JAMES EASTON

Industry: Intellectual property

CURRENT ROLE

- Patent Attorney (Trainee)

EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **MChem in Chemistry** – University of Southampton (4 years)
- **PhD in Computational Chemistry** – University of Southampton (5 years)
- **Trainee Patent Attorney** – Including **PGCert in Intellectual Property Law** – Queen Mary University of London (3 years)

HOW HIS PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- When starting my PhD, I planned to continue in academia. However, I realized that academia wasn't the right fit for me. Working on long-term projects with no defined endpoint didn't suit my work style.
- Becoming a parent during my PhD added extra challenges, especially when writing my thesis and starting my current job. I had to learn to be productive while balancing everything, but it was possible with support.

CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- I enjoy the mix of science and law in my work, which has a real-world impact. Although my job isn't directly related to my PhD research, I still use the skills I developed, particularly my chemistry knowledge.
- The intellectual challenge of the work keeps me engaged, and while cases develop over time, I never spend too long on any one piece of work.

FUTURE PLANS

- I'm still early in my career, aiming to fully qualify as a patent attorney and eventually enter partnership at my firm. The career development and well-defined progression are very appealing.
- I enjoy my work, and despite being busy, I rarely feel overworked. Even at this early stage, I feel my contributions are valued.

ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ✅ Be prepared for the possibility that your career might take you outside of academia. There's no shame in changing paths to find what's best for you.
- ✅ Consider science-adjacent roles that allow you to stay engaged with science without performing active research.
- ✅ Identify and leverage your transferable skills, like time management and analysing complex documents, which can be valuable in various industries.