


## Simon Elliot, MSc Environmental Health

 Simon Elliot - MSc Environmental Health graduate "I cannot overstate the importance Birmingham has played in laying the solid foundations on which to build my career."

I graduated from the [MSc Environmental Health \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/gees/environmental-health.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/gees/environmental-health.aspx) course at the University Of Birmingham in 2005 and completed my work placement at Sheffield City Council before qualifying as an Environmental Health Practitioner (EHP) in 2007. I am currently employed in the discipline of food safety enforcement in Sheffield.

Despite being a relatively newly qualified EHP, my time in Sheffield has already been one full of variety, challenge, and professional development. I have already been the lead officer in many investigations and interventions dealing with a wide variety of food statute contraventions and legal action. I am also a qualified Food Hygiene Trainer and deliver Level 2 Food Hygiene training to groups of the public on the Council's behalf.

As with any occupation, competence grows with job experience and a career in Environmental Health is no exception. However what I have come to realise upon reflection is how well the MSc course at Birmingham prepared me for the demands of the job, for the following reasons:

Working in the field of public health protection I quickly learned how vital it is to understand the health risks posed by the different contraventions, as this is needed to rationalise and prioritise any hazard as well as justify the extent of my chosen intervention; an aspect that the job alone cannot teach. The high academic standard offered by Birmingham within the course content equipped me with an in-depth understanding of the theory to confidently make these judgements when out in the field.

The rigorous academic schedule also helps new professionals adapt to the demands of multi-tasking and meeting deadlines; a common feature of everyday work as an EHP. Similarly the high academic standards demanded by the course staff of the candidate instils a work ethic that is conducive to a productive and efficient EHP, whilst maintaining Birmingham's reputation as a leader in this field.

Most of all I feel that this course has given me knowledge and confidence enough to apply my learning to the benefit of the public of Sheffield and create precedents for the Authority to follow in future, and in doing so establish myself as a valuable asset to the team. I cannot overstate the importance Birmingham has played in laying the solid foundations on which to build my career.