



STEM Ambassador Profile:

Name:

Mel Watson

Job title:

Biomedical Scientist

Location:

Laboratory Medicine, University
Hospitals Bristol Foundation
NHS Trust

Education:

- GCSEs: Integrated Science (dual award), Maths, English Language and Literature, Geography, History, Music and French
- A levels: Biology, Chemistry and Maths with Statistics
- Degree: BTEC HND Laboratory Medicine (now a BSc in Biomedical Science or Healthcare Science is required)
- Other: Post graduate Professional Fellowship in Haematology and Post Graduate Diploma in Medical Education
NVQ A1 and V1 for assessing and verifying QCF qualifications



My job

Day-to-day role: In the scientific aspect of my role I am responsible for ensuring accurate and quality assured diagnostic reports from biological specimens, mainly blood samples, for my medical colleagues to use to diagnose, treat and monitor patients. My specialist scientific area of practice is Haematology – the study of blood cells.

Favourite part of my job: I have moved into a role where I now have responsibility as training manager for the department. I love supporting staff, work experience students, visitors, trainees and other health professional colleagues in learning and understanding the role and work we do in the laboratories.

Most challenging part of my job: The work environment can be stressful at times. Some tests are required urgently when patients become very sick and prioritising this work in a very busy environment can be challenging.

Motivation: Although we are based in a laboratory away from the patients, the work that we do makes a huge difference to the decisions on care that patients receive. 80% of all episodes of patient care have a diagnostic aspect to them. I help make a difference everyday.



My career so far

Most exciting career moment so far: Achieving both my postgraduate qualifications whilst working and raising my family.

Project I wish I could have played a part in: I never have regrets and if I feel passionate about something I make sure I am involved. Some of the recent research breakthroughs in cancer treatment must be very rewarding to be involved in.





“Any career is possible with the right amount of hard work and resilience.”



Maths in action

How I use maths in my job: Maths and statistics are underlying concepts in all the reports that are produced. Blood cells are counted and judgments made using statistical analysis to make conclusions on the health of a patient.

How maths makes a difference in what I do, or how it helps me to make a difference for others: Maths helps ensure scientific reporting is accurate and precise to ensure decisions on diagnosis and treatment are also accurate and precise. Maths concepts underpin everything we do as scientists in a hospital laboratory.



Being a STEM Ambassador

I became a STEM Ambassador because: I wanted to inspire young people to consider a career in science in the NHS. I enjoy my job and want to raise the profile of the science careers available.

What has been your experience in schools as a STEM Ambassador?

I have loved the chance to spend time with young people in schools and hopefully provide an interesting activity for them to learn something new. It can be hard work to prepare for, but it is very rewarding.

Words of wisdom to STEM students: Any career is possible with the right amount of hard work and resilience.



If I didn't do this...

If I didn't work in biomedical science I would... be a STEM subject teacher or lecturer in higher education.

When I'm not at work I... love spending time with my husband and two sons and I am also addicted to listening to audiobooks, especially whilst doing the housework.

