

Brewing Science Graduate Profile



University of
Nottingham
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Naomi Pallister

MSc Brewing Science & Practice 2015-16.

Shift Brewer, Banks's Brewery (Marston's plc), Wolverhampton.



Tell us about your current role and what it means in terms of the day to day work you get involved with....

I am currently working as a shift Brewer for Marston's plc at their Banks's Brewery in Wolverhampton. The majority of shifts during the week contain the same basic elements, mashing at least one brew (usually between one to three mash tuns), putting the copper into boil and checking active fermentations.

Monitoring of fermentations involves checking the temperature profile to ensure the fermentation is making heat and monitoring the gravity decrease until the desired specification is reached, at which point the fermentation is set to cool.

Another aspect to the role is to deal with any issues that arise during production, this requires communication and team work within the department.

Is this the kind of role you thought you might get involved in when you first came to study brewing at Nottingham?

Yes, my hope was to start as a graduate Brewer or Brewing Engineer within a large company that could support me through the IBD Master Brewers qualification. I also hoped to gain experience of brewing on a large and small scale, using SCADA systems and getting a better look at processing post fermentation, which is why my current role is ideal.

Having a background in chemical engineering, and an interest in the growth of micro-breweries, I hoped that the course would give me the knowledge and understanding to allow me to pursue a career in the brewing industry. Once at Nottingham, the course focused my attention on gaining employment in a large brewing company that could give me experience in working on a range of beers and processes.

How does working in the industry match your personal aspirations and expectations of it?

Production is based less on theory and more on historic practical applications, which isn't as I expected. Working within the industry is as expected, as the industry consists of many friendly and welcoming people, all of whom are happy to help each other to ensure the longevity of the industry. There is understanding of how hard it is to work within the drinks industry and therefore everyone is keen to make sure that brewing is prominent by creating exciting opportunities through brand development and providing a consistently high quality product. I am to become a Master Brewer and working in a large national company should hopefully give me the opportunity to attain this as the company is keen to support career progression.

Brewing Science Graduate Profile: Naomi Pallister (*cont.*)

In what ways was the MSc Brewing Science & Practice helpful in preparing you for a career in the brewing industry?

My understanding of how to brew beer before attending the brewing course at Nottingham was limited and therefore I really gained from the course. The brewing course is equivalent to the IBD Diploma and therefore allows you to progress your career to a higher position. Overall, in essence, I was taught how to brew beer from industry specialists, giving me an in depth understanding of all aspects of the brewing process and the practical applications. Industrial visits also gave practical understanding of the day to day production of beer as well as seeing the scale of production and the size of the vessels used.

What skills and knowledge gained (through the MSc) have been most significant in your career so far?

The skills and knowledge gained from the MSc which have been most significant is the theory about fermentation, which I use daily in my current role. For example, the manipulation of the fermentation to ensure that all parameters are within specification is important as well as the importance of looking after the yeast, skimming back so as to increase the yeast's viability and solid content. I have developed skills in teamwork, communication and problem solving. I was a bit wary when I first started as to how older employees would deal with a young female giving them direction on a shift but they accepted my authority and are very focused on producing a quality product.

Has being a Nottingham graduate been helpful in 'opening doors' to job opportunities, do you think?

The Nottingham University brewing course was not well known within the industry as it was only in its second year, when I graduated. Though there are other courses that are more commonly known, the connection with the IBD and the equivalence of the Nottingham brewing course with the Diploma means that employers understand the level of skill that they are getting. The advantage of the Nottingham course is that you gain a Masters Degree from a well-recognised and respected institution, with an excellent teaching staff and this, in any industry, is a benefit making you more desirable to any employer.

Which of the beers you brew is your personal favourite and why....?

Sunbeam – This was one of my favourite beers before I even started at Marston's plc because it is served in the local pub to the Sutton Bonnington campus and reminds me of the great times I had there. Now that I brew the beer as well, makes it even more special, as it is the most difficult beer we brew due to high grist volume and hop additions.

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