

Dr. Carlie Charron

Written by Amanda Black, M.Sc. Trainee



Dr. Carlie Charron began her post-secondary education at Dalhousie University, completing an honours BSc in chemistry under the supervision of Dr. Norman Schepp. Dr. Charron also gained valuable research experience at the Western University as part of a studentship with the London Regional Cancer Program during the summer between her third and fourth years of her undergraduate degree. She then decided to return to western for graduate school, beginning her MSc in under the supervision of Dr. Len Luyt and focusing on organic chemistry, medicinal chemistry and peptide chemistry. After her first year, Dr. Charron transferred into the PhD program and ultimately received her PhD in organic chemistry and molecular imaging.

At this point in her career Dr. Charron had a keen interest in moving towards working in industry as opposed to academia. Like all other graduate students, she had experienced setbacks and frustrations during her research that led her to think academia might not be for her. However, out of a desire to travel to a warmer climate, Dr. Charron decided to pursue a post doc with Dr. Craig Hutton at the University of Melbourne in Australia. Dr. Charron held this post doc position for 18 months, focusing on organic chemistry, specifically solution phase peptide synthesis. Dr. Charron's time in Australia helped her to realize that despite the challenges that come along with academic research, she couldn't see herself being happy in any other field – academia was the path for her. She also realized that despite the daunting nature of such a competitive field, she had the skills and drive necessary to be a successful professor.



After completing her post doc, Dr. Charron returned to Canada, working as a research associate in her PhD lab for 4-5 years. In this time Dr. Charron became a limited term course instructor and a mother of two children. In July 2022 she made the challenging decision to move her family across the country to Halifax to begin her position as an assistant professor at Dalhousie University. While she had interviewed at many schools on both the east and west coasts of Canada, Dalhousie had many benefits, including her own familiarity with the city of Halifax from her time as an undergraduate student.

Since July Dr. Charron has begun to develop a routine in her position as an assistant professor in the chemistry department. Dr. Charron generally spends the first two hours of her workday catching up on emails, organizing her schedule, and submitting paperwork. She then spends the majority of her day in the lab with her students, helping them with work, getting instruments running, organizing chemicals and doing her own experiments. These are particularly important and time-consuming parts of her job right now since they are still in the building phase of their lab. Typically, Dr. Charron's workday ends with a couple hours of writing grants or proposals, ordering chemicals and setting up collaborations before she collects her children from daycare.

Dr. Charron is very much enjoying her position at Dalhousie thus far. While she finds the time and task management that comes with running a lab to be challenging, she is confident her skills will improve with time and experience. Her favourite part of her role as assistant professor is helping her students produce new and exciting results. She enjoys helping her students learn new skills, apply them and achieve their goals. She looks forward to seeing the projects in her lab develop further and hopefully begin collaborations with other labs down the road. In terms of advice for future students, Dr. Charron recommends getting experience, ideally finding a mentor in academia that can help guide you and introduce you to the different elements of being a professor. Dr. Charron stresses the importance of not only enjoying developing new scientific projects, but also teaching and scientific writing, as these are important parts of academia. She also believes in the importance of a work life balance and hopes to show other women in science that it is possible to have a successful career in academia and prioritize your family at the same time.