



Dr Jane Garrison

MSc Psychology Conversion Course,
2010 and MSc Research Methods in
Cognitive Neuropsychology, 2011
PhD, Department of Psychology, University of
Cambridge

The path to a PhD

After studying an MSc conversion course in psychology, Jane Garrison realised that her fascination with the subject lay in more in brain function than behavioural psychology. This led her to undertake a further MSc in Cognitive Neuropsychology, which proved to be excellent preparation for an experimental PhD in cognitive neuroscience.

Now a PhD student in the Memory Lab at the Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge, Jane's research looks at the neurological basis of hallucinations in schizophrenia. As part of this, she is running a range of behavioural and neuroimaging experimental studies in both patients and healthy participants.

'Without my degrees at Hertfordshire I simply would not be in my current role at Cambridge. I was lucky enough to win an MRC studentship to fund my research, and I know that without the knowledge and grounding in statistics and experimental techniques gained on the research methods masters, this would have been impossible.'

An unusual career path

Jane's route into neuroscience has not been a typical one. She initially studied an undergraduate degree in natural sciences/ biochemistry and went on to complete a PhD in

the field. At the end of her studies, she decided to move into business and trained as an accountant, before working in equity finance for ten years.

'I had become Head of Global Research for a large city fund management group; as stimulating and enjoyable as the job was, the long hours and stress finally got the better of me. I decided to take a career break and spend time with my young family. It was through an Open University course that I discovered my love of all things brain-related and signed up for a Masters at Hertfordshire. So far, I haven't looked back.'

Future plans

Jane clearly has a passion for her subject, and would recommend this career path to anyone who feels the same. *'Studying for a PhD involves long hours, frustrating setbacks and disappointments, but my fascination with neuroscience allows me to take the rough with the smooth. The satisfaction when things go well and an experiment works is wonderful. As a mature student I was a little unsure about going back to university, but I love my second chance at an academic career.'*

Looking beyond her PhD, Jane is keen to stay in research. At the moment, getting funding for research is difficult, but Jane is committed to continuing to explore brain function.



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