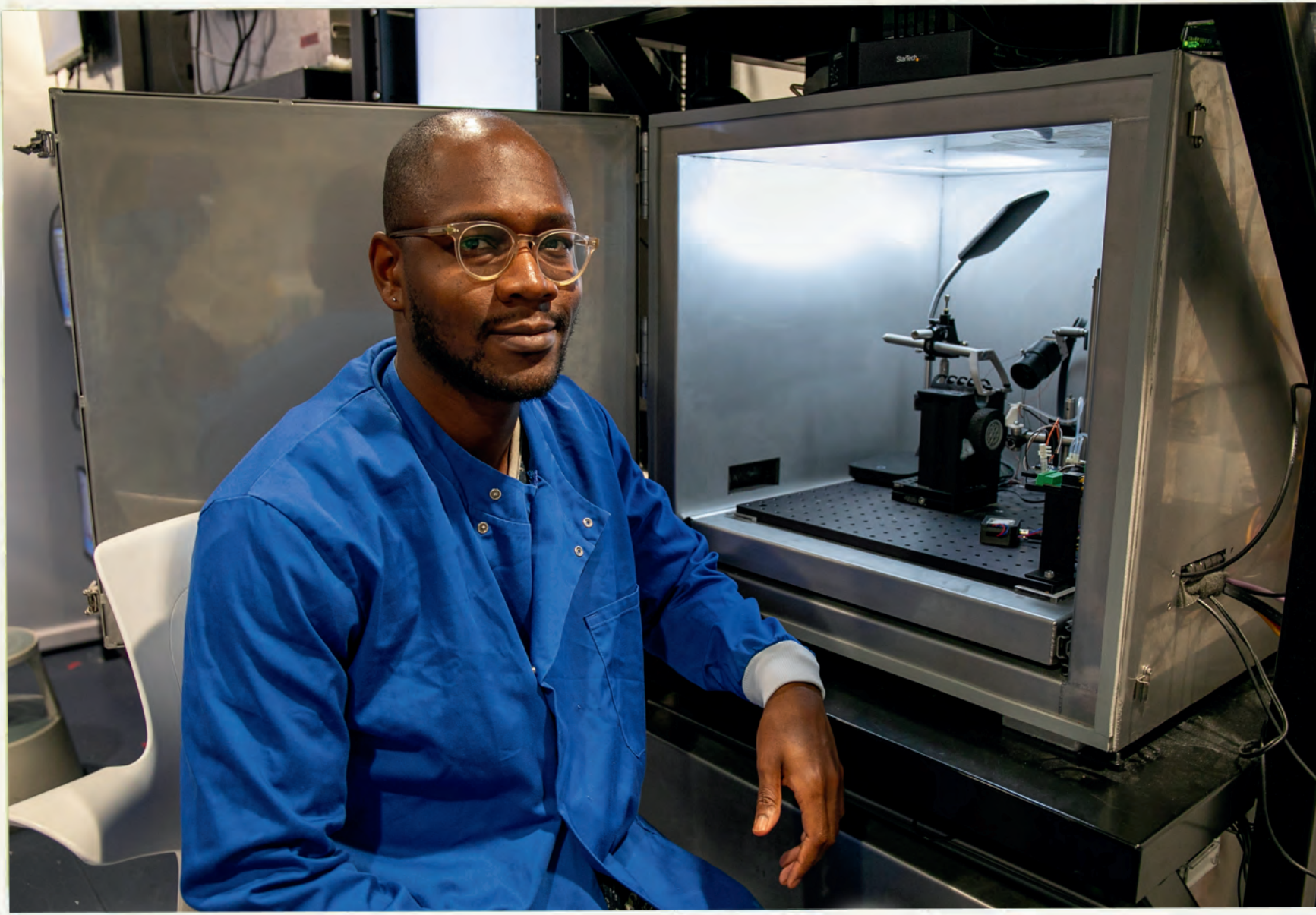


# #IAmABiologist

## Dammy Onih PhD Student, SWC



### What does your day-to-day look like as a neuroscience PhD student?

A lot of my time these days revolves around data collection from long-term experiments. There is a lot of problem-solving and planning for future experiments, recording from neurons in mice for the first time. With data analysis, I can determine whether the data answered our question or not.

### What is your current topic of research?

I want to understand how organisms learn the rules of the world from experience. When someone says “YMC”, you’re bound to follow up with “A”. We’re never given a test on it in school, but how do we know? How does the brain extract what is common and constant from many similar events?

### From the biological sciences, why did you choose to study neuroscience?

It was fascinating how inaccessible the brain is, yet so many complex processes go on inside. The brain is different from the muscular system, for example, where cells do not serve as diverse a function. This challenge of understanding how memory, consciousness, and dreams arise motivated me.

### What are your career aspirations given your expertise and background?

I enjoy problem-solving and the challenges they bring. These days, I design experiments and build the setup to answer a scientific question. To this end, I use software and hardware, and perform data analysis. I’d like to do this kind of problem-solving on a regular basis in the future. In science, the decision to publish could be out of one’s control due to results of the experiment. I’d like to explore working in an environment where the scope of a project is shorter.

### Could you give us a brief picture of your career trajectory thus far?

I went to a grammar school in Dartford, taking GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths, and Philosophy. I then was in the IB programme, studying Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Philosophy, French, and English (my favourite). I then came to UCL for a Master’s in Neuroscience before joining SWC.



### What advice do you have for students who want to become biologists?

It’s fine to not know exactly what you want to do or study. A lot of people, even at my stage in life, are figuring it out. Don’t get fixated on a specific topic. Consume lots of knowledge about the world and establish that you like learning. Hone your skill of absorbing information through diverse media. Most people are drawn to what they’re good at. Embrace what is stimulating to you and try your best according to an internal standard.

