middlesex. I reminded myself that this early morning would definitely be worth it. After a pastry and a coffee at the service station, we arrived at the venue. Upon entering, we were met with a bustling scene of students exploring the stalls and exhibitors. I approached several stalls that interested me and asked questions such as; “What would you be looking for in an application?” and “Is there anything I can do to make my application stand out?” This information gained would definitely help in a future internship application.

As the day continued, I entered my first talk, pad and pen in hand. The talk was “Careers in Plant Science”. The panel consisted of a range of speakers from big companies, PhD students to research technicians. This allowed me to ask questions about their respective positions, how they got to their current position and what



they might recommend to current students looking to move into the field. The talk helped me to build a good picture of what a job in this field might be like. The talks continued on topics such as CV building, career planning and other topics like “Industry vs Academia”. The first half of the day finished and I walked out to grab my packed lunch and speak to my fellow students on how their day was going.

The second part of the day began. As I wandered around the stalls, I noticed a sign detailing that there were practice interviews for students with some of the exhibitors who had come along to the event. I decided that this could be an unmissable opportunity to get helpful advice on how to improve my interview technique for the future. The interview was not stressful at all, rather the opposite. I had a good conversation with my interviewer who then walked me through my technique and gave me a leaflet showing my strengths and weaknesses. I liked the fact that I had a record on paper of where I should be improving, rather than relying on my memory. After a few more career based talks, it was time for the journey back.

Reflecting on this event, I am definitely very pleased I read the email about this and I am happy that I attended. Sometimes, it can be intimidating to attend these events and speak to potential employers but I felt the Careers Team prepared us well and calmed our nerves before sending us into the event. If someone asked me if I would recommend it for future students, I absolutely would. This gave me an unprecedented insight into a range of fields that I could enter with my degree and the information and advice on how to do this successfully.

I would also like to thank the Careers Team for organising everything and the School of Life Sciences for their continued support of their students. ■