

## Graduate Scheme

Name: Alice Pontin  
Degree Course studied BSc (Hons) Food Science and Nutrition (with Industrial Placement).  
Place Studied: University of Reading  
Date Graduated: Summer 2019  
First Graduate Job: Graduate Food Technologist, M&S



### When did you first become interested in Food Science?

During my GCSEs I developed a strong interest for sciences and Nutrition. I thought the only available career to me was a Dietician so applied for some work experience at the Royal Berks Hospital. I quickly recognised that this was not the role for me, but during the placement I spent some time in the Hospital kitchen and realised food manufacturing was where my passion really sparked. I found it fascinating to see food production at large scale and the controls that were in place to allow the hospital to accommodate the various dietary requirements of their patients.

### What was Uni Study Like?

I loved the variability and practicality of the course at Reading University. In a given week I would spend time in the pilot plant, microbiology or physiology labs, kitchens, lecture theatres and even food factories. I loved seeing the scientific theory being applied to real life examples and industry scenarios. My favourite assignment was my final year research project. I spent part of my industrial placement working for a seafood manufacturer where I developed a theory on the flavour chemistry of smoked salmon based on various parameters of the fish. The University allowed me to use this theory to build my research project and I was able to come to an outcome that had tangible benefit for the industry.

### What are the day-to-day routines in your job?

The interesting aspect of the job is that there is no 'day-to-day'! The job is so variable, no two days are the same. I spend my time working at my suppliers (in food factories, depots, farms, etc.), in our stores or distribution centres, or at head office where I might be in tasting rooms/kitchens or in meetings. As a Food Technologist I am responsible for the suppliers within M&S Confectionery where I manage quality, safety, integrity and legality for my range and contribute to new product development by bringing new kitchen concepts to factory scale.

### What advice would you give to someone thinking about Food Science as a career?

If it's something they're passionate about, it can be the best career in the world. Opportunity for travel, scope for progression and a stretching career that is constantly changing. If you want a secure industry you can guarantee people will always need to eat!

*This material has been developed with industry involvement to support graduates, employers and degree educators. <https://www.ifst.org/resources/competencies-food-graduate-careers>*