

# Examples of Versatile Career Paths

## Jackie Senior

Founder member and honorary member of SENSE (Society of English-Native-Speaking Editors, the Netherlands)  
Department of Genetics, University Medical Centre Groningen, Groningen, the Netherlands

Career paths are not often linear, with changes being dictated by personal circumstances or market forces as much as ambition. These examples are from editors/translators in the Netherlands. If you're thinking of change, you could do a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of where you are now and of where you want to go.

## Kate Mc Intyre, PhD



Raised in USA. Mother was a refugee who spoke three languages by the time she was six. Father was a professor of geology. As a child, I read everything that came my way and then some.  
I have now successfully integrated my writing skills with my scientific background.

1991 Gained BA in Geology, Columbia University, New York (age 21). The undergraduate program was a classical humanities-based core curriculum that included a significant writing component.  
1992-1998 PhD programme in Marine Geology at U.C. Santa Cruz. My advisor had worked as a copywriter before graduate school. She was a hard taskmaster and a great teacher.  
1994-1998 Won departmental prize for best-written thesis proposal. Teaching assistant for classes in Oceanography and Environmental Sciences, with an emphasis on writing.  
1996 and 1999 **Geochemist** on two 8-week legs on a deep-sea drilling vessel, including real-time full report writing on findings.  
1998-2002 **Postdoctoral researcher** in Geochemistry at U.C. Santa Barbara and then at CALTECH. Published 7 scientific papers.  
2002 **Moved to the Netherlands** when my partner was offered a faculty position in Groningen. **1st child born**. Started learning Dutch.  
2005-2010 Unemployed and at home mother, I wrote my children's novel *De knikkelares* (as well as the drafts of 5 other novels). Was often asked to edit English texts and do translations by friends.  
2010-2013 **Started freelance editing and translating** for university and literary clients. **Led workshops on academic writing** and English usage for Astronomy graduate students.  
2013 Started part-time as an **assistant editor for the Dept of Genetics**, UMC Groningen, with Jackie Senior as my mentor. Continued freelance scientific and medical editing and teaching scientific writing. Joined SENSE.  
2014 My first novel published by Lemniscaat.  
2014 Gained new skills doing some freelance medical writing, learned to use Adobe Acrobat Pro and became certified as a web editor on the university website.  
2015 Now 50% at Dept of Genetics, plus freelance work.

I enjoy editing - getting the words right and helping people present their work to the world. Working in an international, scientifically progressive department brings me back into the world of research, which I missed. I continue to write, but editing offers a safe haven from the slings and arrows of the fiction publishing market.

email: j.l.senior@gmail.com  
website: www.geneticsgroningen.nl



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## Sally Hill, MSc



Raised in UK. Dad was a Spanish graduate, Mum an English graduate and fluent in French. Word games and language were part of my childhood. At school I was good at French, German, music and sciences.  
I have managed to combine all my skills and 'trades' in a successful freelance editing and translating business.

1989 Started Biochemistry & Physiology course at Sheffield University. Not completed.

1990 **Moved to the Netherlands** to marry a Dutchman (aged 20).

1995 Completed MSc in Medical Biology. **Moved to Athens** for husband's job. Started PhD in molecular genetics at Hellenic Pasteur Institute. Not completed.

2000 **Returned to the Netherlands**. **1st child born**.

2000 **Biology teacher** at secondary schools (in Dutch & English).

2004 **2nd child born**. Completed teaching master at Free University Amsterdam. Taught biology part-time for 9 years. **Started freelance translating and editing** for the Dutch Vaccine Institute (university contact), for bilingual biology streams at school, and for a Dutch publisher (translating a biology textbook into English). This was a big enough project to consider stopping teaching – so I did.

2009 **Set up translation business**. Joined SENSE.

Did a course in 'Medical-Pharmaceutical Translation'. Started doing medical translation for agencies and SENSE members. Editing of research papers & grant proposals gradually started coming in – my science background is appreciated by clients.

2010 SENSE member asked me to help **teach scientific writing** at Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam. Have given 2-3 courses a year ever since. Took course on 'Editing for Readability' given by SENSE members. Joined ITI.

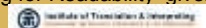
2012 Joined MET, attended Venice meeting.

2014 **Passed ITI's Qualified Membership Examination** for translators in biology. Finally – an official translation qualification!

2014 Asked by SENSE member to **join ProSciCom**; we offer writing courses, workshops and translating and editing services to researchers.  
2014 Asked by old university contact now in a biotech company to write study reports. Steady source of high-level work: *science and language come together*. Stopped taking on most agency work.

2015 Giving own workshops on scientific writing for PhD and BSc students. *Teaching and science and language come together*.

The red line in my freelance career has been SENSE, plus my skill set of science *and* teaching *and* languages.



25

Celebrating 25 years  
of making SENSE