

Creative Careers

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for robotic surgery



When people think of creativity, they don't usually picture robotic surgery programmes in the NHS. But in my career so far - which has taken me from vegan recipe development to medical writing, hospital governance and now project managing cutting-edge surgical technology - creative thinking has been one of my most valuable tools.

Using creative skills in science-heavy roles

At GCSE, I took art alongside my science and language-heavy subjects. I found it challenging, but it taught me something valuable: how to think outside the box. I learned to take something plain and make it more interesting or tell a story with it.

That skill has followed me into every job I've had. Whether I'm trying to get a better deal in negotiations or designing better hospital services, I'm always asking: what options aren't we considering?

In fact, there are a number of creative skills that have helped me throughout my career. Human skills are essential in my work, especially communication, particularly now that I work with commercial and industry partners. You need to know the right level to pitch a conversation to get the best outcome.

I also think that curiosity is just as important for professional development. Saying yes to something outside your role, just because it interests you, can open doors you didn't know existed. That's exactly how I ended up working on a business case for robotics, which eventually led me to the role I'm in today.

Creativity in and outside work

At school, I never thought of myself as creative. I wasn't great at art (despite taking it for GCSE) or drama, so I assumed creativity just wasn't my thing. But after leaving school, I realised I was wrong. My first job in recipe development was hugely creative, and aspects of every role that I've had since have been too.

Sometimes creativity just needs the right outlet, and it's not always one you discover at school. In my adult life, I've found that I actually love having creative hobbies: I do a lot of sewing and making my own clothes, as well as embroidery and other crafts.

Maxine's CV

"I'm 29, and I've been working since I left university, but my career has taken plenty of twists and turns."

I took chemistry, biology, maths and Spanish at A level.

Went to UCL to study biomedical sciences for three years.

Spent six months at a startup, developing recipes for vegan treats, before going travelling for six months.

Spent two years working in medical writing, supporting the publication of clinical trial results in medical journals.

Decided I wanted to be more closely engaged with patients, so moved into patient engagement at a local hospital. That work was all about designing and delivering services with patients, not just for them.

From there, I shifted into clinical governance, investigating when things went wrong in hospitals and figuring out how to build safer, more resilient services.

Now, I'm project managing the delivery of a robotic surgery programme in the NHS.

"I found each of my roles by focusing on an element of the previous role that I really enjoyed. I would follow that thread, and each time it has led me into my next role. They've all been distinct, but still linked in a way."

"Experimentation is key. The more you try, the more likely you are to find something you're good at, and something that can be rewarding both financially and personally."

How creative subjects can open doors

I'm sad but not surprised to hear that uptake of creative subjects is falling, in part because students and parents don't see them as 'useful'.

But here's my theory: if you asked most successful people – CEOs, entrepreneurs, executives – what they studied, I bet many would say they took at least one creative subject, or have creative hobbies outside of work.

The skills you learn in creative subjects are transferable. They can help with other GCSEs, but beyond that, they'll help in any role you go into. Taking creative subjects won't hold you back; if anything, they'll open doors you never even considered.

Why it matters

Evidence of creativity is everywhere. We can go to see movies, admire beautiful architecture, hang art on our walls: all of it exists because creative people made it happen. But creativity isn't just for the arts. It's about problem-solving, making connections, and seeing possibilities that others miss – skills that are essential in every career, including science and healthcare.

It's important to stress that creative subjects aren't 'extras'; they're foundations for innovation. Take them seriously, and they might just lead you somewhere you never imagined.

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