



Name: Meena Anissi

Job Title: Research Assistant

Organisation: The Genome Analysis Centre

Qualifications: A levels
BSc biological sciences

Salary: £20,000-£25,000

About me and my job:

I prepare fragments of DNA for next generation sequencing. I also program liquid handling robots and develop DNA and RNA library construction methods. I enjoy my role as its always evolving. Sequencing technology is rapidly developing and so I am exposed to lots of new technology all of the time.

When I graduated I applied for many different science-related jobs. TGAC is my first job out of university, and it has become a brilliant start to my career. I have now been here for nearly 3 years and it has turned me from a graduate to an early career scientist.

I have always enjoyed biology. In particular I found evolution and genes fascinating. I think what really convinced me that this was the career path I wanted to go down was my biology A level teacher. She was always so passionate and she made biology interesting. There is a stereotype that science is a boring subject, when really, if it is taught in the right way science can be really exciting and interesting. Although I may be bias!

Advice about the sector:

I have been surprised at how important networking is. Talking to other people in the sequencing community is so helpful. I have learnt a lot having just spoken to others in the same field.

A science-based degree is essential, however experience counts for a lot, and next generation sequencing is a very niche area of science and so if you are able to gain any type of experience in the sequencing lab it would put you at an advantage. However, getting work experience in a working lab is rare and hard to come by! And so my advice would be to research and read up. Sequencing technology is always changing and so it would be impressive to a prospective employer if a candidate was up-to-date on the market.

In the next generation sequencing field, career progression opportunities include becoming a team leader, becoming more involved in technology development, or progressing down the automation route. The experience and knowledge I have gained also means that I could be a possible candidate for a PhD. Or there are also opportunities to work for a commercial company, developing sequencing technology or helping to sell sequencing products.