

There are 1.2 million people employed in primary science based roles in the UK, even so, many graduate scientists still encounter problems finding work in labs. The problem is that they have strong theoretical knowledge but they do not possess the technical skills to back it up. Work experience increases your chances of securing a graduate job or a place on a Masters or PhD programme after university.

What is work experience?

It can include everything from a day spent shadowing a researcher in a lab, through to a 12 month industrial placement. It could be paid or done as a volunteer –it all counts!

There are no longer clearly distinct disciplines within science-based roles and scientists work in multidisciplinary teams with a range of other scientists and also those from commercial functions like marketing and sales. Be flexible where you look. Here are some of the key sectors:

- Health service - both private hospitals and NHS trusts plus national and global health-related charities
- Research institutions and Research councils
- Educational institutions -Universities
- Pharmaceutical industry and cosmetics companies
- Agro-chemical industry
- Biotechnology sector
- Scientific and technical consultancies
- Food and drink industry
- Utilities

Because of the multidisciplinary nature of science, work, there is a need not only for an in depth knowledge of your discipline, but also to demonstrate a range of other skills:

Communication, Negotiation, Team work, Presentation, Project management, IT skills

Work experience gives you:

- Knowledge of what is going on in the sector-demonstrates you are up to date and on the ball.
 - Appreciation of the regulations which govern the scientific industry -paperwork is a large part of the job
 - Opportunity to make a real contribution to the lab
 - Understanding of the job application process
- “We need people with interpersonal skills as strong as their science.”

On MEC309 Laboratory Teamwork

You must learn to work as a group or team in the laboratory lab sessions, as well as lab report preparation and writing. Engineers always work as teams in the real world, due to complexity of projects and multi-discipline requirements. Therefore, this is the chance for you to learn how to effectively work as a group.

The following are some points which may be helpful for effective teamwork:

- **Have a team leader or coordinator.** He or she will be the contact person to every team member through e-mail or phone. In this case, whenever a meeting is called for preparing and writing a report, every member can be contacted easily by the leader or coordinator. He or she will make sure that the deadlines are met by each individual.

- **Have clear tasks and deadlines for each member.**

A report can be completed more effectively with least time if it is broken into small and specific tasks for every member. All the information, data, calculations and writings of each task will be combined to complete one report, according to the deadlines.

- **Have good communication among members.** Communication at all levels are important as you need to pass and share information, data and calculations.