

Careers in Technology Transfer



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Knowledge Exchange & Commercialisation Officer at The Genome Analysis Centre

Lana has a BSc in Biochemistry and MSc in Economics, Finance & Management from the University of Bristol, where she also completed a Research Commercialisation internship.

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How did you get into technology transfer?

After my academic studies, I entertained various possibilities from marketing in Big Pharma and PhD in neuroscience to even investment banking, but I knew I wanted to stay connected to science even if not directly involved in lab work and as I started my Research Commercialisation internship at Faculty of Medical Sciences at the University Of Bristol, I knew technology transfer was where I belonged.

As I started looking for a job in technology transfer, I relied heavily on the PraxisUnico website for job adverts. When the job at The Genome Analysis Centre (TGAC) came up I was instantly excited as it offered such a variety of responsibilities – negotiation, setting up new projects, fostering collaborations, market research, intellectual property management etc. Even a year later I’m still sure it is my dream job and it never ceases to challenge and enthuse me.

What training have you had which has been particularly useful?

I have completed a part-time, distance-learning course at University of Bournemouth (PG Certificate in Intellectual Property). It has been intense but very useful. The course was very much hands-on and case law-based. It was fascinating to learn all the different nuances that can deem a patent invalid or allow a smell to be trademarked. Moreover, Negotiation Essentials course on Coursera.org has been revealing for me in steering discussions with industry partners. I am also looking forward to the PraxisUnico’s Business Development and Software Commercialisation courses.

What does your day-to-day role involve?

My every day duties involve assisting with the identification and progression of potential Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation (KEC) opportunities, supporting TGAC staff in the development of collaborative funding applications, developing networks and enabling access to TGAC’s expertise in genomics and computational bioscience. Occasionally I undertake market research activities in order for the institute to make informed decisions about joint ventures, technology investment and to keep track and predict trends in genomics and bioinformatics applications. Collecting and recording KEC activity data for monitoring and reporting purposes is also a big part of the job. All this contributes to a longer-term objective of supporting the delivery of TGAC KEC strategy and embedding a KEC culture within the institute.

Which achievements would you describe as career highlights?

A 100% success rate in obtaining translational funding grants worth £2.5 million is my main career highlight so far, especially since it involved supporting academics through delivering elevator pitches to panels of experts. It was incredibly rewarding to see all the hard work pay off and the sheer joy on the faces of our scientists.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Working towards building lasting relationships with collaborators. I thrive on seeing the progress made in collaborative projects. It starts with raw uncertainty, sometimes trust issues and perhaps a power struggle, and to see all this change into mutual understanding and grow into collaborative high-quality science is very rewarding.