

Emma Rhodes

Emma joined Sterling in 2001, and now heads up production at our Cramlington, UK facility.

Can you describe your background and current role at Sterling?

I completed my degree in Chemistry with German at the University of Hull and spent a year working for a chemical company in Germany during my studies. I then spent five and a half years in the United States working towards my PhD in Organic Chemistry from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

After completing my PhD, I moved back to the UK and took up a role as a Development Chemist at what is now Sterling's Cramlington, UK site. I have been with the organisation ever since.

After three years working in the development centre laboratories on process development and scale-up, I spent time working as part of the proposal generation team. I then became a Laboratory Project Manager before moving to the new product introduction (NPI) team, responsible for the project management of customer projects. After five years as a project manager, I transitioned into the role of Head of Research and Development (R&D) at the Cramlington site, before returning to the NPI team as Head of NPI. More recently, I moved into the role of Operations Director, Production at the site.

I think that my experience working across a broad range of technical areas has been beneficial as it has given me the opportunity to develop relationships with different teams and departments across the organisation. This



Fast Facts

ROLE

Operations Director,
Production

EDUCATION

PhD in Organic
Chemistry, University of
Massachusetts Amherst

JOINED

January 2001

SPECIALISATIONS

Organic chemistry, new
product introduction,
project management,
research and
development, scale up,
production

has helped my understanding of the different priorities and challenges that each discipline faces.

What does your role as Operations Director of Production at our Cramlington, UK site entail?

I head up production at the Cramlington site, meaning that I am responsible for our manufacturing and operational teams who deliver our customers' manufacturing projects.

The team is heavily involved in process scale up activity, including technical preparation, plant design and assessments and project coordination in conjunction with the NPI team. The production team works to ensure that the plant is ready for use, and that the processes are safe and compliant, ready for scale-up. We manufacture a wide range of products for a variety of different customers, and sometimes we can be introducing a process to 4000L or 9000L for the first time. If processes don't go as expected, we work quickly to establish a safe and compliant solution to ensure a successful outcome for our customers.

Customer requirements can change quickly, and clear communication amongst our project teams is critical to make sure that project delivery remains on track.

Ensuring successful production of our customers' product is our main focus, but alongside the technical teams, the

production team and I are also involved in project meetings with our customers and also support with site visits.

Internal collaboration is just as much of a priority and is equally as important as our partnerships with customers. I am responsible for bringing together a range of disciplines and project stakeholders for regular internal meetings, from the technical teams, to quality, to engineering, to ensure constant alignment and establish priorities. Customer requirements can change quickly, and clear communication amongst our project teams is critical to make sure that project delivery remains on track.

I am also a part of the senior leadership team at the Cramlington facility. I work with other members of the leadership team to discuss key topics throughout our organisation and help shape broader strategies. It is also my responsibility to escalate any challenges or decisions within customer projects.

What do you enjoy most about working at Sterling?

Having worked at Sterling for more than 20 years, it's definitely the people, who are great to work with, very hardworking and motivated. What continues to make it an exciting place to be, is that the work we do is very dynamic, especially as we partner with a combination of existing and new customers and projects, to help our customers deliver their products to the end user – namely the patients.