

What do scientists really do?

Sophie Duncan is a program manager at Science Year, a government initiative to promote science to young people, their parents and carers.



“ I have always been interested in science and engineering, although I had a passion to be an actress too. With this in mind I found it really difficult to decide which A levels to do. In the end I chose Physics, Maths and Chemistry and went on to study Physics at Birmingham University. I really enjoyed myself, and found a real satisfaction in finding solutions to problems, and learning more about science and technology.

I enjoyed it so much I decided that I wanted to pursue research, and ended up exploring Proton Induced X-Ray Emission. The problem was that I loved explaining my research to people, but I did not enjoy doing it. In the end I decided that science communication made better use of my skills and I started work at the Science Museum in London.

I had a wide variety of jobs at the museum, from looking after collections of objects, managing touring exhibitions, planning major new galleries, and running events for different audiences – you name it, I did it. It was fantastic and really rewarding. I had found just the kind of work that suited my desire to communicate and enthuse people with science, and made use of some of my theatrical skills too.

When I heard about Science Year I was really excited that it could engage young people with science, and I decided that I wanted to be involved. I got a job as a program manager and now run a third of Science Year programs. A major part of my work has been managing the touring components of Science Year, although I have also been involved in a large number of other programs, including a book of experiments for KS2 and Lab Days – an initiative to open laboratories to the public.”

Do you want to ask Sophie a question?

You can email Sophie during the Science Year *Only connect?* theme at the Science Year website. All the answers Sophie sends out will be shown on the website at www.scienceyear.com/chalkface/index.html, so check there first to see if she's already answered your question. Her email address is at the bottom of that page.