

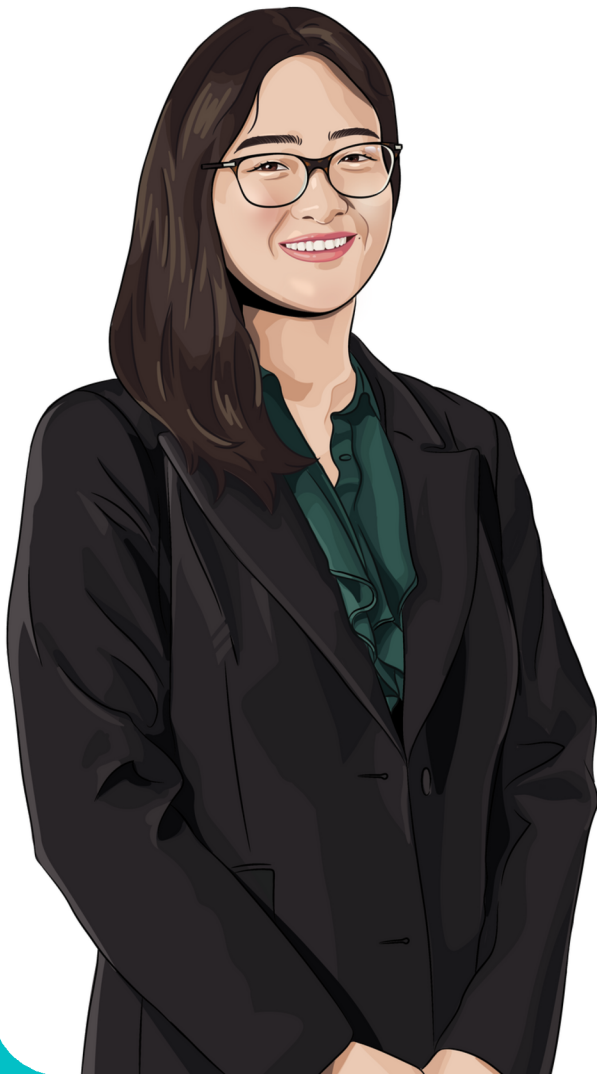
Meet Daisy Shu

What do you do?

I'm an academic research scientist and optometrist. I lead a laboratory at UNSW, exploring how we can better understand and treat eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness worldwide. My work involves both seeing patients in the clinic and conducting cutting-edge research in the lab to develop new therapies that could one day improve vision for millions of people.

How did you get into that job?

After high school, I pursued a combined Bachelor of Optometry and Vision Science degree at UNSW, which ignited my passion for eye research. Upon graduating, I spent a couple of years working as a clinical optometrist in Sydney, gaining invaluable hands-on clinical experience. During this time, I encountered many patients suffering from age-related eye diseases like cataract and macular degeneration, who weren't responding well to existing treatments. This experience fuelled my determination to pursue a research career, aiming to develop better therapies to treat these challenging eye conditions.



I completed my PhD at the University of Sydney, focusing on cataract research under the mentorship of Prof. Frank Lovicu. With my PhD in hand, I embarked on an exciting journey to Boston, USA, where I completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard in the Saint-Geniez laboratory, focusing on developing novel therapies to treat age-related macular degeneration. After completing my postdoc, I returned to Sydney to establish my own independent laboratory at UNSW's School of Optometry and Vision Science—the very place where my journey began. Now, as a Scientia Senior Lecturer, I blend research, teaching, and clinical practice to advance our understanding of eye diseases.

What do you love about your job?

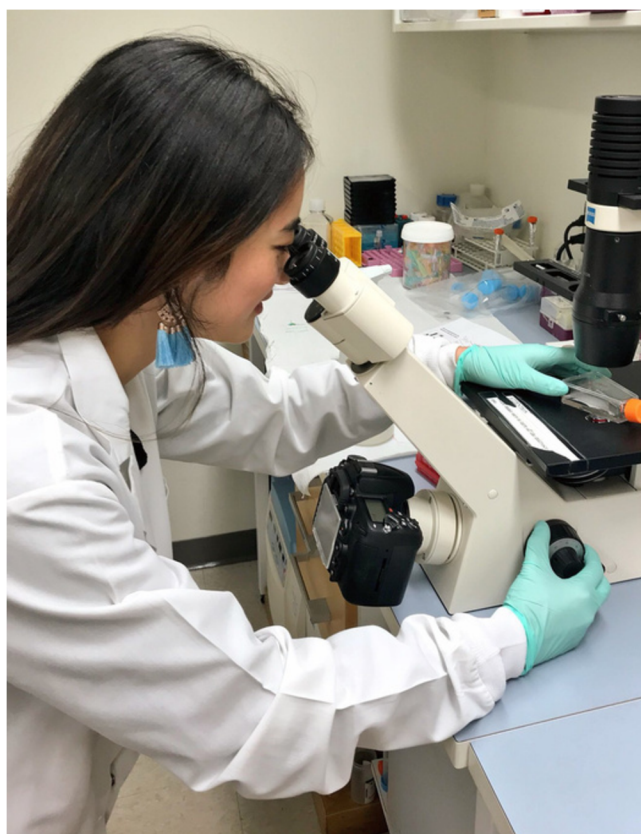
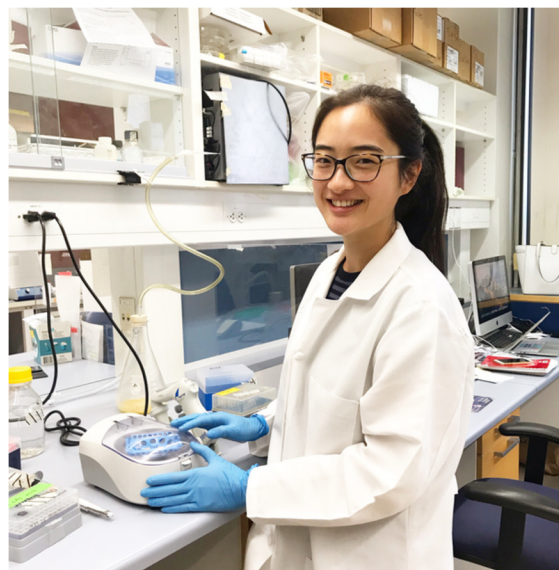
I love that my job is a perfect blend of science and patient care. Not only do I get to explore the mysteries of the human eye in the lab, but I also translate that knowledge into helping people see better. It's incredibly rewarding to know that the work we're doing today could change lives tomorrow.

My career allows me to travel the world for conferences, where I get to meet inspiring people from different cultures. For example, I've been to Belfast in Northern Ireland (where I met my now-husband) and I'm looking forward to traveling to Buenos Aires in Argentina soon for another conference. These experiences enrich my work and bring a global perspective to my research.

How does your job help people/the community/the world?

My job helps by pushing the boundaries of what we know about eye diseases, particularly those that affect older adults. Our research could lead to new treatments that not only improve quality of life but also reduce the burden of blindness worldwide.

Another part of my job that I love is that I get to mentor and train the next generation of scientists, helping to inspire and guide future leaders in vision research. I'm part of the UNSW STEMM Champions program, where I get to inspire girls to dive into the exciting world of STEMM. It's all about showing them how amazing a career in science can be and giving them the tools, confidence, and connections to succeed. We're not just teaching skills—we're building a community of future women leaders who will rock the world of STEMM!



What are two things you're not good at?

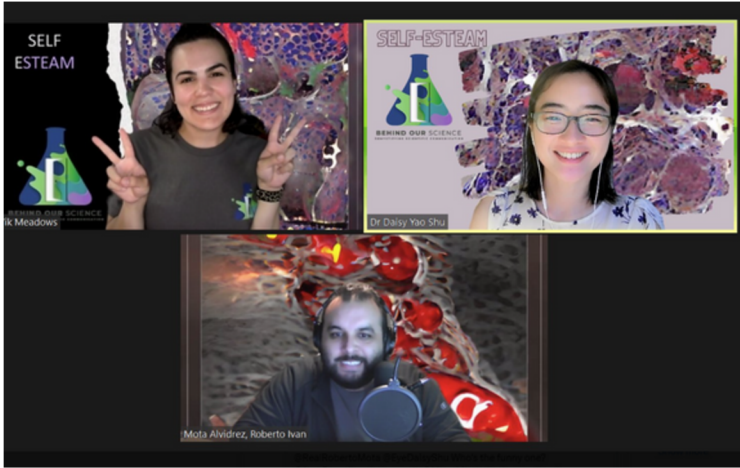
I'm not particularly skilled at coding, so I prefer to collaborate with experts who can handle that side of things.



As for paperwork and administrative tasks, I find they aren't my strong suit, so I like to delegate those responsibilities when possible, allowing me to focus more on research and patient care.

What are two things you are good at?

I'm good at seeing the big picture and understanding how all the pieces of a problem fit together.



Daisy and her co-hosts, Roberto Mota and Vik Meadows

I'm also skilled at breaking down complex science into easily understandable concepts, whether I'm talking to students, patients, or the public. I even host a podcast called "Behind Our Science," where I bring these ideas to life for a broader audience. I love sharing my career journey on social media, actively engaging with the public through my "@EyeDaisyShu" handle.

What makes you happy (outside of work)?

Yoga and baking cookies bring me a sense of calm and balance. Yoga helps me stay centred and grounded, allowing me to clear my mind and find inner peace. Meanwhile, baking cookies is a simple pleasure that brings warmth and joy to my day, reminding me to appreciate the little things in life. I just love the smell of fresh cookies coming out of the oven.



Where do you want your career to take you?

I want to become an internationally renowned researcher, leading a large team dedicated to discovering new treatments for eye diseases. My ultimate goal is to contribute to curing blindness, so that as we age, we can still appreciate the beauty of the world with clear vision and enjoy a high quality of life. I hope my work will make a lasting impact on both the scientific community and the lives of patients around the world, allowing them to continue experiencing the world visually for years to come.