STEM CAREER SHEET

Career Title

Career profile presented by:

CHRYSTAL MOORE, PREDOCTORAL RESEARCHER, UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA

Chrystal Moore is a Predoctoral Researcher at the University of Barcelona where she is currently obtaining her PhD in the department of Evolutionary Biology, Ecology, and Environmental Sciences. Her PhD is through the EU-funded Life Terra project which aims to empower people to take impactful climate action through citizen planting events to plant 500,000 trees by 2025. Previously, Chrystal worked as a science communicator in various scientific fields—most recently, sustainability. Chrystal has a Masters in Environment and sustainability from Monash University, and a Bachelor of Communication from the University of Newcastle.

OVERVIEW OF THE JOB

I work in the intersection of social and environmental sciences, analysing behaviour change and effective communication of environmental issues like climate change. I want to educate people on ecological issues and assess whether that leads them to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU

Growing up in the Australian bush, I always felt a deep connection to the native flora and fauna. I always enjoyed writing, but I knew I wanted to be involved with the environment in some way too. When I was on a Wildlife volunteering trip in South Africa, I learned about the science-communication gap and decided that was the field for me. I was a science writer for some years, but I felt the pull to be more hands-on in addressing the climate emergency. So, I have decided to pursue my PhD in socio-ecological systems.

TYPICAL WORKING DAY

My typical day is mostly a 9-5. I work on the computer a lot. When I am collecting data, I'm often holding seminars and interviewing people.

STUDY & CAREER PATH

My study path started with sociology. I knew I wanted to be a science writer, so I got my bachelor's degree in communication. Then, I worked as a science writer in medical research. I knew I wanted to work in Environmental science, so I went back to Uni and got my Masters in this field. I enjoyed the thesis element of my Masters so much that I decided to continue with research journey with my PhD.

If I could do it over again, I think I would have gotten my Bachelors in Environmental Science and a postgraduate certificate in communication. It would have been a shorter career path. Writing is a skill that most people can collect from experience, but environmental science requires more formal education. But then again, I have an advantage that people who took that path don't: I understand the media landscape intimately.

I knew that my dream job would be highly competitive, so I enrolled in a lot of volunteer experiences, study abroad experiences with specialised universities, and internships. I surrounded myself with science communication however possible.

KEY SKILLS

Critical thinking and problem solving are key in research. You must have a curious mind and be willing to investigate deeply and question everything.

Editing, writing and social skills are all crucial for writing scientific articles (how we communicate our research to the scientific community)

Data management, proficiency in computer systems, and software management are essential in storing and analysing data.

Public speaking, creativity, emotional intelligence are necessary skills when collecting data from people.

CAREER PROSPECT

Writing, editing, academia.

CHALLENGES

Time management and getting people to input data correctly.

YOUR ADVICE TO STUDENTS

There is always another way! If you don't get into your dream university or dream course on the first try, that's okay. Build resilience and keep trying.

YOUR ADVICE TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Don't put too much pressure on your children—immense pressure can be paralyzing.

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The STEM Alliance is an international initiative, gathering frontline Industry partners and coordinated by European Schoolnet, that brings together Industries, education stakeholders and Ministries of Education to promote STEM education and careers to young Europeans and to address anticipated future skills gaps within the European Union. To address these issues, the STEM Alliance coordinates concerted actions to 1) Make STEM subjects and careers more attractive; 2) Explore and support innovative practices in STEM teaching.

Scientix has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme – project Scientix 4 (Grant agreement N. 101000063), coordinated by European Schoolnet (EUN).

Scientix (https://scientix.eu), the Community for Science Education in Europe, promotes and supports a Europe-wide collaboration among STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) teachers, education researchers, policymakers, and other STEM education professionals. Coordinated by European Schoolnet (EUN), Scientix runs since 2010 leading the exchange of knowledge and experiences in STEM Education via its portal, publications, campaigns, professional development activities and networking events. Scientix was co-funded by the European Union's FP7 and Horizon 2020 research and innovation programmes from 2010 to 2022. It continues as an initiative of EUN, supported by Ministries of Education, STEM Alliance Industry partners, Scientix Associate Partners, and in collaboration with different European Commission funded projects.

The SEER receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe programme project The SEER (Grant agreement: 101058569) coordinated by European Schoolnet (EUN).

The overarching objective of the SEER project is to provide a set of roadmaps that will pave the way for the policy and institutional changes necessary for the large-scale implementation and mainstreaming of STE(A)M education in Europe. The project will synthesise the status of STE(A)M Education and evaluate gaps in European policies and initiatives while analysing the needs of teachers and schools to support the design of a set of milestones and strategies for key stakeholders, including policymakers, school decision makers, teachers, and industry