

A scientist just like me



Phebie Watson
Researcher in Forensic
Ecogenomics



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Hi there! I am Phebie Watson – A researcher in forensic ecogenomics



Where do I work?

I am currently carrying out my research at Liverpool John Moores University, with the aim of gaining a PhD in the next two years.

What did I like doing when I was at school?

I struggled at school, but I had a passion for biology, all things to do with crime and any science practicals. I was always a hands-on learner!

What do I like doing in my spare time?

In my spare time I love music, whether this is playing a guitar, going to gigs or adding to my vinyl collection.

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What do I do as a researcher in forensic ecogenomics?

I use microorganisms to investigate crimes. I have created a unique project that uses changes in soil bacteria to tell investigators more about how or where someone died.



How does what I do make the world a better place?

My work helps crime investigators and the families of missing or murdered people to gain answers. My work helps the investigators to confirm the information given by witnesses and suspects by creating a timeline of events.

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What I like about my job

The best thing about being a postgraduate researcher is that you are on the cutting edge of research. I am adding to, and developing, the work done by other scientists, and I am the first person to find out the information that I am looking for.



Challenges I have faced

One of the biggest challenges I have faced throughout my academic career is funding. Coming from a poorer background, I have had to find a way to fund myself through university to get my degree and my PhD.

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If you want to be a researcher in forensic ecogenomics, you need:

- ✦ **to be interested in true crime** – having an interest in what you are researching is crucial
- ✦ **to be self-motivated** – doing a PhD is not like being at school and there is little direction from teachers
- ✦ **to problem solve** – in research things often go wrong and it is important you can work out solutions
- ✦ **a strong stomach** – you will likely be working with dead things... they smell and look gross!



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Discussion time

- ✦ Would you like to be a researcher in forensic ecogenomics like Phebie Watson?

Why? Why not?

- ✦ What skills and interests do you already have that would help you become a researcher in forensic ecogenomics?
- ✦ What new skills and knowledge would you need to develop?



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Free supporting resources for forensic ecogenomics

[Bringing Back Glass](#) – see 'Soil profiling'

[I bet you didn't know...](#) resources use cutting-edge science research as a context for learning. To learn more about soil or bacteria, see:

- Soil fungi could reduce global warming
- Dragons could save us from bad bacteria

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