



Dr Jon Urch

Public Engagement and Outreach Co-ordinator,
Revealing Research



Try as many different things as you can until you find something you're passionate about and follow that career.



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For my first degree, I studied Biochemistry because I enjoyed it and I felt it would give me the broadest understanding of living organisms. Following that, I researched new drug targets for malaria for my PhD and then I secured a five year Postdoc at Dundee because I wanted to produce research that had an impact on the rest of the world.

My plan was always to run my own lab because my role models were successful academics in the field of drug discovery. However, my plans changed as I felt I wasn't making as much of an impact as I wanted and I started to look at opportunities to see what other careers I could go in to. I looked at Scientific Writing and also Knowledge Transfer, but it was when I became involved with a public outreach project, Sharing Science, that I knew what I wanted to do. A position arose at the University of Dundee, jointly with the Dundee Science Centre, to deliver

Sharing Science for a second year as well as setting up the Revealing Research Office. Changing career was difficult but I had some great support and I am now the Public Engagement Co-ordinator for Revealing Research at the University of Dundee, which is creative, challenging and changes on a daily basis! Find something you're passionate about and follow that career. Try as many different things as you can.

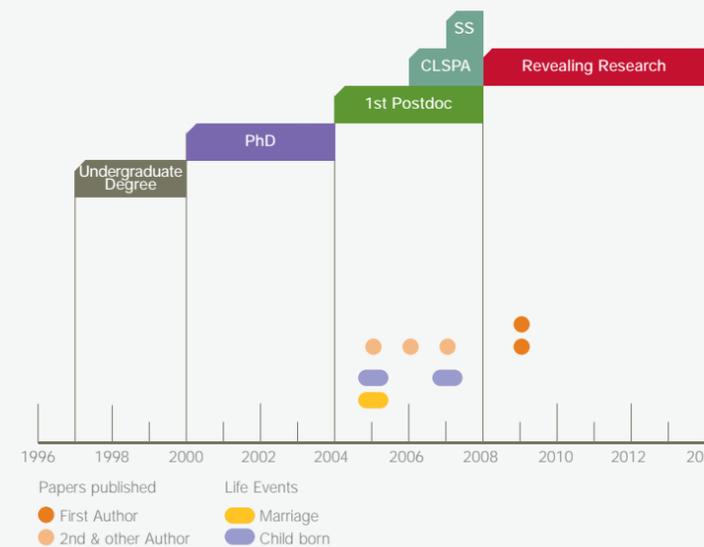
A Day in my Life

After dropping my daughters off at school, I start work at roughly 9:30am. There isn't really anything like a typical day. I may spend all day in meetings or be in the office in the Tower Building. Monday mornings start with a review of last week's activities and planning our objectives for the weeks ahead. This helps focus the office, especially during our busier times.

I spend a significant amount of time planning our future programmes months in advance. This involves liaising with speakers, booking venues and marketing events to public audiences. A lot of this work requires considerable email and phone correspondence. I often take to Facebook and Twitter to share details of our events.

There are opportunities to travel to support our public engagement in Dundee and across Scotland. I still really enjoy speaking face-to-face with the public and discussing the University's research.

The job requires roughly three late evenings a month and 3-4 weekend days at events. However, you might find me working late, especially on a Monday or Tuesday evening, before I head home to unwind.



Undergraduate Degree
University of Cardiff
BSc Biochemistry: 1st Class Hons

PhD
University of Cardiff
PhD Biochemistry
Dr Colin Berry and Professor John Harwood
Investigating new drug targets for the malaria parasite

Postdoctoral Position
University of Dundee
X-ray crystallography
Professor Daan van Aalten
Studies of the structure of carbohydrate processing enzymes

CLSPA Treasurer
College of Life Sciences Postdoctoral Association

Sharing Science
University of Edinburgh
Led project to discuss research with the general public at Sensation Science Centre and Oban

Public Engagement and Outreach Co-ordinator Revealing Research
University of Dundee
2008-2009 A University of Edinburgh led project funded by the Scottish Government to discuss research with the general public at Dundee Science Centre, Our Dynamic Earth and in Oban.

2009-2010 Funded by the Scottish Funding Council to coordinate Public Engagement across six Universities in NE Scotland, sharing best practise and supporting development of new initiatives.

2010-Present Centrally funded by the University of Dundee to lead Public Engagement across all research subjects.