

## Careers Zone

### 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016



We piloted our second Careers Zone on the 21<sup>st</sup> September, with students from Year 8 to Year 13. We had 3 laptops and 5 iPads for students to log into and engage with the Careers Zone, which included 19 experts, 11 from I'm a Scientist and 7 from I'm an Engineer.

The day was split into sections with each year group having 30 minutes at the fair. The students had been prepared for the day with a note in the school newsletter going out to parents, and tutorial time spent thinking of careers-based questions to ask. This meant that students came to the stand interested and ready with questions.

We allocated a maximum of 6 experts per chat session, however, due to a change of schedule from the school and some technical difficulties, by the end of the day it had become less structured and experts were dropping in and out of the chats as they were available.

### Key figures from the Careers Zone

- 65 active students – students who logged into the site and either took part in a Live Chat or sent a question through the ASK section.
- 33 questions in total were approved in ASK, of which 28 were answered. All the experts spent time answering them outside of the 30 minute live chat slots they had agreed to take part in
- 33 students left their email addresses, meaning they would receive an email when their question was answered
- Students spent time reading through the experts' profiles and used the side widget to send a question (rather than the ASK page) – showing the profiles are interesting and encouraged further questions
- Most questions were on topic and careers based. Very few were science/factual based.
- Often, students arrived at the stand with a specific area of interest that they want to work in and found out who was the most relevant scientist or engineer to talk to. For example, some students knew they wanted to work with animals, and asked Joanna about her work as a Zoologist and for advice on the different types of animal-related careers.
- Other questions were more general and for all the experts, such as 'how did you get into science?', 'what is your salary?'
- Students asked for advice on different University Courses, and some Year 8 and 9 students asked whether they should take double or triple science for GCSE.

CAREERS ZONE	
Active Students	65
Questions asked	97
Questions approved	33
Questions answered	28
Answers given	140
Comments	6
Lines of live chat	581
Lines of live chat from scientists	296
Lines of live chat from students	285

## Engagement examples from Live Chats

### Year 13

The live chat with the Year 13 students was relatively quiet, however the students did spend time on the site reading through the experts' profiles. The conversation in the chat was quite general with questions about how they got into their jobs and their salaries:

*"Hi. What kind of science do you Simon?"* - **752cars35, student**

*"We produce X rays on an industrial scale for scientist to look at materials down to atomic level"* – **Simon Lays, controls engineer**

*"That's sounds pretty cool, how did you get into that?"* - **752cars35, student**

*"I started off as a humble apprentice and worked my way up! Always been interested in how things work and love cool designs with great attention to detail"* - **Simon Lays, controls engineer**

### Year 10

Year 10 engaged well with the live chat, which began with general questions about ways to get into science jobs:

*"What different paths are there into science?"* – **662cars48, student**

*"The standard one is school - university - more university! But some people have breaks, like travelling after school/first degree, going and working in industry or another field for a while then coming back to do a PhD"* – **Marianne Baker, Communications Officer**

*"There are many ways, these days you really need to do a degree in a relevant subject but that doesn't mean you have to go down the becoming a Professor route - I like the technical side of things so took a job managing a lab"* – **Ian Hands-Portman, Microscopes Manger**

*"It depends on the field! In zoology you can do it through a series of university degrees (an undergraduate, then perhaps a Master's and a doctorate), or you can get there through practical experience from an early age – you build up a set of skills"* – **Joanna, Zoologist**

Students then asked more specific questions, offering their own interests and asking for advice:

*"What do you do as a Zoologist?"* – **662cars48, student**

*"I study animals, and I teach students - so sometimes I spend the whole day in the field, and sometimes I'm in the lecture hall, or marking papers. It's a pretty diverse job!"* – **Joanna Bagniewska, zoologist**

*"Hi I want to do something to do with animals and I just don't know what yet ... What are some options ??"* - **martha, student**

*"The options would be a zoologist (if you're a geeky type, like me), a vet (if you're into fixing), any job to do with agriculture or forestry"* – **Joanna, zoologist**

*"How much fieldwork do you do Joanna?"* - **martha, student**

*"That depends on the season - this summer I spent 2 weeks in Iceland, and a week in Sweden; last year - a week in Sweden and 2 in South Africa. In the spring term we also do our ecology classes in the field (that's every week)"* – **Joanna, zoologist**

## Year 8/9

*"Hello, I'm emma! I'm really interested in science! What field of study are you in??"* – **Em, student**

*"Quantum physics, the best kind :)"* – **Ollie Brown, software developer**

*"Quantum physics sounds amazing! I really enjoy physics!"* - **Em, student**

*"excellent :D do you know which science and what sort of problems interest you the most?"* – **Ollie, software developer**

*"the beginning of the universe and how it is going to end, the black holes and light travel"* – **Em, student**

*"sounds like you should look at particle and astrophysics then :) if/when it comes to choosing a university and you still want to do that stuff look for a department that actively researches it, as their department will be more likely to teach that stuff"* – **Ollie, software developer**

*"Yeah I love Astro physics and forensics. Partical physics sound interesting too! But the idea of working with the advancement in medicine sound awesome! i have to go, thank you for answering my questions!"* - **Em, student**

Because of the wide range of Scientists and Engineers taking part in the zone, often students were able to talk with someone who worked in the specific field they were interested in:

*"I am looking at biochem, what are the benefits of perusing it"* – **Robsterg, student**

*"It's a wide open field of study with plenty of career choices"* – **Ian Hands-Portman, Microscopes Manager**

*"You could make a bacteria make/do almost anything with the right tools/techniques"* – **Michael Sulu, Biochemical Engineer**

*"What kind of jobs would be available if I choose biochem?"* – **Robsterg, Student**

*"All the people I know work in new medicine creation. There will probably be lots more of those jobs in the future because of the increase in antibiotic resistance"* – **Michael Sulu, Biochemical Engineer**

## Example questions in ASK section

**What's it like being a female scientist?**

**Hello, throughout all my life I have wanted to be a veterinary surgeon but have found I am now quite interesting in studying how people think and understanding us humans as a whole. I am curious to know if this job pays well and how interesting you honestly find it and also the types of things you do. Thank you**

**Will there be a lot of jobs in AI in the future? What should I study to follow this?**

**Hey! I really like zoology, do you have to take triple science to do it? Also, how do you get into working in zoology**

**What Hours do you work and what is the pay like?**

**Hello, do you know what GCSEs I would need to take to be a marine biologist?**

**Hello I'm in yr9 at school and was wondering what qualifications you needed to get to where you're at with your career currently?**

**What is your favourite part of your job?**

## Feedback

*“Careers Zone provided our students with a rare opportunity to learn first-hand about many careers in Science and Engineering – something that would have been very difficult to achieve without their support. Thank you.” - Vicki Turner, School Careers Co-Ordinator*

## Improvements for next pilot

The day worked well and we are keen to pilot it again. Some ideas for next time...

- Logging in took too long and was a bit confusing for students who were seeing the site for the first time. Can we have QR codes on the log in cards to use with iPads?
- After students updated their profile, it would be easier if the site automatically directed them to the ASK section or Live Chat
- We took handouts with logging in instructions and details about the experts. This was largely ignored by the students. A separate screen or projection would be helpful to explain the logging in process
- We could also have a rolling animation showing the different experts alongside a simple job description and example questions for students to reference
- It's important for the people supervising the stand to have an idea of who is taking part and the areas they work in, as often students have specific interests and ask for a recommendation of who to talk to
- Some of the experts were educated outside of England, meaning it was sometimes difficult for them to answer students' questions about the English education system. This is something to be aware of when recruiting experts for the future
- Questions like 'what hours do you work', 'what is the pay like', 'favourite part of job' etc are going to be common and relevant to a lot of students. How can we make more of these?