

My Secondment Experience

Graeme McAllister

Position before secondment: Senior Technical Specialist, Chemistry Dept

Secondment position: Technical Operations Manager, Chemistry Dept

I unofficially started my secondment in May 2020, during the first Covid19 lockdown, when my predecessor was himself seconded to a faculty position and I was asked if I would backfill part of his role.

Being a lab-based technician and having to work from home don't really go together, so I jumped at the chance to learn a bit more about the operations job. Given that there were so many uncertainties at the start of the pandemic, it did feel like I was in at the deep end at times! My immediate responsibilities involved leading the small team (Chemistry Wildcats!) who were keeping the department in hibernation, and dealing with any building or facilities issues that arose.

When the full-time secondment became available around a year later, I felt confident enough to apply, and after my first (and only) experience of a Zoom interview was appointed in May 2021.

It didn't take long for me to realise that my previous experience had only scratched the surface and I still had a lot to learn, but I have relished the challenges (and there have been many!)

I have been lucky enough to have been moved to an open contract, but it was always good to know I had the safety net of my old role, if I'd wanted it. I would thoroughly recommend a secondment if the opportunity arose – they are a great way of learning new skills, getting heaps of experience and 'trying before you buy!'