

Case Study - looking to a scientific future

Martin Domville

Apprenticeship in Applied Biotechnology – Level 6 (Degree)

UCB



Martin Domville, 23, is a Level 6 apprentice at UCB. Martin first visited the company when he was 16 as part of the annual [Work in Science Week](#) event, designed to let students sample life as a scientist. He enjoyed it so much he decided the scientist's life was for him and now he helps ensure other young people get the same opportunities he had.

Have you always been interested in science?

Yes. My mum is a chemist, so I was brought up in a scientific household, but aside from that maths and science have always been my favourite subjects and the ones which I did best in.

What made you take the apprenticeship route rather than university?

Up until Year 12 and my visit to *Work in Science Week* at UCB I had thought I wanted a career in music production. But spending time with the scientists in the labs made me realise I really wanted to be a scientist! I left school with A Levels in maths and chemistry and was intending to study chemistry at university but started thinking about different options, to find an alternative that would better suit me at that time in my life.

I almost didn't apply for the apprenticeship though because I didn't have the grades they were looking for – two B grades at A level, with biology preferred. Then I thought, '*the worst that can happen is they can turn you down*' so I went for it! A couple of interviews later and I was delighted to be accepted.

What benefit do you think you have gained from doing an apprenticeship?

The apprentice lifestyle is probably less social than the university one, but I have been able to work and learn close to home, make some great friends and have the structure, routine and goals that the apprenticeship offers. It is a path that suits me, and all my friends and family agree! I feel like I have so many options open to me through the knowledge, practical experience of scientific technologies and strong foundations I have built here. I have confidence to build a career in science and by doing an apprenticeship I feel like I am in an advantageous position for the future.

What have you learned in your time at UCB?

I didn't know much about biochemistry before I started. At school I didn't really enjoy biology, but I liked chemistry and learning more about this practice has been great – a branch of science which really inspires me. I am happy working in the pharmaceutical industry as it provides me with the opportunity to help people in the most tangible way I know how. I wasn't ever going to be a doctor, but this is a way that I can make a difference with the skills that I have. Before I started my apprenticeship, I knew UCB from *Work in Science Week* and I knew that I would fit in and feel welcome and the therapy areas the company focuses on are of personal interest to me, so it's been a rewarding learning experience.

UCB is a member of the Science Industry Partnership which works in partnership with government to establish the skills needed to build a high value, competent scientific workforce



Science Industry Partnership

What advice would you give other young people interested in a career in science?

Go for it! University isn't for everyone and apprenticeships aren't for everyone but if you know you want to work in science look at all the options open to you and decide what's best for you and what you need to succeed. Science really is a level playing field in terms of the respect and impact you can have, no one field of science is better or worse than another, and no way of getting into science is better or worse than another. I'd also say take every opportunity to understand what being a scientist is. I have helped at every UCB *Work in Science Week* since I started here for exactly that reason – because I want to give something back for those people coming after me. *Work in Science* solidified my thinking that I wanted to be a scientist and I hope that we give other students this insight too.

What's next?

I have completed my Level 5 apprenticeship with a foundation degree in Applied Biotechnology and I'm on to Level 6 for a BSc in applied biotechnology, which finishes in December 2020. After that I don't know yet. I am considering a PhD and I know I absolutely want to work in labs in some capacity but exactly how I'm not sure.



01925 515 220

sipmembers@cogentskills.com

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