In 2009-10 three students in Food and Nutritional Sciences carried out their final year project in local secondary and primary schools during 2009-10. During their time in the school the students work closely with teachers in the science department, supporting the classroom teacher, observing teaching methods and delivering small parts of lessons and practicals themselves. In addition they carry out their own ‘special project’ which can be into some aspect of secondary Science education or they may develop teaching materials or run a Science club.

The aims of the project are to allow students to gain those valuable transferable skills which employers are seeking and to give undergraduates an idea of teaching as a profession to allow them to make an informed decision about career choice.

The Food Sciences students doing the Education project were very successful in their projects and were given very high marks (>85%) by their teachers at the schools. One of the students did her project in Whiteknights Primary School where she focused on promoting the Science subject in key stage 2 children. In addition she helped organising the Science focus week activities for the whole school and developed several practical lessons and resources. As part of the Science week, she organised a visit to the Science Studios in Reading University. Year 6 children thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being at the University as well as working in the Science Studios making some sticky ‘stuff’!

The other two Food Science students worked alongside the Biology teacher in Leighton Park School and the Food Technology teacher in Abbey Junior School. Both students were very successful in bringing in their knowledge and experience in Food Sciences and organised visits to our food processing pilot plant.

This year, in 2010-11, we had one student carrying out her project in Whiteknights Primary School. She thoroughly enjoyed working along the Science subject teacher in organising activities and developing resources for the Science Week. Children found the practical lessons very enjoyable and some even very tasty as they were taught to make pretzels!

Overall the student ambassadors help us to raise the profile of Food Science/Technology as very often pupils and teachers at schools are not aware of the strong scientific component of our degrees and of the multi-disciplinary nature of the subject. So the UAS is a great scheme which all parts concerned benefit from.

Further details of the scheme can be obtained from the Departmental UAS co-ordinator, Dr Paul Jauregi (p.jauregi@reading.ac.uk)