



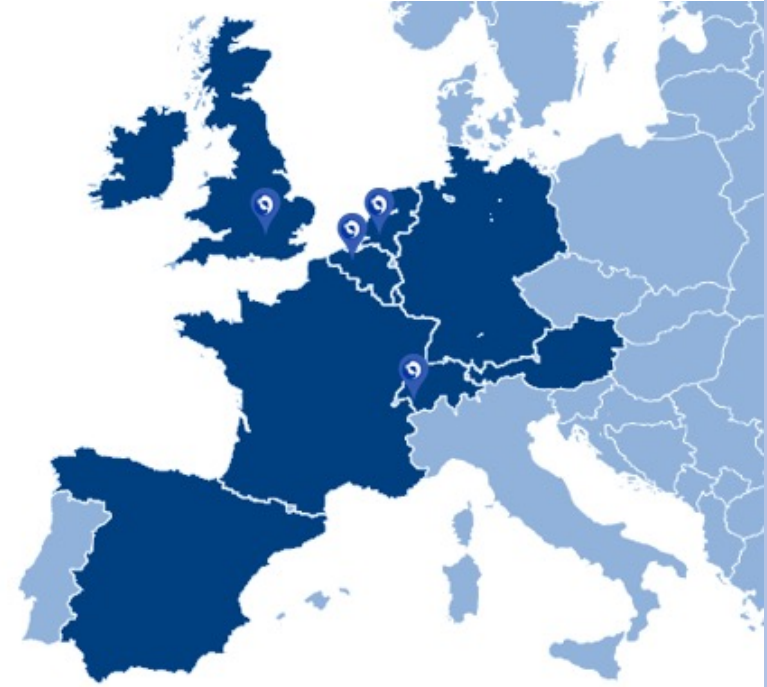
Beating the challenging labour market with a traineeship programme



Jules van der Zalm, Operations Manager, OCS Life Sciences
PHUSE Winter SDE 2022, Heidelberg, 1 December 2022

Some background

- OCS Consulting established in 1984
- Privately owned, staff based
- Turnover of € 13 M
- OCS Consulting in the Netherlands established 1998
- 60+ employees
- Clients in life sciences from the outset
- Brand OCS Life Sciences introduced in 2017
- Clinical and statistical programming, biostatistics, software development
- Services offered as resourcing assignments or projects





Growth and its challenge

- Aiming at natural and steady growth
- Very hard to recruit experienced programmers locally
- Last local experienced recruit in 2019
- All recruits since are either trainees or juniors, or come from abroad
- Clients don't easily accept junior staff as consultants



The solution?





First traineeship

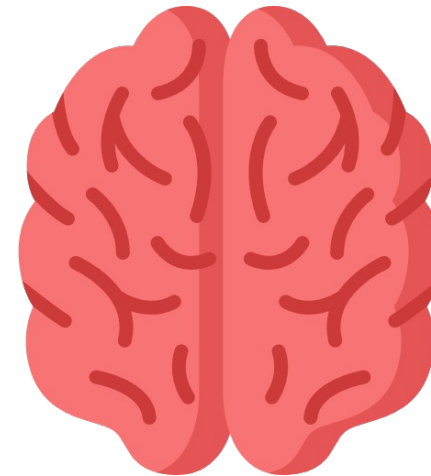
- 1 February 2017
- Two participants
- Called “Life Sciences Bootcamp”
- Self-regulated learning
- E-learning modules followed by SAS exam
- Exercises based on client projects
- Ad-hoc support
- One day of instructor-led SDTM training
- Quite minimal, but still successful





What we learned since then

- Maybe a bit *too* self-regulated
 - Trainees don't know what to expect afterwards
 - Not properly trained for client work
 - Out of touch with colleagues
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- Shouldn't have used actual study data
-
- Don't call it "Bootcamp"

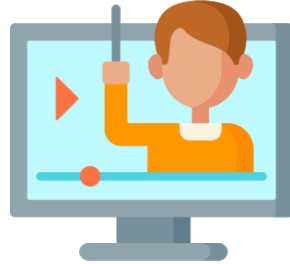




Current traineeship programme



2 months



Self-paced
SAS e-learning



SAS exam
after 4-6 weeks



Programming
exercises



2 coaching
sessions per week



6-8 project
presentations



6-8 training
sessions



Pass/no-pass
at the end



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3-Oct	4-Oct	5-Oct	6-Oct	7-Oct	31-Oct	1-Nov	2-Nov	3-Nov	4-Nov
			Introduction day	SAS Studio training [Ramon]	SDTM-training part I [Lieke]	Coaching session [Berend-Jan, Jules]		SDTM-training II [Lieke]	
			Introduction to e-learning [Mylène]					Coaching session [Berend-Jan, Lieke]	
10-Oct	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct	7-Nov	8-Nov	9-Nov	10-Nov	11-Nov
	Fundamentals of Clinical Trials [Marion]	Coaching session [Berend-Jan, Jules]	Project presentation HERA [Hanna-Liza]	Coaching session [Kai, Berend-Jan]		Project presentation Argenx [Louella]		Coaching session [Lieke, Jules]	
						1:1 coaching sessions [Berend-Jan, Kai]		Project presentation CHDR [Caro]	
17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	14-Nov	15-Nov	16-Nov	17-Nov	18-Nov
QMS Talk [Arjan]	Coaching session [Lieke, Kai]	Project presentation Medical Devices [Fenna]	1:1 coaching sessions [Lieke, Jules]			Coaching session [Kai, Berend-Jan]		ADaM-training [Caro]	Coaching session [Lieke, Jules]
						Project presentation [Kai]			
24-Oct	25-Oct	26-Oct	27-Oct	28-Oct	21-Nov	22-Nov	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov
		Coaching session [Kai, Jules]	Project presentation [Anton]	Coaching session [Kai, Lieke]	Coaching session [Berend-Jan, Lieke]	Company Day		1:1 coaching sessions [Kai, Jules]	
					Project presentation [Luis]			Validation training [Caro]	
					28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	1-Dec	2-Dec
						Coaching session [Lieke, Kai]	Statistics for Beginners [Mariska]	Coaching session [Berend-Jan, Jules]	



After the traineeship

- Participation in actual client projects
- Learning continues for many more years
- Financial contribution often from day 1
- First profitable month often within first half year
- Always focus on programming and CDISC standards
- Pick one area of expertise



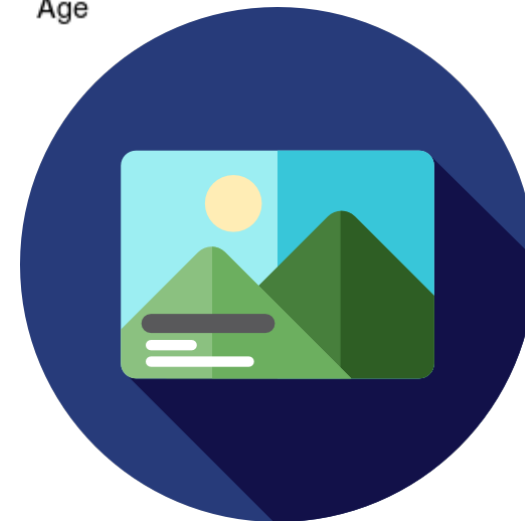
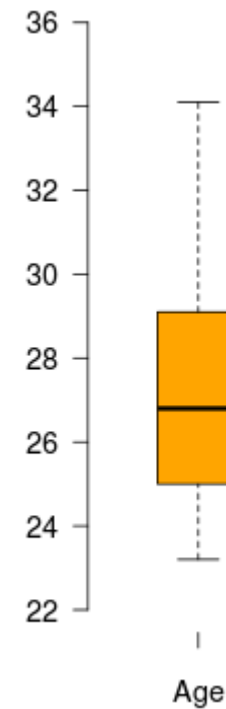
Recruitment process

- Vacancy on regular job boards and LinkedIn
- Through our own network of staff
- Most interesting
 - Quality of CV and motivation letter
 - Interested personality
 - Interesting personality
 - Social interaction
 - Exposure to life sciences
 - “Puzzle with data”
- Less interesting
 - Previous programming experience
- Guesstimated 5 candidates for each 1 position



Candidate background

- Youngest participants are as young as 23 years old
- No participants are over 35
- Mostly MSc, some PhD
- Exclusively scientific degrees
- Epidemiology
- Nutrition and Health
- Biology
- Bioinformatics
- Biomedical Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Drug Innovation



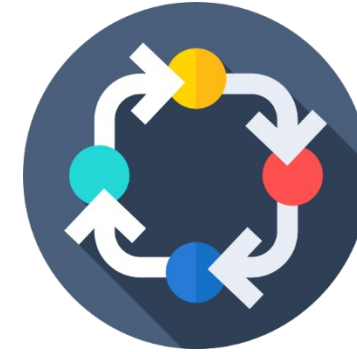
The good...



25 good
participants



Great career
progression



Nearly self-
sustaining

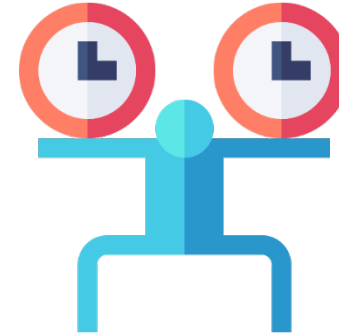
...the bad...



People
leave



We get
targeted



Burden on
the team

...and the ugly



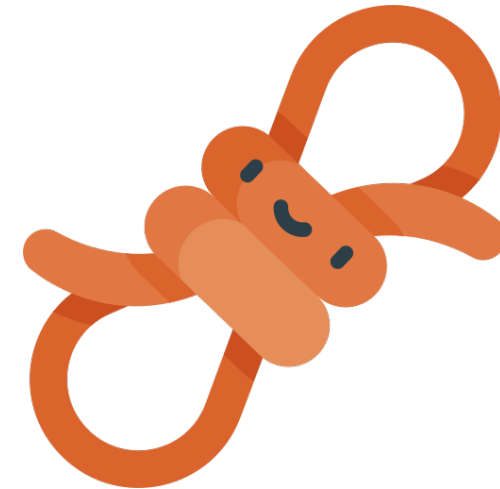


Lessons learned

- Don't run a traineeship programme over summer
- Having people contribute repeatedly is beneficial
- Programming *and* industry experience
- Learning continues after the programme ends
- COVID changed the way we interact with trainees

Summary & conclusion

- Traineeship programme for graduates is successful
- Investment and hard work from existing team is required
- Trainees easily transition into client work
- People ramp up to become stars of the team



Q&A



"The traineeship was a crash course into a challenging new industry. During two months, I got to learn from the experience of my colleagues. Getting their encouragement meant everything. Since then, the learning hasn't stopped."

– Luis Boullosa, Summer 2021

The traineeship was a great way to get acquainted with programming and start my career in the life sciences industry. The atmosphere at OCS and support of my colleagues were key contributing factors to making the traineeship a success!

– Louella Schoemacher, Fall 2017

