

# Case Study

## Rebecca Animal Technologist



Rebecca enjoys having a job which allows her to provide important animal care...

### **1. How did you become an animal technician?**

There are many internet-based resources to search for jobs. I put my CV on job sites and set alerts to be notified of any animal related jobs.

### **2. How relevant is your degree to your job?**

My animal behaviour degree was pretty relevant. The skills I gained in animal handling and care skills, husbandry and an understanding of the behaviour and biology of different species really helped.

### **3. What does being an animal technician involve?**

I work with mice. I conduct morning checks of the animal room (checking that all cages have food, water and that the mice are all well) and I then continue by recording the temperature and humidity of the room. Then comes the basic

husbandry tasks of cleaning out the cages and replacing them with clean cages with fresh bedding (shavings/sawdust). I count the mice and assist in sexing the litters (counting the number of male and female pups) and I also keep the breeding records up to date, recording pregnancies and setting up matings as required.

### **4. How has your role developed and what are your career ambitions?**

From starting with just cleaning out, I have now progressed to looking after the mouse colony and breeding mice, identification of individual animals and record keeping. I also have a lot more interaction with the researchers, gaining more insight into the different research projects. This involves closer communication and liaison with researchers, advising them on the performance of the breeding colony, etc.



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### 5. What do you enjoy about your job?

I have always wanted to work with animals and so the most enjoyable part is caring for the animals. I also really enjoy the opportunity to gain more responsibility, knowledge and training. Using animals in research can be controversial but I ensure that they are cared for and I can see the bigger picture and that meaningful progress is being made to developing new cures and treatments.

Working in the biomedical research sector means that I can work with animals which I love, whilst also contributing to new treatments and cures. It is a very professional environment with many training and learning opportunities as well as job security. Other animal related jobs can require long term voluntary work before securing a wage. Having a defined career structure and opportunities to progress is another benefit.

### 6. What are the most challenging parts of your job?

Communicating with people who are not on site, as they may not realise the amount of space/hours/resources their project will require. It is a balancing act between available resources, space and researchers' requirements. Another issue is time management to ensure that animal care and welfare is always the priority. We know we have to work weekends and even Christmas day and that is just part of the job but when we have bank holiday weeks or staff off sick it can mean that core duties must be done in less time or we have to work extended hours.

### 7. Any words of advice for someone who wants to get into this job?

You can get a lot out of this career; it is very hands on but there are many opportunities to develop an animal care career and contribute to the research projects taking place. Ask questions about everything to continue your learning and development - ask questions about the research, be proactive, ask for training and show initiative.

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