

# Meet Imogen



## Clinical Engineer

Hi, my name is Imogen. I am a Clinical Engineer and I work in the Medical Physics and Bioengineering department at the Royal United Hospitals Bath. Find out more about me and what I do below.

### What do you do?

I am a Clinical Engineer and I work in the Healthcare Engineering and Gastro-Intestinal Physiology team (HEGIP). I provide scientific support to the hospital such as environmental monitoring. For example, I have monitored nitrous oxide levels, as well as noise levels, in wards over a 24-hour period. This produced lots of data. I enjoyed analysing this information and presenting it to people in an easy-to-understand way. I also support the medical equipment team with the calibration of equipment. I am also involved in the running of two clinics. One of which is the Combined Breath Test clinic. Before this test, the patient must fast overnight. I take a breath sample to measure their hydrogen and methane levels. I then give them a lactose or glucose solution to drink and I measure their gas levels over the next 90 to 120 minutes. The lactose test aims to identify whether the patient has problems digesting lactose. The glucose test aims to identify if there is small intestinal bacterial overgrowth. After the test, I give the results to a consultant.

### Describe a typical day

Every day I come in and check my emails, but apart from that, there is no typical day for me! Clinics take place four times a week. The rest of my time is spent on any requests that come through to the team. Sometimes I may spend half a day or a few days out of the office where

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I provide services, like audiology equipment calibration, to other hospitals.

### **What hours do you work?**

I work Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm. I am required to work flexibly so sometimes I may start or finish an hour earlier or later.

### **How did you become a Clinical Engineer?**

I have always been interested in science and maths and I knew that I wanted to be involved more directly with patient care. For my A-Levels, I studied Physics, Maths and English. For my Physics A-Level, I opted to study the medical physics module which helped me narrow down where my interests lay. After some research, I decided to study a Biomedical Engineering B.Eng degree. During my degree, I completed several placements in different departments. I even had the opportunity to observe hip replacement surgery! These were some of the most enjoyable and interesting parts of my course. The placements inspired me and I realised that I would quite enjoy working in a clinical area.

After I finished my degree, I went on to do a masters in Bioinformatics at the University of Bath as I enjoyed the computer science side of my degree, however after a couple of months, I decided that this was not for me. While I was in Bath, I discovered the Clinical Engineer role and so I applied for it and got the position that I am working in now.

### **What qualities should somebody have to become a Clinical Engineer?**

You must be willing to learn and be good at problem solving. You must also have an interest in healthcare. For my role, it is important to have good communication and people skills. When I was younger, I felt that my communication skills were not my strongest point and this discouraged me from considering patient-facing roles. After school, I worked in retail and this experience has helped to improve my communication skills. If I had told my younger self that I would be working in a patient-facing role in the future, I would have been very surprised!

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## What advice or tips would you give somebody interested in becoming a Clinical Engineer?

Try and learn about the field. Getting some experience could be really useful. Also, if you do gain work experience, be curious and do not be afraid to ask questions. It also helps to think carefully about the experience you have already and how your skills can be transferable to other areas. For example, I have previously worked in retail and this has given me experience talking to the public and doing my best to solve their problems. I still use these skills in my current role.