

Science Communication Training

Course outline

Day 1: Presenting to other scientists:

Morning session:

- Defining your aims and targeting your presentation to achieve them.
- Knowing your audience: what level of specialist knowledge to assume for different scientific groups.
- How to structure an effective short talk, such as a journal club or poster presentation.
- Effective use of language: how to develop a clear and vivid style of English.
- Selecting the right amount of information for an effective talk.
- How audiences assimilate information in different ways and how to cater for them.
- Science communication for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Afternoon session:

- Long presentations, such as conference plenaries: structure and content.
- Creating excellent audiovisual materials.
- Managing question and answer sessions.
- How researchers can leverage social media to help their research, communicate their work to other scientists and to raise their profile at scientific conferences

Exercises include:

- Study a bad example of a presentation script and edit it into lively, clear English.
- Create AV materials for a presentation.
- Prepare a short 5-minute scientific presentation.
- Deliver a presentation to the group, while being filmed. Receive tutor feedback.
- Design a Twitter "hashtag" campaign to publicise your poster at a scientific conference.

Day 2: Presenting to other non-specialists:

Morning session

- Non-specialist audiences: who are they and why communicate with them?
- Knowing your audience: what level of scientific knowledge to assume.
- How to structure an effective short popular science communication, either written or spoken.
- Making your work accessible to non-specialists without over-simplifying or “dumbing down”.
- Effective use of language: how to avoid jargon.
- Tackling the “So what?” factor: how to make non-specialist audiences take an interest in what you have to say.
- Best practice: How to responsibly communicate risk and uncertainty in scientific findings.
- Case study: “Café Scientifique”, where scientists give short talks to members of the public.
- Audience participation: how to devise exercises and demonstrations to get your audience involved.

Afternoon session:

- The “new media” landscape and what it means for popularising science and engaging audiences.
- The importance of “public engagement” versus “public understanding”: how new media can increase your science popularisation efforts.
- How blogging works: what makes a great blog? How to encourage audience interaction.
- How to blog if you have little time: Tumblr, a low-effort blog platform for the busy scientist.
- Twitter as a popularisation tool: showing non-specialists how science works in real-time.
- Coordinating your efforts: how to link up outreach efforts via YouTube, blogging, Twitter and Facebook.
- Tracking the success of your social media outreach with tools such as bit.ly

Exercises include:

- Draft a short popular science blog post about your research; receive tutor feedback.
- Prepare and present a 5-minute “Café Scientifique” non-specialist presentation, receive tutor feedback.
- Design a prop or exercise that will inspire a public audience.
- Explain your research in 140 characters or fewer, suitable for a “tweet” on Twitter.
- “Tweet” the proceedings of the “Café Scientifique” exercise.