

Careers in Technology Transfer



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Laura has been working in technology transfer since 2011. She has an undergraduate degree in Biochemistry, a PhD in molecular biology and completed a 3 year postdoctoral research position.

“If you enjoy science from an application point of view, then tech transfer could be a good opportunity.”

How did you get into technology transfer?

During my PhD I started to look into careers away from the lab and took part in more extracurricular activities to increase my skills base. I took part in the Biotechnology Yes competition in 2010 and our team went on to win, which was a great experience and really opened my eyes to technology transfer roles.

How has your career progressed from that point to where you are today?

I started as a Technology Associate within the Life Sciences team at Cambridge Enterprise (CE) in October 2011, which was a great starting position to train in technology transfer. In September 2013 I became a Senior Technology Associate at CE and started to manage more cases and agreements independently and continue to support managers on cases.

What training have you had which has been particularly useful?

I attended the Praxis Unico Fundamentals of Technology Transfer course in April 2012 and this was a brilliant course for people starting in tech transfer as it gave a thorough overview of the processes involved, with a good mix of theory and practical exercises. This course was also a good opportunity to make contacts within the tech transfer field, many of whom I'm still in touch with today.

We have also had internal courses on marketing and project facilitation, which have been very useful. Most of the training I've had has been on the job though, as nothing can teach you like first-hand experience!

What does your day-to-day role involve?

Every day is different and very varied, but typically will involve meeting with academics to discuss new or existing technologies, analysis of new inventions (including market analysis and prior art searching), working with patent attorneys to co-ordinate new patent filings or existing patent management, project development (including applications for translational funding), marketing of our technologies to potential licensees, review and negotiation of legal agreements, including CDAs, joint invention agreements and licences and management of post-deal relationships. I also work with University departments to educate academics about technology transfer and the services CE can provide.

Which achievements would you describe as career highlights?

The highlight of the job for me is when you successfully manage to licence a technology and close a deal. One particular deal I was working on with a CE manager took over 1 year of intense negotiations, with multiple international parties. I took a lead role in closing this deal and it has resulted in a licence to one of our technologies that could really make a difference in the clinic and brings in significant revenue to the academic and University.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

The scientific diversity of the projects we work on (from new therapeutics to stem cells, fitness devices and software) together with the wide range of statuses the projects are at (new inventions through to patented and licensed technology). This keeps the job very interesting and no day is the same!