



## InterPro Team Leader

Sarah Hunter

*As the leader of the InterPro protein resource project, it is my job to foster good relationships with potential collaborators and end-users in order to discover what they expect from our resource. Consequently, I have to create a vision for how the database will develop in the future and I secure grants from funding bodies in order to realise this vision.*

### Length of time in the post

Nearly two years.

### Education and other qualifications

BSc in Biochemistry and Genetics at Nottingham University, MSc in Bioinformatics at Manchester University.

### An overview of your career path before joining the EBI

Prior to coming to the EBI, I worked in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries in bioinformatics-related areas. Initially, I was involved in setting up data analysis pipelines for handling the first draft of the human genome sequence. Later I worked within a wider range of bioinformatics support activities. One of the best things about my experiences in these industries was that it exposed me to a wide range of new technologies.

### What attracted you to this role?

I had used the InterPro database and InterProScan for many years and was aware of what an important tool it was for biological research. That, coupled with the reputation of the EBI, meant that I leapt at the chance to be able to work for InterPro. As leader, I wanted to contribute to the further development of InterPro - a prospect which really excited me.

### Describe a 'typical' working day

I manage a team of eleven people and meet with them daily to hear about the work they have been doing. I regularly meet or correspond with collaborators to exchange ideas and information. I make choices and decide priorities that will shape the future of the InterPro resource.

### What is the best thing about your job?

At the moment we are in a very interesting phase of InterPro's history, as the database is now ten years old. Finding innovative ways to improve InterPro and deal with the technological changes and challenges that come our way is very satisfying. It's also great to hear from users when they have appreciated using the resource!

### Why do you enjoy working at the EBI?

In my opinion, the EBI has it all. You are working with bright, enthusiastic people and are frequently involved in cutting-edge fields of biology, all the while being surrounded by beautiful grounds - what more can you ask for?!

### Describe the most challenging tasks that you face in your job?

Managing a fairly large team has its challenges: you have to ensure that the needs of the project, the team and the individual are fulfilled. Getting funding to keep the project going also demands quite a lot of time and effort.

### What advice would you give to someone applying to a similar role?

Absolutely the most important skill (and it sounds like a cliché) is being able to communicate. Communication is central to making sure that the goals you set are understood and met. It also ensures that you are aware of what you need to do to make sure that your resource remains an important and useful one for its users. ●

