



Name: Adam Tarrant

Current Job: Undergraduate student (about to start a placement at DESY in Germany)

Scientific Discipline/Field: Dark Matter

University: Royal Holloway University of London

Country: Britain

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q,+, etc.): G and Gender queer

Website: Twitter or other social media handle (if applicable)?

Instagram: [@atotarrant](https://www.instagram.com/atotarrant)

Twitter: [@AdamTarrant](https://twitter.com/AdamTarrant)

What does your job involve?

As an undergrad my day consist of going to lectures and labs. And then when they aren't on I'm trying to keep up with problems sheets, course work, research projects. Then most evenings I have a small part time job, so it can be a pretty full on day. Currently, I've been working in the department over the summer working on a new high-pressure time projection chamber. It's been super interesting working on an experiment which doesn't have to work and dealing with problems that arise many of which don't have the answer. By the end of July, the detector will move to CERN to take data for two months which will be a very exciting time.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

To get on my degree I had to get my A-levels. Theses weren't as high as I had wanted but I still managed to get onto a degree programme. From there I've been able to do placements and get a real feel for the enormous scope there is in physics.

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

I never really thought about me being gay as an issue in science. It wasn't till I read an article in physics world about the experience of someone at CERN and having to deal with people who may not come from a country where being LGBT is accepted and how this lead to an 'informal' group at CERN for LGBT+ people. This was the first time I ever really thought that me being gay might affect my career choice further down the line.

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

I ended up setting up a LGBT group within the department mostly targeting undergrads. I didn't really know if anyone would come. I only had a small budget from the physics society. My head of department at the time approached me and gave me some wine for the event, even then I didn't expect the support I received from the department. At the first meeting it was great to see so many people from both the undergrads and academics that I managed to fill the room. A few meetings have happened since and I'm now trying to organise a public lecture from a diverse range of undergrads to show the public that anyone can do physics. Other changes have occurred such as

geology deciding to dedicate one of their loos to be gender neutral. I think the true test will be in mid-July when I go to DESY for several weeks as it will be my first experience not working at Royal Holloway.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

Not really, which is half the reason I started the LGBT group. I struggled because I wasn't stereotypically gay nor was I really into hyper masculine things like sport. So, it's taking me years to realise that stuff like wearing makeup doesn't affect my masculinity. I think the landscape is a lot better than when I first came out and having done most of my degree it's been amazing to meet so many inspiring people that it almost makes up for the lack of role models I had as a child.

What are your plans for the future?

I have one year left of my 4-year degree and hopefully after that I will be able to start my PhD looking for dark matter.