



## CORINNE FULCHER OPTOMETRIST



### ? What do you do?



My main occupation is studying for a PhD in the mechanisms of time perception! As you know we have different senses for vision, hearing or touch, and there are distinct areas of the brain that process this sensory information and allow it to be consciously perceived. I am also a part time Optician, working mainly on weekends. Throughout the week as part of my PhD program, I also teach university students some of the practical skills required to become an Optician. The role of an Optician is to provide an eye examination, looking at a patient's visual requirements and in some cases prescribing glasses. I also look at the muscle balance of a person's eyes, and check the health (inside and out!).

### ? Describe a typical working day



My time is divided between reading scientific papers in order to gain an understanding of the current theories and models in my field of interest, and writing up my findings on the computer in preparation for my thesis. I also spend time collecting data from the computer in my lab. One of my experiments involves listening to a sound and watching a light flash on my computer, and having to judge which one was longer. Through measuring many different combinations of sound and light durations we are able to find out how one sense can influence and distort our perception of the other. Finally I might have a few hours each day teaching students in the eye clinic, which involves supervising them through a full eye examination or holding mini tutorial sessions.

### ? How did you get to where you are now?



I always enjoyed science and maths at school, mainly because I liked the challenge of solving puzzles that had a definitive answer! With the help of my school careers advisor I decided that I'd like to become an Optician, since this was a healthcare role with reasonable working hours. This led me to studying Maths, Chemistry and Biology at A-Level, and accepting a place to study Optometry at university. One of the great things about studying Optometry is that mid way through your degree most students enter into a contract with an Optical company to secure a job on successful completion of the course. This happens because after graduating you need to spend a pre-registration year under supervision, working as an Optician in a practice. Once I had qualified (after four years of study) I went on to work full time as an Optician for a further four years. Whilst I enjoyed my job I missed the challenge of learning new things and being in an academic environment. Therefore in 2012, with the support of my family and friends, I applied to do a PhD within an Optometry department that specialised in perception and neuroscience.

### ? What kinds of activities would you like to support?



I'd love to help out at careers events and talk to students about what I do. Most students wanting to work in healthcare think about Nursing or Medicine, as Optometry isn't always well publicised, and my hope is that by talking to students about vision science people will see that there are many different professions out there that they might be interested in.

#### How your school can access STEM Ambassadors

We work with schools so that you can access our database of **FREE** STEM Ambassador volunteers, enabling you to incorporate exemplary links to the world of work within your teaching. Each STEM Ambassador has a STEM background – they are usually experts or professionals in their field.

All of our STEM Ambassadors have also undergone an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check to enable them to work with young people in school; and they have also attended an induction session with West Yorkshire STEM staff on how to approach classroom and school-based teaching sessions. To request a STEM Ambassador, email us: [ambassadors@wystem.co.uk](mailto:ambassadors@wystem.co.uk).

