



SULSA's Life Sciences Skills and Opportunities in NE Scotland

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"Innovation is not born from the dream, innovation is born from the struggle." – Simon Sinek

The [SULSA Forging Futures Scheme](#) enables PhD students and postdoctoral researchers from SULSA members to explore the opportunities available in academia and industry, equipping them with the tools to work effectively between the two sectors. This is particularly relevant for the life sciences field, as many skills learnt in one sector are transferrable, applicable, and even highly sought after in the other. The scheme is run in collaboration with [Interface](#), [SkillFluence](#), and MyFuture Plan, giving participants insights into how to engage with industry partners effectively, developing their career path, and building connections. The 2024 cohort successfully participated in the 6-week modular course, and we are now in the 'pay it forward' section of the scheme.

With the ever-shifting environment in both academia and industry, as well the increasing job uncertainty, many early career researchers (ECRs) feel the pressure to move to have a flourishing career. While the freedom to move at this career stage may be a benefit to some, it is not for everyone. We ran the 'Life Sciences Skills and Opportunities in NE Scotland' Event at the [ONE BioHub](#), Aberdeen, 6th May, 2025 to show ECRs that they do not need to move to e.g., the Golden Triangle or Scotland's Central Belt in order to have a successful career in life sciences. Forging Futures 2024 Ambassadors [Gael Morrow](#) and [Nuruddin Mahadik](#) (Robert Gordon University), [Nia Gray-Wannell](#) (James Hutton Institute), [Francesca Moramarco](#) and Rebecca von Hellfeld (University of Aberdeen), [Lisa Logie](#) (Dundee University), and [Connie MacKinnon](#) (University of the Highlands and Islands) developed a programme to showcase careers across sectors, highlight transferrable skills, and create networking opportunities for researchers in NE Scotland. We invited inspiring speakers from across different sectors and research fields, with each session of speakers followed by very engaging Q&A sessions.



The morning session focused on key transferable skills across sectors and how linear careers don't tend to exist outside of academia. We learned about Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) that bring industry and academia together and provide research associates with the skills needed to succeed in either sector. About 60% of KTP associates end up transitioning into the industry that sponsored their project. We also discussed the current geopolitical environment and how global

uncertainty decreases investor's risk appetite making it a difficult time for start-ups. In the afternoon, we looked at career journeys where our speakers have chosen to build their careers in the northeast of Scotland. The strongest message from this session was that the life sciences community and ecosystem is incredibly close and collaborative. This sentiment provided comfort for early-stage academics, industrialists and entrepreneurs that there is a real sense of community in the northeast of Scotland and an ecosystem of enablers and supporters of innovation from the colleges and universities to Highlands and Islands Enterprise, BioDundee and our event hosts, ONE BioHub. Hopefully this event has inspired ECR's to develop and utilise their transferable skills to realise their full potential and gave them confidence to embrace any new challenges that they may encounter during their careers.



We would like to thank all the speakers that attended the event; , [Dr Kate Gormley](#) (University of Aberdeen), [Laura Dee](#) (North of Scotland KTP Centre), [Dr Rodanthi Zindrili](#) (EpitogenX), [Dr Edward Devlin](#) (Rowett Institute and NCIMB Ltd.), [Dr Graeme Rogers](#) (James Hutton institute), [Prof Alistair Kean](#) (University of the Highlands and Islands), [Prof Caroline Barelle](#) (Elasmogen), [David McNee](#) (TauRx Therapeutics), [Dr Lisa Logie](#) (University of Dundee), and [Dr Jessica Giannotti](#) (SeaDyes and Crúbag).

