

LEARNING CURVE



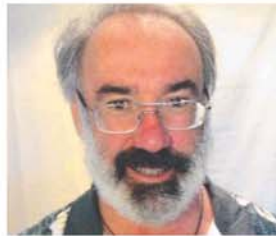
Career Change

How a chef can become a scientist



THE APPLICANT

Name: Daniel Meloncelli
Age: 38
Former job: Chef
New skills: Holds a Bachelor of Science (Hons). Received an Australian Postgraduate Award for 2014 to continue his research in a PhD. Awarded University of the Sunshine Coast Chancellor's Medal
New position: Environmental scientist
Dream job: I worked as a chef for 15 years but I hope my research can change the world, a little bit. There are many similarities between cooking and chemistry and I've retained my passion for food quality by investigating the therapeutic potential of honey to treat chronic wounds. I'm looking to identify those compounds to create a profile so we can tell the differences between types such as medical-grade Manuka and Jellybush. I'll be testing about 300 different types of honeys for their properties. I've volunteered and worked at university in many capacities, including as an academic skills adviser, tutor, peer adviser, student mentor and fundraiser.



THE TRAINER

Name: Dr Peter Brooks
Position: Senior lecturer in Chemistry, School of Science and Engineering, University of the Sunshine Coast
Skill tips: All good scientists need to have a broad skills base, be open minded to inquiry with an eye for finer details and have a dogged determination in seeing the task through. They can work for years researching complex problems that require team skills. The ability to collaborate with scientists from other fields is important so as to gain the evidence that will lead to informed and better decision making. Environmental science is a multi-discipline field with interactions between biology, botany, chemistry, ecology and mathematics. A good environmental scientist has a passion for the environment, draw on diverse skills and adapt to new challenges. University environmental science degrees have a broad science base so graduating scientists understand how earth, water, air, plants and animals interact and how the big picture is dependent on all parts.



THE EXPERT

Name: Dr Fiona Young
Position: Senior lecturer, Biotechnology, Flinders University
Skill tips: Environmental scientists need many skills and attributes, with an underlying appreciation of the complex interplay between the shifting factors that combine to form our environment. They need to be creative to form hypotheses and to design experiments and also able to collect reliable, reproducible and accurate data in a highly disciplined way, often in unpredictable and uncomfortable conditions. Extended time in the field may be required to observe animal behaviours or to record patterns of distribution or abundance. Environmental scientists need numerical and statistical know-how for computer collation and analysis of data and excellent writing and communication skills for presenting findings. Environmental scientists can find work after graduating with a three-year Bachelor of Science degree, which teaches the basic scientific process. All three SA universities offer a wide range of subjects.



THE RECRUITER

Name: Professor Deb White PhD FFSoc (RCPA)
Position: Director of Cancer Research, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute; Professor in Medicine and Paediatrics, University of Adelaide.
Skill tips: To be a research scientist you'll need a Bachelor of Science degree, usually with Honours. Most people employed in my lab have PhDs. To undertake a career in science, you need passion - it is a career, not simply a job. Being a successful scientist requires a certain level of intelligence and a healthy curiosity. You need to have good powers of observation and be very dedicated to your research. It's not a 9am to 5pm, five day a week job - in many instances, it can consume most of your waking hours. I think it is also important to be able to self-critique and accept criticism from others. It is a lot about working as a team to ensure you achieve the best outcomes. Successful scientists have well-developed oral and written communication skills. Patience also is an important asset.

FOCAL POINT

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