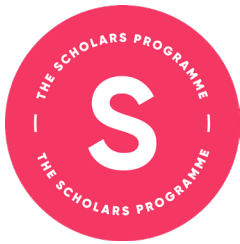


The Brilliant Club Case Study



Tutor Name:
Aimee Smith

PhD Research Area:
Planetary Science/Geology

PhD University:
The University of Manchester

Tutor since: October 2018

Brilliant Club Programme:
The Scholars Programme



Which schools have you taught at?

Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College.

What is the name of your Scholars Programme course?

The Anthropocene vs. Deep Time- A journey through Earth's climate history.

What made you want to apply to be a Scholars Programme tutor?

In secondary school I took part in "The Top-Up Programme", which was similar to the Scholars Programme. This programme gave me confidence in my academic ability and it's ultimately what led me to apply to University. Now that I'm doing a PhD, I'm so grateful for such programmes as without them I wouldn't be in the position I am today. Because of this, when I heard about The Brilliant Club I just had to apply since widening access to University is something I'm extremely passionate about and I owe a lot to programmes that do this type of work.

What has been the most rewarding moment of your Scholars Programme placements so far?

When one of my pupils was published in The Scholar magazine. They had worked really hard throughout the tutorials and deserved being acknowledged for their efforts. When I found out that their essay had been selected for publication, I was so proud!

Tell me about being a Scholars Programme tutor. How has it helped in your development as a research student?

My communication skills have improved greatly. Explaining complex concepts to pupils means I am more comfortable in dissecting the complex aspects of my research, simplifying them so they can be understood by a broad audience, and then distributing this information through seminars and academic talks. Being a Scholars Programme tutor also developed my time management skills as I had to ensure I was an effective tutor and still achieved my research goals. I have also gained an appreciation of the doors that being a research student can open to me post-PhD and the breadth of opportunities that could be available.



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What have you gained from being part of The Scholars Programme community of researchers?

At training weekends, the Scholars Programme community are exceptionally helpful. I was able to chat to returning and new tutors with whom I could share advice and experiences, something that was invaluable prior to undertaking my own placement. The community is also active on social media, which has been very useful for getting quick advice and support about all aspects of the Scholars Programme.



How has The Scholars Programme affected the way you approach undergraduate teaching?

The Scholars Programme made me aware of pedagogy techniques and how I can implement and apply these to my undergraduate teaching. Beyond this it has given me an appreciation that not all undergraduate students will have experienced University style teaching prior to arriving and may require more assistance than others when adjusting to this new style of learning. The importance of feedback has also been highlighted to me as it can be an important tool for development, not just assigning a grade. It's because of these techniques that I am now applying for my AFHEA (Associate Fellow Higher Education Award).

How do you think you have made a difference to pupils as a Scholars Programme tutor?

I feel like I have helped underconfident pupils express themselves in an interactive learning environment and showed them that University style learning, which may have seemed daunting at first, is accessible for all.

I think I also helped pupils to realise their potential by encouraging them to achieve a better grade than they anticipated. Also, as someone who took part in a similar programme, I hope the pupils were able to relate to me and see University as an option that they may have previously dismissed.

Do you have any advice for someone looking to apply to work as a tutor?

Not only is the Scholars Programme a great opportunity for you to develop your teaching skills it's also great fun! I thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of my training and placement and because of that I actively encourage fellow PhD students to apply.

So, my advice would be don't hesitate and apply!

THE SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

To find out more about how you could become a Scholars Programme tutor, please visit our website at www.thebrilliantclub.org