



## Neil Trotter

Biomedical Scientist

### What does your job entail?

In simple terms, my job involves processing clinical samples to produce results that are relevant for the treatment of hospital and GP patients. I process the swabs and urines that your GP sends into the Microbiology lab and inform the GP whether or not there's an infection present.

### How did you get into this line of work?

I stumbled into Biomedical Science. When I was choosing my degree, I knew I liked human biology, so I picked a few courses, including one I'd never heard of before – Biomedical Science. The modules at university sounded the most widespread, so I decided this was the route for me. Then, early into my first year, I discovered that I'd stumbled on a fully-fledged career path (that it turns out I love).

### Outline your career to date

I started at Craigavon Area Hospital Microbiology as a university student in September 2019. I worked there until March 2020, when the first Covid-19 lockdown happened, and I was offered a zero-hour contract as the lab needed as many staff as possible. When I went back to university for my final year, I continued to work weekends and evenings. In 2021, I applied and secured a full-time job as a Biomedical Scientist. Since then, I've started to do my IBMS Specialist Diploma, and I'm considering doing a Master's in Biomedical Science.

### Tell us about your qualifications and training

I have a Bachelor's of Science degree in Biomedical Science from Ulster University. This included some lab experience; however, the bulk of my training came from in-house training from the Microbiology team during my placement year. The work style is like nothing else I'd ever experienced – the work is fast-paced and very detail-driven, which is a difficult combination to learn to appreciate. It was definitely a different set of skills than what I was used to using, but I've started to apply what I've learned from work to my everyday life – keeping a level head and working through complex tasks without getting stressed is a great thing to be able to do.

### Whats the best advice you've ever recieved?

Always be true to yourself, as cliché as it is. Pursuing what you love and what inspires you is often the key to finding happiness and fulfilment in life. Being true to yourself means that you're being honest with yourself and everyone around you, even if it means having tough conversations or making hard decisions. Having a base of authenticity allows you to build everything else on solid foundations, which is so important.

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

I have a really mixed repertoire of hobbies – I run, rock-climb, and hike, but I also love to cook for my friends and family. I also dabble in programming, electronics, and networking – really, I do whatever takes my fancy in a given week or two.

### What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

I'd tell myself to stop worrying about the small stuff – the things I was worrying about then won't matter to me when I'm 24. I actually try to use this trick to make sure I'm not spending time worrying about the wrong things now.