

My Experience of the Summer School in Food Sciences 2014

When I arrived at the Summer School, it was daunting that I did not know anyone there; however a range of “ice breaker” activities made everyone feel at ease very quickly.

We soon split up into groups where we experienced different aspects of the Food Science industry. For example, the microbiology taster illustrated the importance of maintaining high hygiene standards, whilst in another session we learnt about how all the five senses contribute towards our perception of taste. I found this particularly interesting because I had never thought about how the sound a crunchy crisp makes impacts upon how we perceive it to “taste”.

Next, there was a sports activity after which we had a barbecued dinner whilst getting to know new people. In the evening, all of the people from both the Food Science and Plant Science Summer Schools took part in a range of team-building games and everyone had great fun. Eventually, we all went to bed after an exhausting but thoroughly rewarding day.

On the second day, we met representatives from both Mars and Nestle and we also learnt more about the engineering and mechanical aspects to the food industry, such as how factory machinery functions efficiently. We also attended a lecture where we were spoken to about research that has taken place to investigate taste receptors in different animals; for me, this was one of the highlights of the Summer School because I found it fascinating. In the evening, we had a formal dinner where we were given the opportunity to talk to industry experts from companies such as Sainsbury's. After dinner, the final activity of the day was a quiz before we went to our rooms for the night.

On the final day, I was lucky enough to visit the Thornton's factory. This was a really insightful experience as being taken along the production lines allowed us to understand all of the intricate processes involved in producing even the simplest of chocolates. Of course, the free samples were the best part of the tour! We then returned to the campus for the end of the Summer School.

Overall, I felt that taking part in the Food Science Summer School was undoubtedly worthwhile. I enjoyed myself and learnt so much in such a short amount of time, and the hard work of all the organisers and student ambassadors involved made it a fantastic experience.