## SULSA's Graduate Employability Masterclasses

*Asking Questions Helped with Networking*

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The Masterclasses were pitched to me by my academic year tutor as a great opportunity to gain an insight into the real world, industry side of Life Sciences. Seeing the range of companies that were attending, from Roche to Omega Diagnostics, I was curious about how I might be able to apply my degree post-graduation with these companies. The industry-recognized badge for completion of the masterclasses was appealing too.

The main highlights from the class were the interactive, collaborative sessions between the attending students. The activities were relevant and tested our creativity and comprehension of the material provided by the speakers, and getting to meet students from other institutions was very fun. It also provided an opportunity to get to talk to the speakers as they visited the different groups, and their insights into our thoughts about the activity were enlightening. The standout activity for me was during the Roche class, where I got to pick the brain of a data scientist working with sensitive, clinical data.

The Masterclasses themselves were only half of the story when it came to the networking opportunity the event provided. By asking questions, being active and inquisitive during the classes you can make a real impact on the speakers. They're looking for enthusiasm and interest in what they're talking about, and it was only afterwards when I reached out to connect on LinkedIn when I realized that it was asking questions, not just attending, that afforded me that opportunity.

In terms of understanding the industry, I'd say the Masterclasses were an excellent insight. Everything from a multi-national company like Roche and Canon Medical and how they work with different, national teams to deliver products to market to smaller companies like Omega Diagnostics and Elasmogen who have to carefully decide as to which of their potential products are the most promising, and subsequently using all of their investment money to develop that product into a marketable, approved drug.

If there was one take-away that I had from the event, it was that I would likely want to do a post-graduate degree. It appeared as if a lot of the interesting, exciting, international roles in a life science company would require a Master's or Doctorate in order to compete for the role. However, I also learned that I could both work for a company and pursue post-graduate education at the same time. It will require a lot of work while I'm an undergraduate to prove that I am able to do both my studies and work at a company simultaneously; but I believe the combination of supporting myself financially, gaining additional experience in a lab, and gaining contacts with industry colleagues along with advancing my academic career would set me up for a long and successful Biotechnology career.

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