

Science

Philip Hoggan



Job title: Chair of Theoretical Chemistry, Professor of Chemistry and Surface Physics

Company: Institut Pascal, Clermont University, France

Qualifications: PhD in Theoretical Chemistry

Languages have played a pivotal role in the career of this Scientist, enabling him to live, study and work abroad, as well as connect with researchers across Europe.

What are your experiences with languages?

I grew up speaking French and English at home and studied Welsh, German and Russian at school. After graduating, I went to France for a year's postgraduate study with every intention of returning to the UK. However, I stayed in France, completed my PhD and I continue to live and work in France to this day!

How do languages impact your current job?

Languages have played a pivotal role in my career. My professional life is essentially describing chemistry in French but other languages are important too. Many experts in the field of solid state physics are Russian and prefer to speak Russian over English. I make regular use of Russian here in France and also on trips to Russia and Ukraine.

I travel to conferences and Russian has helped me work in other countries where similar languages are spoken, such as Slovakia. German has been useful for trips to Poland and Hungary.

Philip's advice:

- Russian and German are really useful languages for scientists.
- Learn another language to give you the confidence to live and work in another country. This will broaden your career options.
- You never know when knowledge of other languages will be useful – I funded my PhD translating scientific papers from French to English.
- Knowledge of one language can make it easier to understand others.
- When travelling abroad for work it can help to have a few phrases in the language of the host country – you don't need to be fluent!

More information:

Philip's full job profile
bit.ly/sciltphiliphoggan

Other careers with languages
bit.ly/sciltjobprofiles

Studying languages beyond school
www.scilt.org.uk/BeyondSchool.aspx

Careers in Life Sciences
www.myworldofwork.co.uk/the-life-sciences-industry

My World of Work
www.myworldofwork.co.uk/

Université Blaise Pascal
www.univ-bpclermont.fr/rubrique97.html