

BNA Careers and Talent Recruitment Fair 2024

Expand your network - Meet employers - Refine your CV - Gain interview skills

Top tips and advice





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Thank You to our Supporters

A shoutout to our supporters and their help in making this event a reality.

Overview

The day was made up of two sessions, morning and afternoon, with approximately 40 delegates in each.

The attending organisations included, UK DRI, Parkinson's UK, Drug Science, Sainsbury Wellcome Centre (SWC), BNA, Miltenyi Biotec, ABPI, University of Glasgow, Taylorollinson and Voight-Kampff.

After an introduction given by Laura Ajram (CEO, BNA) and Tom Otis (Chief Scientific Officer, SWC), delegates started open networking with representatives at their stalls, as well as attending their pre-booked 1-1 meetings.

The 1-1 meeting room was filled with conversation from representatives talking about their roles, their organisation, and ultimately, their well-earned wisdom, with delegates eager to listen, learn and ask questions.

Tea and coffee, as well as delicious muffins and cakes, were provided in the breaks while delegates had time to chat, forming meaningful connections with each other.



Attending organisations



ABPI

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry is the trade association for over 120 companies in the UK producing prescription medicines for humans.



Andrew Croydon

Director, Education & Examination
Policy and Partnerships



Jill Percy

Director, Reputation



Joseph Clift

Head of Policy and
Advocacy



Dani Wijesinghe

Membership and
Communities Manager



Laura Ajram

CEO



BNA

The largest UK organisation connecting, representing and promoting neuroscience and neuroscientists across the globe.



DRUG SCIENCE

Providing an evidence base free from political or commercial influence, influencing sensible and effective drug laws, and equipping people with the knowledge and resources to enact positive change.



Hannah Thurgur

Senior Research Officer



Mags Houston

Head of Projects and Communications



David Hughes
Senior Lecturer



UofG

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

The School of Psychology & Neuroscience offers a range of undergraduate, postgraduate taught degrees, and postgraduate research opportunities.



Miltenyi Biotec

MILTENYI BIOTEC

Miltenyi Biotec offers research- and clinical-grade products for sample preparation, cell separation, flow cytometry, and cell culture applications.



Caitlyn Martin
Product Manager



Dawn Farrar
Marketing Manager

Attending organisations



PARKINSON'S UK

Funds research aimed at finding better treatments and improving the understanding of Parkinson's and its causes.



Laura Jacobs

Research Involvement Manager



Michelle Bendix

Research Grants, Projects and Planning Lead



April Cashin-Garbutt

Head of Research Communications and Engagement



Zoe Gawthorne

HR Officer



Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

SAINSBURY WELLCOME CENTRE

SWC's research focuses on how information travels through biological matter, drilling down into the networks in the brain, computations in neural circuits and individual neurons.



TAYLORROLLINSON

Taylorrollinson have the expertise to guide job seekers and employers alike through the recruitment process.



Charlie Cox

Scientific Recruitment Manager



Sam Coxon

Life Science Recruiter & Director



Bradley Roberts

Science Review Manager



Alex Collcutt

Research Communications Manager



UK DRI

The UK DRI accelerates discoveries to prevent, treat and care for people with all types of dementia, and it will help us understand ways to keep the brain healthy.



Voight-Kampff

Think outside the screen

VOIGHT-KAMPFF

Voight-Kampff is improving the relationship between brains and their tools and developing a new technology for displaying digital information inspired by how our brains' understand and interact with the world.



Adam Kampff

Director



Elena Dreosti

ROLE?

Key Takeaways

An overview of the key points gathered from the fair that will change your approach to job searching and improve your employability.

CAREER PATHS AREN'T LINEAR

Don't assume there is a standard career route for your future. Avoid putting pressure on yourself to follow a specific career path.

Many of the representatives we spoke to started with a degree in a completely different field, such as Music, Film or Marine Biology.



FIND YOUR VALUE

Take time to reflect on your strengths, skills, and ultimately, your overall value.

When applying for jobs at specific organisations, it is helpful to work out your value to that company, What can you specifically bring to the table? What can you add to their organisation?



VARIETY OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN NEUROSCIENCE

You can still work in the neuroscience community without having to be a researcher/lab assistant, or an academic, such as a lecturer.

The attending organisational representative's roles included HR, communications and event roles, marketing, project management, planning roles and directors.



EXPERIENCE IS KEY

The experiences you gain, no matter in what area or field, are invaluable. Have a look back on your experiences and recognise the **transferable skills** you gained. Employers will acknowledge and appreciate these skills.

Additionally, analyse what skills you can leverage from academia.

On the other hand, lack of experience can give a new perspective and can bring different skills to the role, so don't worry too much about not having adequate experience.



DON'T BE AFRAID TO APPROACH FIRST

If there is an organisation you particularly like the look of and want to work for, don't hesitate to approach them first about job opportunities.

Don't wait for vacancies to appear; go out and find them!



UTILISE SCIENTIFIC RECRUITERS

Make use of scientific recruiters to help you find roles and provide advice on your CV.

They are there to help you and your career, so make the most of their skills and connections.



Networking

“Networking is the key to career progression and success”

Colby Benari, CEO, In2science UK



All representatives highlighted the importance of networking. It’s a skill that may seem tricky to master, but will be extremely worthwhile if you put in the effort. The more you put into networking, the more you get out of it.

It was also stressed that while building connections is important, the key is sustaining these connections. Get in touch with people over time and keep yourself relevant to their work. You should approach networking with the intent of creating a long-term relationship.



Networking relationships are like any relationship, if you don’t put the time and effort in maintaining that relationship, it will eventually crumble.

Essentially, networking is being curious about people. Simply trying to understand what their role is or get to know them is effective networking. Being genuinely interested in what they have to say is key to fostering a good connection.

When attending a careers fair or a networking event, research the attendees and note who you would genuinely like to connect with. You don’t have to approach every person in the room. It is better to have one connection that is really valuable and genuine than have one hundred business cards.

Multiple representatives at the fair recalled a story of someone or even themselves, mentioning a research or career interest/goal to a connection, and it ultimately leading to that person being able to help them achieve that goal or work within that interest.

You never know what someone may be able to support you with, so be open and curious to networking.



Career talks



IRINA JURENKA

Senior Staff Research Scientist
Google DeepMind

Irina was introduced to computer science and programming at a young age, and loved maths and science at school. She had goals of becoming a surgeon, however received criticism regarding a female having aspirations of surgery. In light of this, Irina researched other careers and considering her interest in science and the brain, she decided to pursue psychology at University.

However, Irina didn't enjoy her course as she had a passion for maths, coding and neuroscience, which were not met during her studies.

For her placement year, Irina approached a lab at Oxford University. Due to Irina's lack of a scientific background and lab experience, the lab was hesitant about accepting her, however, Irina was persistent and she was eventually offered a role created for her. Here she began studying neural networks of the visual brain.

During her PhD, Irina felt quite isolated so she got involved in many extra-curricular activities, such as ballroom dancing, rifle shooting and korfbal. It was her dance partner who recommended Irina work for Google.

Irina highlighted the value of placements and internships, as well as getting involved in lots of activities and meeting people outside of academia or your job. You never know what opportunities will open up for you, and who could help you.

Career talks

COLBY BENARI

CEO

In2science UK



Colby's career journey started off at The Academy of Medical Sciences, then moved to Cancer Research UK, followed by working at UCL, leading her to finally becoming CEO of In2science UK.

Colby candidly stated that the logos and names of the organisation she worked for are way less interesting than the things she's learnt. She also emphasised the importance of networking and its vital role in progressing your career.

One thing Colby mentioned was that the size and structure of the organisation you work in matters a lot to how you'll fit in. Within big organisations, roles are very clearly defined and structured, whereas the roles in smaller organisations are broader and more flexible. Colby found that she was not as suited to big organisations as she was in smaller organisations, and thus highlighted the importance of researching this when looking at places to work. However, she did mention the benefit of bigger organisations as it being easier to learn and adapt by observing other people, something Colby found very beneficial within her career.

When applying for her role at UCL, the job on paper didn't look great, however, due to prior networking, she knew the hiring manager. She was then able to get in touch and discuss the role prior to applying and having the interview. Within this, she stressed that the person you work for is sometimes just as important, if not more, than the actual work you are doing.

Thank you!

To our supporters who helped make this event possible, we thank you and look forward to the future of the BNA Careers and Talent Recruitment Fair.

Sainsbury Wellcome Centre

A huge thank you to SWC for allowing us to host the fair at their venue. The space was perfect and easy to access, which we greatly appreciate.

To the organisations and their representatives, we thank you for attending and sharing your wisdom with our members.

The organisational representatives

Our delegates

To our members who attended, we thank you for taking this initiative with such enthusiasm. The representatives spoke very highly of you.

To Irina Jurenka and Colby Benari, thank you for putting together your talks, making the trip to London, and for inspiring our attendees.

The speakers