

'A Day in the Life' of an engineer

**1) Give a brief description of what you do & the company you work for?**

I'm a mass spectrometer engineer. I work for SCIEX and I install, service, repair and train people in the use of their mass spectrometer.

**2) What does your average day entail? Where do you work? (Environment - Office, home, studio etc.) What is your work pattern? (full time/part time etc) What are the main activities during your day? (i.e. meetings, emails, practical tasks, visiting clients etc)**

I work full time. I work from home and drive to my customers. They can be anywhere in the UK so my days are quite varied. Once I have done my job I drive home and then I do some administration work such as emails and phone calls.

**3) What skills and qualification are required for your role?**

I have a BSc in Applied Biology and 20 years' experience of working with mass spectrometers. The skills and qualifications needed to be an engineer can be quite varied. You need to be practical, able to work alone and also be part of a team. Good communication skills are essential and it helps if you like to travel.

**4) What do you enjoy most about your job? What are you least favourite aspects of your job?** I most enjoy going to different places and seeing different people every day. I least enjoy the paperwork.

**5) What were your favourite subjects at school? Why? Do these link/relate to the job you do now?**

My favourite subjects were Physics, Chemistry and Biology. These are all relevant to my job now. I use physics in the theory of how the instruments work. Most of the samples analysed by the instruments are of a chemical and biological nature. Also all my customers are also scientists so it helps to understand what they are doing with our instruments.

**6) How did you get to where you are now? (i.e. academic routes, professional development, career opportunities)**

I did a BSc in Applied and Human Biology at Aston University. From there I went to work at GSK as a Research Scientist. Here I became interested in mass spectrometers and how they worked. I then went to work for the company that makes the instruments used in the pharmaceutical companies.

**7) What advice would you give to our aspiring students who are interested in pursuing a career in your profession?**

Do something you enjoy. You have to do it for ages so make sure it's something you like doing.

**8) In your current profession what are the potential development and progression opportunities?**

I can progress in 2 ways – I can take a technical route and become a specialist in certain areas of the instruments. I can also take a managerial route and become a team leader or service manager.