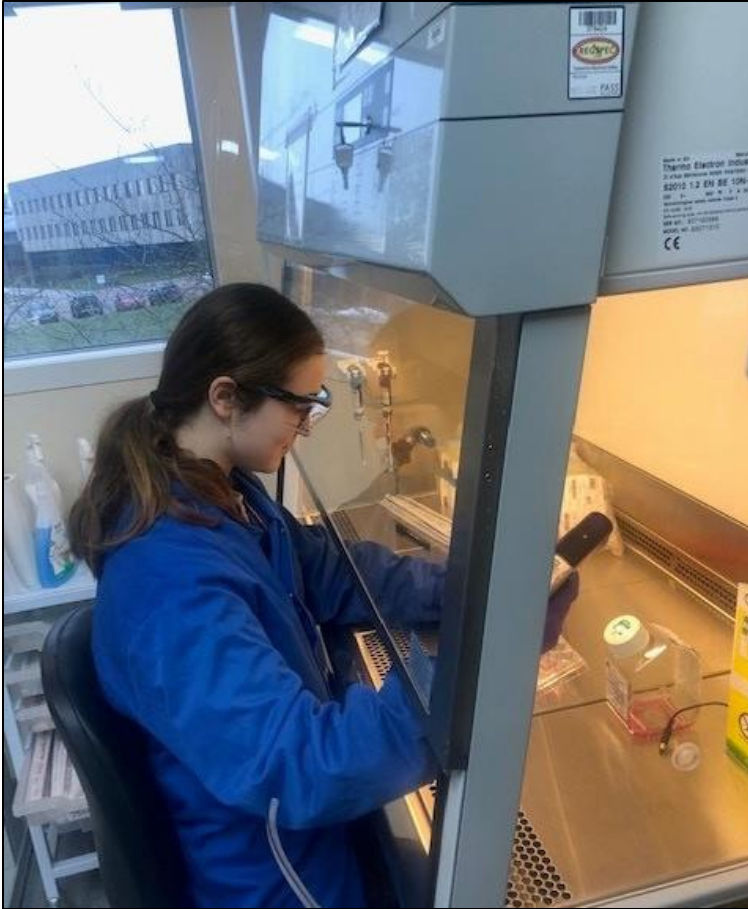


# Pia Boeber – Degree Apprentice with AstraZeneca



I left Tomlinscote School back in 2020, with GCSEs in a range of subjects including psychology, German, DT, and History. I have always enjoyed learning, and in particular, loved Science. During my time at the school, I was able to develop my passion for the subject even more- the science department (particularly Dr Hammond, Dr Comfort and Mrs Sanger) all pushed me to do my best and really helped to nurture my love for the subject. In addition, I was lucky enough to have had the opportunity to study Psychology with Miss Roy which also allowed me to explore Science from a new and exciting perspective. Tomlinscote also supported my development outside of the curriculum; it enabled opportunities for dedicated work experience, the chance to take on key leadership positions, such as Deputy Head Girl, and helped me to challenge myself with new experiences through the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

After Tomlinscote, I progressed to The Sixth Form College in Farnborough to pursue A levels in Biology, Chemistry and Psychology. In addition, I completed an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) in in-vitro fertilisation. Whilst at College, I also led the Chemistry Society, where I was fully beginning to explore my love for laboratory sciences. During this time, I applied for both university courses and degree apprenticeships where I ended up being successful for a degree apprenticeship in the Cell Engineering Team at AstraZeneca.



# Pia Boeber – Degree Apprentice at AstraZeneca

In my day job, I genetically edit and engineer cells using a range of techniques, such as CRISPR systems, in order to manipulate specific genes; ultimately these cell models will be used by project teams in the drug discovery process. For the degree element of my role, I am studying part time for an Applied Bioscience degree (BSc) with the University of Kent, which is extremely interesting and enables me to be able to apply my learning and education to my specific job role. I am currently one year in and have developed my laboratory skills by using cutting edge technology, and thoroughly enjoy being able to do science with field experts!

Since deciding to pursue higher education through a less conventional route, I have had many opportunities to get stuck in, challenge and develop myself. From learning a plethora of new techniques in the lab to actively participating in outreach to the wider community, I have enjoyed every moment so far. Outreach standouts have been the Cambridge Big Biology Day and delivering a presentation to Year 11s at a local secondary school, promoting science and apprenticeships to young people. Whilst in the lab, highlights include having had a real impact in on developing projects, learning CRISPR techniques (among other lab skills!) and even presenting my own scientific poster!

Continuing with my degree apprenticeship, I look forward to learning even more about the ever-changing scientific world and continuing to develop as a scientist.

