



Professional Memberships/Fellowships

- 2003** Member of The Biochemical Society
- 2005** Member of the British Society for Immunology
- 2009** Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology

Awards/Prizes/Distinctions

- 1999** Open University Award for exceptional performance
- 2000** Open University Award for exceptional performance
- 2002** Open University Teaching Award
- 2009** Open University Teaching Award

Career

Plan after graduating?

When I started my BSc I wasn't thinking about academia – I wanted to work in industry. However, I became interested in research so did a PhD and two post-docs, where I got my first taste of undergraduate teaching.

Did that change? If so, how?

I got a temporary lectureship at the Open University and found out about distance teaching – quite unlike anything I'd done before, but I loved it. It was a steep learning curve, but my teaching materials seemed well received by peers and students. I was thrilled when I got a permanent job with the OU as a lecturer. Although I did some research, my main focus was teaching.

What are your special interests/achievements in education?

I've enjoyed working with fantastic colleagues to develop a robust pedagogy for distance education. There's definitely more to it than putting your lecture slides on a website! Having started with a very focused research area – cell division – it has been a delight to have been able to research and teach in many different areas. Having to learn about new topics keeps you on your toes, and keeping interested yourself helps to enthuse your students – vital for effective learning.

After several years I found myself as Head of Department and a Professor, thanks mainly to my teaching contributions – I've worked on more than 25 modules, and enjoyed (almost) every minute.

1974
BSc in Genetics and Microbiology, University of Sheffield

1977
Awarded PhD in Molecular Biology at the University of Edinburgh, followed by post-doc positions

1983
Temporary lectureship at the Open University; when the contract ended in 1986 I took on lots of small consultancy and teaching jobs

1994
Permanent job teaching at the Open University

2001
Promoted to Senior Lecturer largely on the basis of teaching and administration

2005
Took on the roles of Health Sciences Programme Director and Lead for Foundation Degrees

2007
Became Head of Department

2011
Member of the Heads of University Biosciences (HUBS; a Special Interest Group of the Royal Society of Biology), elected Chair in 2012

2013
Invited to join national steering group examining the status of teaching within Universities

2014
Promoted to Chair on the basis of teaching and leadership