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Issue #8



SAF Newsletter

The latest news, views and announcements

Letter from the Forum

Dear Readers,

This is it—your last chance to secure tickets for the **Science Apprentice Conference 2025!**

We don't want you to miss out on what promises to be our biggest and most inspiring event yet. This year's conference is packed with opportunities designed to support, challenge, and celebrate apprentices from across the science community.

Here's what's waiting for you:

Workshops on conflict resolution – practical skills to strengthen your workplace confidence.

KSB/CPD evidencing sessions – tips and guidance to showcase your progress and achievements.

Poster competition – share your work, ideas, and creativity with peers and professionals.

Resilience workshops – build strategies to thrive in demanding environments.

Apprentice career panel – hear first-hand stories and advice from those further along the journey.

Awards and recognition – a celebration of the incredible work apprentices are doing across the sector.

With limited spaces left, this is truly the final call to join us for an event that will inspire, empower, and connect you with like-minded apprentices and professionals.

And speaking of celebrating apprentices, don't miss our **Apprentice of the Month** feature in this issue! We love shining a spotlight on the journeys and achievements of our community. If you'd like to nominate yourself or a fellow apprentice for the next one—or if you'd like to contribute your own story, reflections, or questions for our upcoming newsletter—get in touch with us!

This is your chance not only to attend an unforgettable conference but also to be part of shaping and sharing the apprentice voice.

The Science Apprenticeship Forum Team



Science Apprenticeship Forum Updates!

The countdown is on! Act fast—tickets are going quickly and you won't want to miss out on shaping your future! Secure yours now and be part of the excitement

The Science Apprenticeship Conference returns for its 3rd year as the UK's first event dedicated to science apprentices. Taking place at MTC Events in Coventry and hosted by Innovate UK, this year's theme is "**Shaping Your Future**".

Key Details:

- *Date & Location:* Friday, 12th September 2025, MTC Events, Coventry
- *Partners:* Science Apprenticeship Forum, Innovate UK, Royal Society of Chemistry, Science Council
- *Open to:* All science apprentices or recently completed apprentices
- *Perks:* Counts toward off-the-job training hours; lunch & refreshments included

What to Expect:

- *Workshops & Panels:* Skill-building sessions tailored to apprentices and an interactive Q&A panel with current apprentices
- *Networking:* Meet fellow apprentices, universities, and professional bodies
- *Poster Competition:* Showcase your impact for a chance to win £350 (submit by 3 Sept 2025)
- *Travel Bursary:* Up to £150 available to support travel costs (apply via email)

To get involved:

- Submit poster entries or apply for travel funding via scienceapprenticeshipforum@gmail.com

Don't miss this opportunity to grow your network, enhance your skills, and shape your future!

[Get your tickets here!!](#)



Calls-To-Action

IST Technical Conference 2025

 University of Birmingham

 Thursday, 18th September 2025

 50% off for apprentices and T-Level students!

Theme: Innovating and Evolving in a Changing Landscape

Join talks and workshops across AI, creative tech, health & safety, and career development. Open to anyone working in STEM, creative industries or technical roles.

Register to attend [here!](#)

Want to help organise the conference? Email office@istonline.org.uk to express interest.

Share your Science Expertise!

The Science Council is seeking volunteers to take part in short online sessions with teachers, helping them understand careers in science and what different roles involve.

If your work touches on:

- **Core Knowledge** (e.g. cells, genetics, microbiology, chemistry)
- **Clinical Practice** (e.g. ethics, regulations, understanding diseases)
- **Technical Skills** (e.g. lab work, microscopy, aseptic techniques)

*...we'd love to hear from you! Just **20 minutes of your time** can inspire the next generation of scientists.*

To get involved, please contact scienceapprenticeshipforum@gmail.com.



Apprentice of the Month: Grace Tomlinson



Congratulations to Grace Tomlinson, who made an outstanding contribution to the manufacture of 2,000 vials for accelerated predictive and long-term stability studies underpinning a phase 3 clinical shelf life submission. Stepping in at short notice, Grace assumed accountability for progressing manufacture, identified and mitigated critical contamination risks, and coordinated stakeholders across quality, laboratory support, and facility management. Her leadership and technical expertise ensured compliance with GLP standards, safeguarded study timelines, and protected the integrity of ongoing clinical trials.

In addition to this newsletter feature, she will also receive a certificate to share with her workplace. To get involved in the next 'Apprentice of the Month', see more information on page 6!

Apprentice Spotlight: Grace Tomlinson

Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself and your background?

I started my apprenticeship at AstraZeneca in 2021, just as we were coming out of the pandemic, and joined straight from college where I studied biology, chemistry, and maths. I had applied to universities, but a friend's mum suggested I look into apprenticeships – I applied for this one, and when I was offered the place, I grabbed the opportunity.

I'm studying Applied Bioscience with the University of Kent and am now in my fourth year. Over the course of the apprenticeship, I've worked across a range of areas – from formulation development for injectable medicines, oligonucleotides and peptides, to oral projects such as tablets and manufacturing. I've had the chance to take ownership of small-scale batches for stability studies and become a subject matter expert in some areas, which has been both challenging and rewarding.



Apprentice Spotlight: Grace Tomlinson

Q: What challenges have you faced, and how have you overcome them?

At the beginning, I struggled with confidence. You're surrounded by highly skilled scientists, and it can feel daunting to develop your own scientific opinion – I definitely experienced imposter syndrome. To overcome this, I kept reminding myself: "I am the best person for the job that I'm doing."

I've also learnt that progress isn't always linear. Day to day, it's easy to feel like you're not moving forward, but when I look back over the past four years, I realise how much I've achieved. Having mentors and buddies has been invaluable – they've helped me understand the business and guided me through the more nuanced challenges.

Q: Has anyone been a big influence or mentor during your apprenticeship?

Yes – definitely. In my first year, I was mentored by *Claire Gibb*, a Senior Formulator. She has so much experience in clean manufacturing and really taught me the ropes – I think of her as my work mum.

Another key influence has been *Zahid Nazir*, who supported me on my very first project. He showed me how to approach problems like a scientist and gave me feedback that helped me improve.

Q: How has your apprenticeship changed your perspective on learning or working?

It's changed it massively. At school and college, I focused so much on academics and pushing for top grades that I burnt myself out. With the apprenticeship, I've learnt that it's not just about grades – it's about skills, experience, and how you apply what you know. I now see learning as something practical and ongoing. I feel much more employable because I've been able to apply my skills directly in real-world settings, which is something I wouldn't have had if I'd gone down the university-only route.

Q: What are your career goals for the future?

When I finish my program, I'd love to stay at AZ and progress into a Senior Scientist role, continuing to build my expertise in formulation science. My goal is to become a lead formulator one day.

That said, I'm keeping an open mind. I've been exposed to other areas – like devices and biopharma – and there's so much I'm excited to explore. I don't want to limit myself to just one path, but I know I want to keep learning and growing.



Key Updates

Apprentice of the Month Nominations!

We're celebrating our amazing apprentices by featuring those who go above and beyond—whether through outstanding performance, teamwork, or workplace impact. Nominate a deserving apprentice by sharing their achievements and help us highlight the incredible talent in our community!

Use the link [here](#) to nominate now!

We Want to Hear from You!

Our newsletter is all about celebrating your stories, experiences, and questions. Whether you've recently worked on an exciting project, want to share your journey so far, or are looking for advice from the community, we'd love to feature your voice.

This is your space to inspire others, ask questions, and highlight the amazing work happening across our network. No story is too big or too small—every contribution helps to build a stronger, more connected community.

If you'd like to be featured in our next newsletter, simply get in touch by emailing **o.brittain@scienceapprenticeshipforum.org**

We can't wait to hear from you!



Upcoming Events / Dates:

Science Apprentice Conference 2025!	12 September 2025
IST Technical Conference	18 September 2025
National Inclusion Week	15 - 21 September 2025
Rosh Hashanah	22 - 24 September 2025

Any Other Business (AOB):

Science Apprenticeship Forum Membership Form

As we continue to enhance the way we support and connect with our community, we kindly ask all members to complete the new SAF membership form. This will help us ensure we have the most accurate and up-to-date information about your members.

You can find the form [here!](#)

