



Physical Oceanographer in Marine Physics and Ocean Climate

Dr Penny Holiday

Penny is a physical oceanographer whose research centres on physical processes in the high latitude North Atlantic Ocean.



Career Pathway

At 22 years old, after graduating with a Geology degree, Penny got a job with the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences, a predecessor of today's National Oceanography Centre. Here she worked as a junior science administrator for WOCE: an international project aiming to measure the entire world ocean circulation over the course of five years. In 1993 Penny joined her first science cruise and only a few years later decided to begin a PhD on the topic of interannual variability of physical properties and circulation in the subpolar North Atlantic. In 2002 Penny earned her PhD having worked on it part time for six years and it remains her research focus and passion.

Support for equality and diversity

In an article for 'Women in Oceanography' Penny outlined the positive changes which have been happening for women on board ship "On my first cruise, there were just two women in the 25-strong science team, and none in the ship's personnel. Cruises are very different now: on my 2014 cruise, half the scientists were women, and on a cruise in 2011, five of the six-member physics team were women." Penny is a great supporter of encouraging more women into STEM subjects and is a fantastic role model for those thinking of a career in Oceanography. Penny says "The NOC have supported me throughout my career and when I had my children allowed me to work the flexible hours I needed. I did work part-time for 13 years but have returned to science cruises now my children are older. I have a great sense of job satisfaction and look forward to coming in every day."