



SULSA's Graduate Employability Masterclasses

Realising My Dream Career Path

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In January of 2021 an email dropped into my university email telling me there was an employability masterclass series that would take place virtually over 3 weeks and give insight into employment opportunities within life sciences. As I was in my 3rd year, I knew it was time to think outside of the university bubble to my next steps in forging a career in life sciences.

I had no expectations upon embarking on the masterclass beyond gaining a few tips about potential career options and how to apply for them. However, in attending I was presented with options I never considered and insight from industry professionals that was invaluable, especially the importance of connections and building profiles. The tasks we carried out were engaging, involving, and very relaxed while providing invaluable insight into different ways of working and thinking.

However, one presentation by one company caught my attention - a relatively unknown position of Quality Assurance Auditing. Kim Ritchie, QA Auditor 2 at Charles River laboratories, co-presented a piece on quality assurance auditing. The more I heard, the more it piqued my interest as I had had a previous role in retail that was similar in ensuring legal and correct compliance to that role. This was ticking many boxes. As with all the presenters we were offered to link in on LinkedIn and build network connections with presenters and companies through a private LinkedIn group for those that take part in the masterclasses.

I began to connect with others on LinkedIn but, as exams were fast approaching, it was placed on hold. However, I kept coming back to Quality Assurance roles and further research indicated just how important the role is yet so under-represented as a job to take after university. I decided to reach out to Kim in the hope at least of gaining further information and a more focused insight. I suggested a site visit or inquired about internships as they had never had a person inquire about such a thing. Kim was instrumental in helping secure opportunities and Charles River were just as keen to see how they could accommodate me. After a virtual meeting I was offered a placement and I jumped at the chance.

I did a week-long work experience placement with them to see the role first hand. I was given a chance to work on actual files and do inspections and see the true breadth of the role and what it entailed. Everyone I met was open and engaging about their roles and what is involved. After speaking with the manager and supervisors in the department they have also encouraged me to apply for the role upon graduation and offered support and help with my CV and interview preparation that I can use for future job opportunities.

By the end of the week, I was in good stead to realise that this is what I want to pursue. By taking part in the Graduate Employability Masterclasses, I was able to truly find an opportunity that I wish to grab with both hands. If I took anything from the masterclass, I would say it was to take the chance to make

connections and ask about opportunities. The worst-case scenario is they will say no. The best-case could be an opportunity to go in a direction you have never considered before.

Resources

<https://www.photofeeler.com/>

<https://monkeylearn.com/word-cloud>