



Where I work Sofia Qvarfort

Theoretical-physics concepts can be hard for anyone to visualize. As a person with albinism, a genetic condition that impairs vision, I face particular challenges. In this picture, taken in June at my former office at University College London, I'm sitting in front of a blackboard filled with mathematical equations describing quantum states. I had to put my face right in front of the chalkboard to make any sense of the scribbles.

I've since moved to my home country of Sweden. I'm navigating my surroundings well. In theoretical physics, thinking is more important than seeing. Experimental quantum physics would have been extremely difficult for me: I can't see the tiny equipment and electronics in quantum laboratories. People with disabilities have to be realistic. I can't do some kinds of experimental work. I can't be a pilot either.

I started VIP@Uni, a website that offers tips and resources for visually impaired people in academia. Academia can be a good option for people with disabilities, because they can achieve a highly valued level of

expertise that can help them to find their place in the world.

I still use blackboards, but I now spend more time looking at screens. Computers are an incredible tool for the visually impaired. I can zoom in on any word or image. The switch to virtual conferences during the pandemic was helpful to me. Before, I often had trouble seeing slides at presentations. But at a virtual conference, I can enlarge every slide on my screen.

My work looks at some fundamental questions. In 2020, I co-authored a paper showing that electrons and protons in hydrogen atoms are entangled at a quantum level (S. Qvarfort *et al.* *New J. Phys.* **22**, 093062; 2020). It was a very exciting but difficult project. If you're passionate about something, you find ways around the obstacles.

Sofia Qvarfort is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Research Fellow at Stockholm University and a Wallenberg Initiative on Networks and Quantum Information Research Fellow at Nordita, Stockholm. **Interview by Chris Woolston.**

Photographed for *Nature* by Agnese Abrusci.

Correction

This article misspelt Sofia Qvarfort's surname throughout. This has now been corrected.