

Alumni profiles - Rachel Hoare (nee Wheat)

MSc Clinical Oncology, part-time 2012

Research Technician at the University of Birmingham, School of Cancer Sciences

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How has your career developed since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

The MSc course enabled me to further develop my skills as a researcher, helping me to conduct research in a more informed way, taking into account the downstream processes required to translate research for a patient's benefit. The dissertation project enabled me to become a more independent researcher by intercalating my laboratory-based job with the planning, execution and reporting of a piece of independent study for this purpose (which I subsequently presented at a conference). This Masters level programme benefited me in many ways. I not only assembled and learnt facts, but also considered some of the philosophical challenges which underlie the treatment of cancer. I gained a greater understanding of how the research and trials processes fit together in the context of oncology and through engaging in continuing professional development, I gained increased confidence and self esteem.

What is the best thing about the job you are doing now?

I am committed to cancer research and enjoy making a positive contribution to cancer research fields through my laboratory work, which is what I enjoy doing.

What did you think were the best points of the course and the University?

- The lectures are given by world-class researchers and clinicians working at the university/experts in their field, and the information is very current and very relevant. One highlight is to hear the views of clinicians and others who are working at the leading edge of their specific fields, which often opens up discussions in the lectures.
- Very relevant course for anybody working in the cancer field.
- Broadens knowledge, not only clinical but also research methods and statistical analysis.
- Teaches you how to critically appraise published work and analyse the statistical methods used in clinical studies, which is a very important skill.

What advice would you give to current students studying on the course?

Ask questions and don't be afraid to express an opinion during lectures. Enjoy learning!!

How did you grow as a person by studying at University? Did it change your life in any way?

I have gained increased confidence and self esteem, as well as become much more independent in my research skills. I have gained skills and expertise from studying (and working) at the University, which will be paramount for directing my career in cancer research and maximising its impact on improving patient treatment and care.