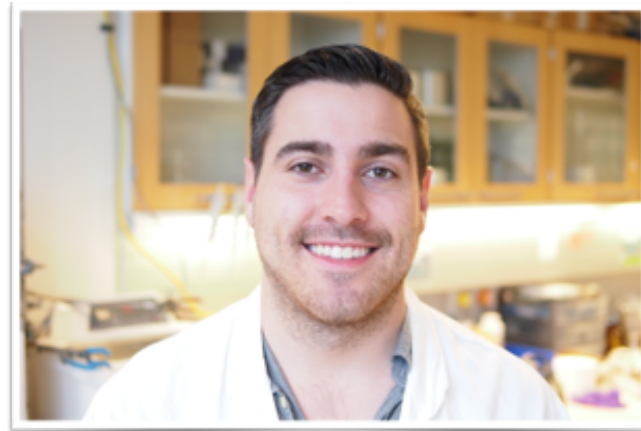




Dr. François LeFort

Written by Nicholas Morehouse, Ph.D. Trainee



François LeFort pursued his secondary education at Dalhousie University where he first completed his undergraduate degree in chemistry and conducted an honours project under the supervision of Dr. Jean Burnell. Though François had always been interested in pharmacy, he greatly enjoyed his undergraduate research project and decided to continue within academia by pursuing a PhD studying ring forming reactions, also under the supervision of Dr. Jean Burnell. He defended his thesis in August of 2015 and had begun applying for positions in industry across the Maritimes and within Montreal hoping to stay close to home while considering his back up plan of pursuing a post-doctoral position. François received a few phone interviews and had his first on-site interview offered to him by Paraza Pharma Inc. where he was employed as a Scientist in November of 2015. Three years later, in 2018, François became a Senior Research Scientist working in the chemical development department of Paraza Pharma Inc. where his roles and responsibilities are multifaceted. Aside from various administrative duties, François focuses on solving the various chemical problems that may arise, such as the removal of impurities from final products, he also performs cost analysis and works on optimizing the chemical development process at various steps.

When asked what some of his favorite aspects of working at Paraza Pharma Inc. were, François mentioned many positive aspects of the work environment such as the flexibility in hours given the pandemic. He enjoys doing high-quality chemistry using state-of-the-art equipment and using novel methodologies to help advance drug discovery research. He also has enjoyed watching the company grow from approximately 70 people and a single building to now



approximately 200 people across three buildings. François also enjoys how much knowledge he has gained and continues to gain while working at Paraza Pharma Inc.

When asked about tips for current graduate students looking to eventually move to industry François had many useful comments. For instance, though François did not have the opportunity to participate in a co-op or internship during his studies he has seen it as a valuable experience for others during his time working at Paraza Pharma Inc. He also mentioned that you should not feel that you must obtain a PhD to move into industry as there are many positions for MSc graduates as well, for instance, Paraza Pharma Inc. is currently looking to hire people with a master's degree. François also had valuable advice for interviews. He mentioned that it is beneficial to refresh your memory on organic chemistry and basic chemical reactions but that it is also fine for you to not know all the answers. It is important for the interviewee to demonstrate a logical thought process and problem-solving skills during the interview. He also highlighted the value of a good network of contacts and the importance of not being discouraged when you are rejected or not called back about a position you have applied for, as there are lots of positions available.