



My journey to Salford

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From Syria to Salford

I started my career in Syria in 2007 as a laboratory scientist. Shortly after this, I was promoted to manager of the general laboratory and IVF laboratory in 2009. My role grew quickly at the hospital, and it wasn't long before I was overseeing the laboratory activities across seven floors, managing 40 laboratory staff – until 2013.

When the war started in Syria, in the blink of an eye I had lost everything you can imagine. Members of my family and friends, my house, and my job. My family and I crossed 14 countries just to find a safe place to live.

I arrived in the UK in 2014 speaking zero English. I started to learn the language and worked in a coffee shop at the same time. I also started my study at the University of Salford because I had been told:

“You will never be able to work as a scientist again”.

Since then, I've been on a mission to prove to the world that I'd be able to not only learn English, but also make my life a success story once more, so that my daughter would be proud of me. It's hard to believe I'm now in my final year. I would be lying if I said it has all been sunshine and roses. I cried and slept in pain, feeling confused, lost and exhausted. There have been times where I have questioned myself, thinking, 'why am I putting myself through this?!' But at the end of the day, I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

Today, I'm a Bioscience lead at one of the largest UK testing centres. I am so proud to be a part of the fight against COVID-19 with the Department of Health and Social Care and Lighthouse laboratories.

I'm responsible for overseeing a lab-based team from sample receipt through to RNA extraction and delivery of PCR data. This includes troubleshooting and solving problems with PCR machines and supervising scientists carrying out their lab activities. I have had the opportunity to complete a portfolio of training activities including health and safety, manager essentials, and performance and improvement courses. Together with my team, we have delivered 7 million COVID test results to patients.

I could say so much more about my experiences and journey so far. I can honestly say that I have always appreciated the support that has been provided to me by the University of Salford and that I wouldn't be here without it. My journey at the University of Salford is not yet over, as I intend to study an MSc in Biotechnology after I graduate from my BSc in Biomedical Sciences.

Through my educational journey at the University of Salford, I have learned four major lessons that I think other people may benefit from. I leave you this:

1. It's not too late – never give up.
2. To finish any great endeavour, you must first start.
3. If you want happiness, help other people.
4. Failure and mistakes make you stronger.