

Molecular Biologist

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What does a Molecular Biologist do?

As a molecular biologist you can work with anything containing DNA and cover topics from the underlying mechanisms of cancer development to aspects of biodiversity and conserving endanger species. Molecular biologist can also work outside the lab as this profession is at the heart the biotechnology industry. Knowledge of molecular biology is also useful in such commercial fields as patent law.

What do you work in and what is your specialty?

After working for a number of years as a research scientist, I recently moved in to the commercial side of science and now work as 'Clinical Sales and Support Manager' at AdvanDx. In this position I provide support for people all over Europe who use our molecular diagnostic products for identifying which bacteria are causing blood stream infections in hospital patients.

How did you become interested in this area and when did you first start?

I always had an interest in the more applied and commercial aspects of biotechnology and preferred being closer seeing the applied use of the technology. I spent over 12 years as a research scientist but have been in this type of position for just over 2 years.

What study path have you taken to get here?

I started by taking a Bachelor of Applied Science (Biotech) and moved straight into doing an Honours degree at the University of Queensland and then moved interstate to do my Ph.D. almost immediately after. Once you have a Ph.D. it is easier to move your skills overseas, which is what I did, and moved to Denmark. I started working at the Carlsberg and moved on to both the Technical University of Denmark and the University of Copenhagen where I worked as a post-doctoral scientist then as an Assistant Professor. A few years ago, an opportunity came up to use my academic background and my teaching experience in a commercial setting, so I took it.

What do you like most about your job?

Professionally, I like that my work has an applied angle and actually saves people's lives. The type of work I have always done, but now more than ever, has given an international perspective on life and I enjoy that too.

Do you have any particular career highlights?

When I was an academic at the university, I still remember getting my first journal article published with me as the first author as a particular highlight.

What advice would you give to someone interested in working in this area?

If you want to move into the commercial side of science, I would recommend taking qualifications in both these areas. I never did but wish I did in hindsight.