

Wendy Gaisford Research Scientist

I am shortly to start a Wellcome Trust Career Re-Entry Fellowship at The University of Cambridge looking at autoimmunity and Type 1 diabetes.

After completing a degree in microbiology and a PhD in microbial biochemistry, I worked on the immunology of SIV and HIV. This gave me my first real research success and when I left for a career break to bring up my two children, I felt dissatisfied that I had not achieved all I wanted to.



During my time away from research I worked from home for Cambridge University Press, for a scientific based computer company, as a teaching assistant in a local secondary school and as a medical writer based in London. Throughout this time I still had the desire to return to research but I didn't realise quite how hard this would be.

Whilst applying for jobs, I took a course for women wishing to return to science run through the Open University. This highlighted a grant available from the Wellcome Trust specifically for returners. Thanks to help from Dr. Esther Haines of Cambridge AWiSE, I contacted Prof. Anne Cooke. With her outstanding support we applied successfully for a grant in collaboration with my old Post Doctoral supervisor Prof. Kingston Mills.

I have really enjoyed working as a medical writer and it is hard not to be torn between a highly paid job and lab based academia but I know that the opportunity to return to the lab will never present itself again. I can always return to medical writing if my life in academia isn't successful but I am hoping it will be! Besides lifestyle is also important to me. Commuting to London to work severely restricts my quality of life!



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