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Widening Participation - Schools Engagement

Career Journeys in Cancer Research

Prof. Ananya Choudhury

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What do you do in your job?

I study the **best way to treat cancer patients** using radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

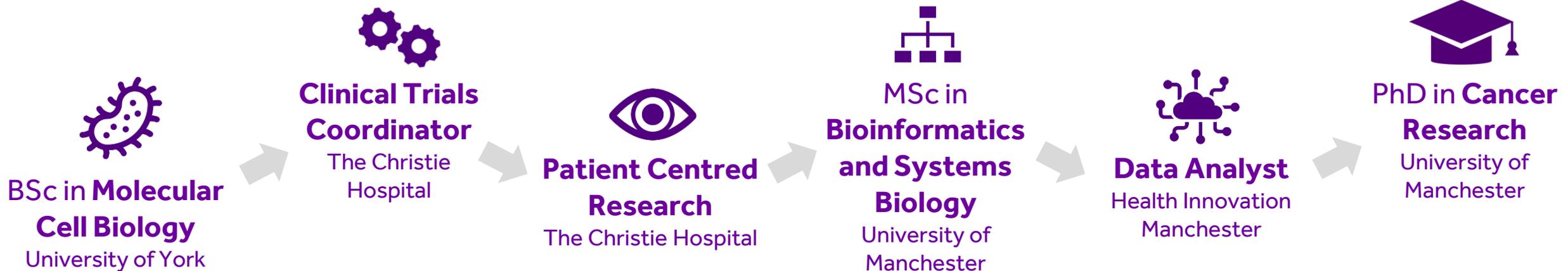
You can be anyone and do anything. Grab each opportunity that crosses your path – be **fearless and fair**. You never know where you will end up, so **enjoy the journey!**



Charlie Heaven

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What do you do in your job?

In my PhD I am working on **creating a computational program** which simulates what happens after we treat cells with radiation. By creating this we can then change bits of the set up to **predict** what would happen if we **changed treatments** and what gets the **best results**.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Follow what you enjoy. If you like a subject, just go and explore the options in that. Talk to people working there, see what career routes they took and **don't be worried about having it all planned out**. I've changed careers so many times and now I absolutely love what I do and I have no regrets!



Dr Claire Trinder

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What do you do in your job?

I am responsible for Research Operations at the MCRC and ensuring we **deliver on our strategy** which includes becoming a top 5 world class comprehensive cancer centre. It's about working out **what needs to be done** and then **making sure it gets done!**

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Think about the long term as well as the short term and **do not be afraid to take an unconventional path**. Do something you love and don't worry about what other people think. **Aim high!**



Dr Ellie Badrick

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What do you do in your job?

Life isn't always straight forward. I wanted to be a GP, but took a different career path I'm now a **cancer researcher** in a medical school and help teach people who are training to be Doctors.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

There's no shame in changing your mind, **the most important thing is try things.** Live in a different place for a few years, you can always move back, also be nicer to your Mum – she was right about a lot.



Dr Eliana Vasquez Osorio

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What do you do in your job?

I work with **medical images** of cancer patients to **improve future treatments**.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

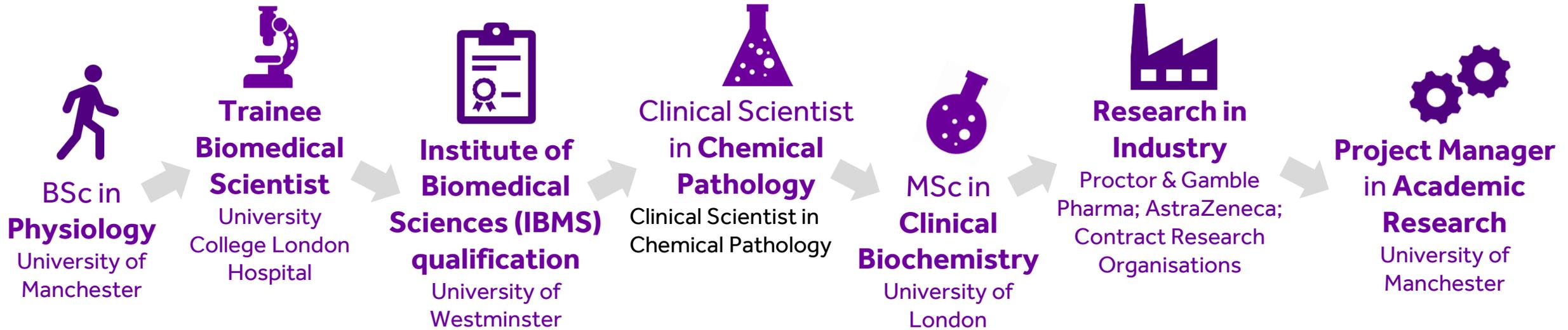
Choose what makes you happy, and don't be afraid of trying stuff that looks complicated or difficult. **Don't overthink your future**; you can stir it in different directions later on. Life has a way to help you find your path!



Emma Thorpe

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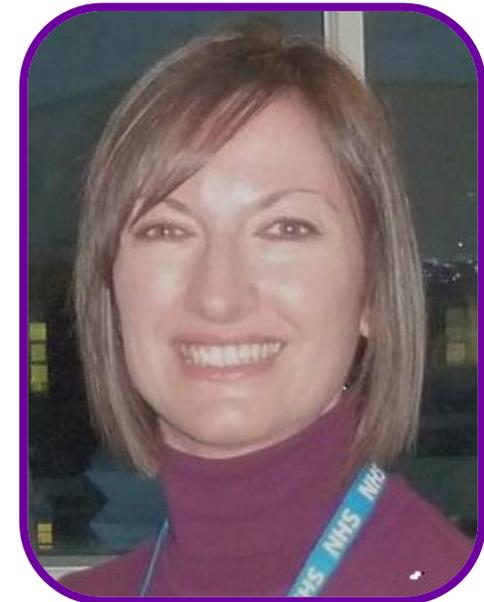


What do you do in your job?

I am a **Programme Manager** and manage a **cancer research theme** working with academics and clinical academics across the University of Manchester and various NHS Trusts

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

I work with people doing similar roles that have a very different career history to me. **You don't need to decide your future path at this age but if you do have specific goals then pursue them.** If opportunities arise that you weren't expecting, **have a go and see where the path takes you.**



Grant Punnett

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What do you do in your job?

I project manage a number of research studies investigating patient centred outcomes. This involves setting studies up, recruiting participants, line managing research assistants working on the studies and analysing the resulting data. I sit on a number of committees, one of which is a monthly forum at the trust which I co-run with my colleague which aims to inform and educate healthcare professionals and researchers about research skills and issues.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

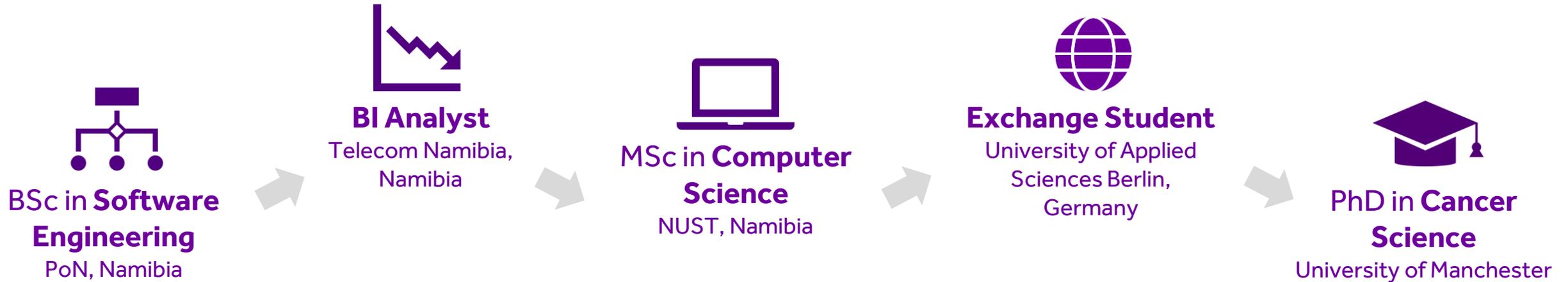
It is OK to not know just yet what you want to do with your life. You are in charge of your own destiny and it is never too late to change course. Don't let anxiety hold you back.



Mr Lameck Mbangula Amugongo

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What do you do in your job?

I work with **medical images** of lung cancer patients to **personalise treatment** for future patients.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Believe in yourself, you can be anything you want to be.
Impossible is nothing.



Dr Lana Lai

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What do you do in your job?

I am an **epidemiologist** currently studying the **association** between obesity and survival in patients with colorectal cancer.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Don't be afraid to **EMBRACE** every opportunity that comes your way. Don't be shy to **ENGAGE** in conversations with your teachers / mentors about your passions & interests. Don't forget to **ENJOY** every moment of the learning journey!



Lauren Hewitt

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What do you do in your job?

I am a **Project Manager within Radiotherapy Related Research** and responsible for making sure research projects are delivered on time. It is an **incredibly diverse role**: I am involved in multiple research projects, meaning in one day I could be organising an international network of researchers, costing a clinical trial and talking to the government to ask if an engineer can come into the country! You have to be **organised, pragmatic and determined** to overcome problems, finding timely solutions to a wide and varied range of challenges.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Whether you have a path and you know what you want to do, or whether you have no idea about your future direction, either way, **work hard, be curious, ask and learn as much as you can**. Then you are in a position to **make choices**. Keep persevering and **don't be afraid to change direction** to pursue something that you find interesting!



Lee Malcomson

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What do you do in your job?

Most of my time is spent with **health data** – either analysing it, collecting it, writing about it or co-ordinating projects that use it. It can sometimes **lead to discoveries that help improve the lives of patients!**

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Don't worry if you're not sure where you want to be in 20 years time – **take your time to decide what's best for you** and if you have the opportunity to travel & try out a few different roles, **take it!**



Nadin Hawwash

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What do you do in your job?

I am a **medical student** taking 3 years out of my medicine degree to complete a **PhD in Cancer Sciences**, specifically looking at body fatness and the cancer risk across a person's lifetime. So the main focus of my PhD is in **cancer prevention**.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

The working world is full of so many opportunities! **No opportunity is too big for you! You are capable of whatever you put your mind to!** I grew up in Greater Manchester and took Arabic, Biology, Chemistry and Physics A-Levels. Work experience in a hospital and my love for healthcare and research helped me decide what I wanted to do in the future.



Dr Nicola Flaum

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Medicine, with
**BSc in
Physiology**
Cardiff University



Junior Doctor,
Manchester



**Started training as a
medical oncologist**
Christie Hospital



**PhD in Genetics of
Ovarian Cancer**
University of
Manchester

What do you do in your job?

I am an **oncologist** currently doing a **laboratory-based PhD in cancer genetics**, specifically looking at risk prediction and cancer prevention.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

You don't have to decide everything now! I grew up in Birmingham and took English Literature, Psychology, Biology and Chemistry A Levels. Follow what genuinely interests you. **Talk to people who do jobs you find interesting and show interest in them**, it may open a lot of doors!



Sam Ingram

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What do you do in your job?

I make sure that **radiotherapy** (a type of cancer treatment) is **optimised for patient treatment**. This includes the planning, dosimetry and safety of the treatment.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Jobs are far more of a pick n mix than you are led to believe. There is no one way you might arrive in your career, so it's best to **focus on self-development** rather than a career check list.



Scott Brown

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What do you do in your job?

I am an **Advanced Nurse Practitioner** in Gastroenterology and Nurse Endoscopist. My role involves **in-patient management** in addition to undertaking **suspected cancer clinics** and performing flexible sigmoidoscopy to diagnose colonic polyps and tumours.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Do the best you can and don't worry about making the right subject or career choices! I was interested in Biochemistry and initially wanted to pursue a career in research but things change. Look at me now, I am able to work in a rewarding environment on a daily basis.



Dr Suzanne Johnson

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What do you do in your job?

I am a Teaching Focussed Lecturer developing a new online Masters Programme to educate future oncologists and other health professionals all over the world.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Follow what you **enjoy**, keep asking **questions**, networking is fun, people in senior roles are still just people, don't just talk about it, **do it!** Most of all, **believe in your abilities.**



Malini Dey

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What do you do in your job?

I am currently a **second year PhD student** in an ovarian cancer and cell biology lab, based at **Manchester Cancer Research Centre**, which is part of University of Manchester.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Find a good mentor, who is approachable and can guide you with career choice advice.

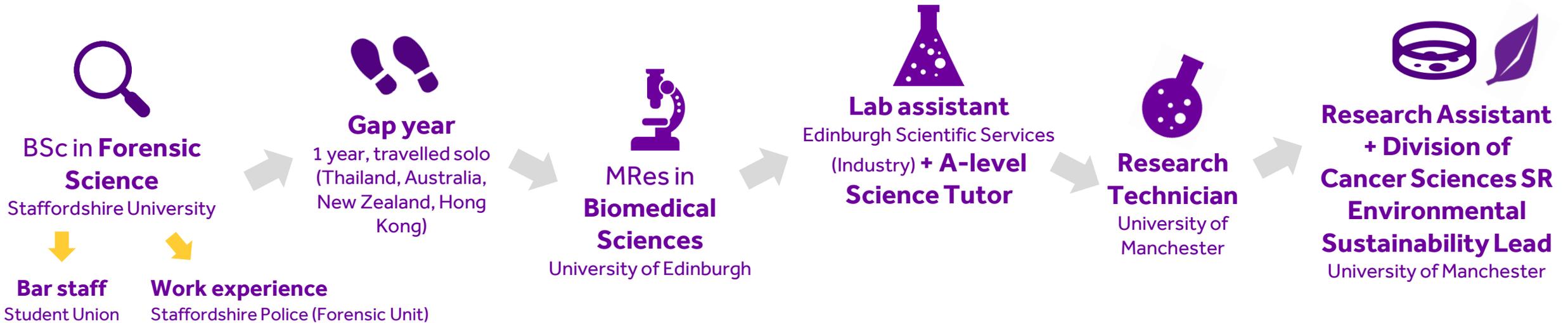
Every day is a school day! I am still learning something new every day, even in my PhD, and I am continuing to improve in specific skills which I was not confident in when I left school.



Samantha Littler

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What do you do in your job?

I'm a **research assistant** in Stephen Taylor's lab, trying to figure out how to kill ovarian cancer cells using various chemotherapy drugs and looking at their genes! Plus I help keep the lab running by ordering chemicals, making solutions and making sure fellow scientists can work safely.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

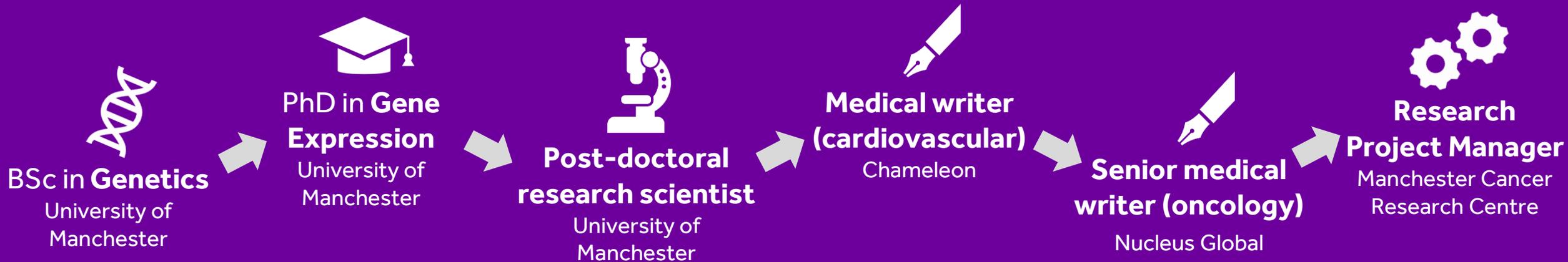
It's more than **OK** to change your mind, take a step back and reassess. **Sometimes things don't work out and that's OK**, just ask "What did I learn and how would I go about it differently next time?" Also, **don't take yourself too seriously!**



Dr Jo McGrail

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What do you do in your job?

I provide **scientific writing and project management support** for grant applications and research manuscripts. I've also helped with **website development**.

What career advice would you give your 15 year old self?

Follow your interests! When you're doing something that interests you, it feels much less like work!



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“Choose what makes you happy, and don’t be afraid of trying stuff that looks complicated or difficult. Don’t overthink your future; you can stir it in different directions later on. Life has a way to help you find your path!”

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“Work hard, be curious, ask and learn as much as you can. Then you are in a position to make choices. Keep persevering and don’t be afraid to change direction to pursue something that you find interesting!”

“Follow what you enjoy, keep asking questions, networking is fun, people in senior roles are still just people, don’t just talk about it, do it! Most of all, believe in your abilities.”