



Name: Raquel Yustos

Job Title: Research Technician

Organisation: Imperial College

Qualifications: Biology degree in Spain
MSc microbiology

Salary: £25,000- £30,000 and
£30,000 – £35,000

About me and my job:

Most of my time is spent helping PhD students and postdocs on different projects and I also help masters and undergraduate students with very specific projects for a short period of time. I am required to maintain and supervise different resources in the lab from cells and plasmids to water baths, incubators, and centrifuges. I place orders for the whole group, from specific requests to general consumables such as gloves, bags, ethanol and basic chemicals and kits to maintain stocks. I also keep a record of expenditures on different grants. I really enjoy the variety of activities in my role, the excitement about checking if an experiment has worked and the opportunity to help people with work that could potentially be quite important in their future career.

I really enjoyed biology during my secondary school studies and I had a great teacher. I decided to study biology at University level with a focus on environmental biology. After I finished my degree I took a career break where I went to the United States and then London, to improve my English. Afterwards I managed to get a job as a chemistry technician at a secondary school. At the same time I decided to do a masters in microbiology, where I discovered how wonderful and engaging molecular biology was. After I graduated, I started applying for jobs to work as a technician in molecular biology and got a job at Imperial College, where I have been working for the last thirteen years. I have been surprised by how quickly scientific techniques and equipment change and evolve.

Advice about the sector:

Most people nowadays have a degree. Prepare yourself as much as you can and make sure you take all the opportunities around you from placements and internships to work experience and voluntary jobs. All these activities will give you valuable experience that will be appreciated once you start looking for a job. Most importantly, make sure that you enjoy what you do.

In terms of career progression, at University level you can work as a laboratory manager, but in this role you will have less involvement with the scientific research that takes place. There is also the option to do a PhD. If you enjoy the teaching part of your job, you could become a science teacher in a secondary school.