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Careers in Science Communication

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Careers in Science Communication

1. What I do and why I'm speaking!
2. What is Science Communication?
3. What careers are available?
4. What qualifications do I need?
5. What can I do to gain experience?
6. What should I do next?

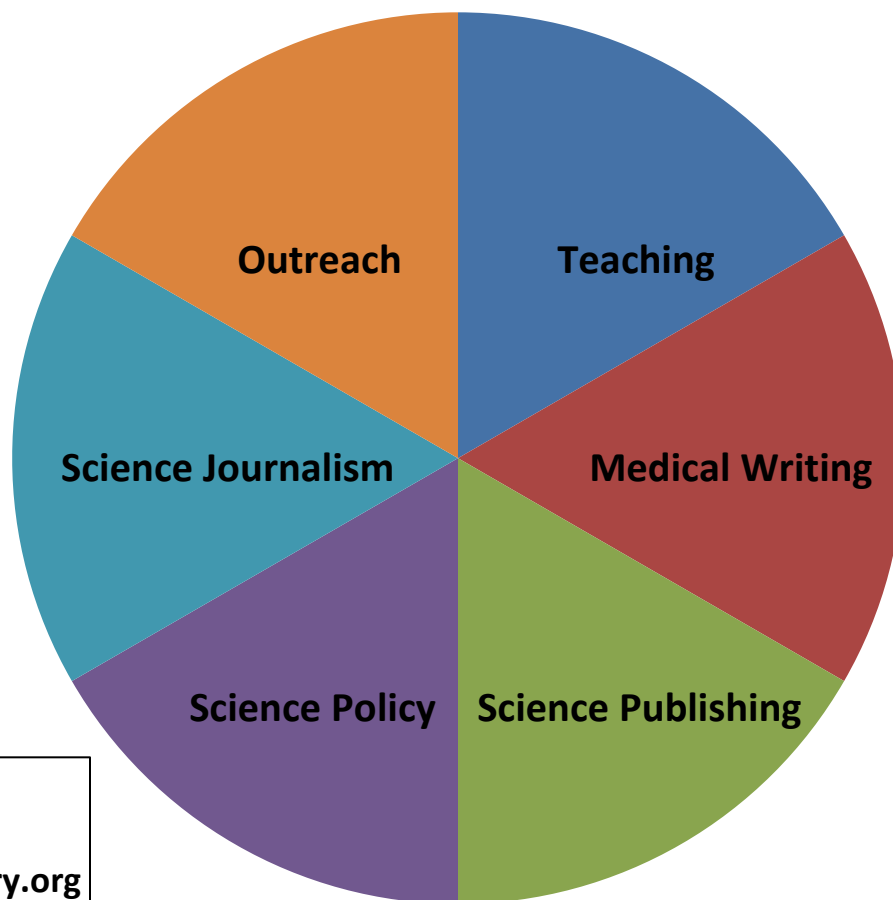
What do I do?

- **Day job:** Lecturer (Reader) in Chemistry and Forensic Science, Researcher in Chemistry.
- **Science Communication background:**
 - 20+ years of running the Chemistry programme for the British Science Festival.
 - This has involved working with both **science communicators** and **scientists who communicate** (different roles).
 - Skills are **generic** to Life Sciences.

What is Science Communication?

- **Science communication** generally refers to **public communication** presenting science-related topics to non-experts.
- This can involve professional scientists (**outreach**).
- It has also become a **professional field** in its own right. This can include science exhibitions, journalism, science policy and media production.

What careers are available?



Alexa Hime,
Biochemical Society:
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Outreach

- **Aim** – to enthuse the general public (often young people) about science and to make it accessible.
 - It can include *interactive* lectures and **hands-on-demos**:



Scientific Publishing

- **Skills needed:**
 - Written communications
 - Research
 - Listening
 - Attention to detail
 - Ability to meet tight deadlines
- **Possible careers:**
 - Journal editor
 - Journal production
 - Commission papers and articles
 - Licensing & sales



BJ BIOCHEMICAL
JOURNAL

 **BioMed** Central
The Open Access Publisher

Science Journalism

- **What would you do?**
 - Seek out news
 - Meet experts
 - Write!
 - Make podcasts/videos
 - Work to deadlines
- **Skills needed:**
 - Good written/verbal communication skills
 - Investigation and research
 - Ability to pitch science at the right level
 - Meet tight deadlines



NewScientist

theguardian

THE  TIMES

Science Policy

- **What's involved?**

- Applying a combination of scientific knowledge and understanding of government and policy making.
- Identify and transfer information between scientists and policy makers.



- **Skills needed:**

- Written and verbal communication skills
- An interest in science policy
- Research and investigation
- Meeting tight deadlines

Medical Writing

- **What's involved?**

- Combining scientific knowledge with an understanding of how to present information at the right level for the intended audience:
 - Regulatory documents
 - Patient information leaflets
 - Clinical study reports
 - Conference proceedings
 - Manuscripts for publication
 - Promotional/marketing related material

- **Employers:**

- Pharmaceutical companies
- Contract research organisations
- Communications agencies
- Freelance work



Qualifications needed

- In most cases, a degree in a relevant subject is needed.
- For teaching, a PGCE is required.
- It is possible to enter any of these careers with a PhD, although it is not usually required!
 - e.g. if you're interested in scientific publishing, journal editors sometime have PhDs.

Gaining experience

- **Volunteer** to help at a **science festival**
 - e.g. <http://www.britishtscienceassociation.org/>
- Look out for opportunities for **outreach activities**
- Start building a **network**
 - **Twitter** is useful here
- Start a **blog** and publicise your posts!
- Consider **internships**

What to do next?

- See 'Next steps; options after a bioscience degree' (in your conference bags), which has a resource list at the back, including a science communication section.
- You can contact me by e-mail or Twitter (see title slide).
- Another useful contact: **Alexa Hime** (Head of Education & Training, Biochemical Society)
<http://www.biochemistry.org/education>
Alexa.Hime@biochemistry.org