

# MY EXPERIENCE OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL IN FOOD SCIENCES 2017

*by Han Chung*

When my careers adviser told me about the Food and Crop Sciences Summer School, I was very excited about this opportunity. Food is a large interest of mine but I had limited knowledge about what goes on behind the scenes – so I applied to learn more about this fascinating industry.

I arrived at the beautiful Sutton Bonington campus feeling slightly nervous because I didn't know anyone. However everyone was on their own and with the help of the student ambassadors we quickly got to know each other better by playing icebreakers. We settled in easily because the on-site accommodation was very good – we stayed in single en suite rooms with Wi-Fi access. It was wonderful for me to experience staying at a university.

Over the course of the summer school there were plenty of hands on activities which took place in the biology super lab and the food hall. These ranged from using ATP swabs to detect living organisms on food preparation surfaces, to making and tasting ice cream using different types of sweetener. We improved our practical techniques and teamwork skills within these engaging sessions. Furthermore, postgraduate students helped run the taster sessions and I loved having the chance to ask them about their innovative research projects.

One of the sessions I enjoyed the most was a sensory activity where we learnt how appearance can affect taste or smell. We were given scented coloured bottles and it was extremely hard to determine their smell because the colour didn't match with the scent. Also within the session I found it crazy how difficult naming the flavour of white skittles can be.

On the second day we were given a lecture from Helen Munday from the Food and Drink Federation who addressed important topics such as sustainability, demand, and how food preferences are constantly changing. This was followed by a formal dinner which was a fantastic chance to speak to industry experts and gain invaluable advice from the professionals.

On the final day we were given a tour of a Hovis factory. Stepping into the warm smell of freshly baked bread and taking in the huge scale of a food manufacturing plant was breath taking. It was an excellent way to round off a highly enjoyable few days.

I would definitely recommend this summer school, it has broadened my horizon and helped me realise the stunning depth and variety within the food industry. It has been influential, making me consider a future in food science. My biggest piece of advice for potential summer school participants is to really get involved and talk to as many university students and industry experts as you can to get the most out of your experience. Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to say thank you to all the staff, sponsors and student helpers for crafting and running such a compelling list of activities and packaging them in a fun and educational summer school.