

Industry & Employer Newsletter

15 May 2015

Welcome to the new industry newsletter – which has replaced the Pharma & Biotech Newsletter. This will be sent out every other month, and is designed to help identify and highlight the ways that those working in science industry can most effectively engage with the Society of Biology.

The Society has created the Employer Advisory Group (EAG), as part of its work to increase industry involvement. This group provides an interface between employers and the Society of Biology which enables employers to bring their views and concerns to the attention of the Society for wider debate and future action, while seeking to:

- Ensure that small companies have a voice to articulate needs and are engaged with accreditation and graduate skills
- Link biology careers to exciting science - through placements, apprenticeships, citizen science and public initiatives etc
- Ensure that government understands the value of well trained scientists and a scientifically literate population
- Help develop CPD and training for personal development
- Support the delivery of science in schools

If you would like to find out more about the Employer Advisory Group, or would like to become a member of the group, please contact [Rachel Lambert-Forsyth](#) the Society's Director of Training & Education.

I hope that this newsletter is useful to you. Please feel free to circulate it freely within your networks, and [let us know](#) if there is anything else you would like to see in this newsletter - or if you have anything you would like us to promote. If you have any suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch with [Mark Leach](#).

Dr Aileen Allsop

Chair of the Employer Advisory Group (EAG)

Society of Biology news

Society of Biology achieves Royal status

At our AGM on 13 May 2015 in Charles Darwin House, we were delighted to announce that we have been given permission to become the Royal Society of Biology. Granted by the Sovereign, acting on the advice of Ministers, this is a greatly welcomed recognition for the discipline of biology and the contribution of biologists. This change recognises the collective efforts of many individual members and Member Organisations to reflect and communicate priorities for the bioscience community through the Society, and provides clear acknowledgement of this collective impact. It is very positive news for all of us.

Before beginning to use the new title, we must complete the alterations required to our Constitution and Charter, and update our branding to reflect this change. This will require a little time, and once these important alterations have been completed, we will be able to officially launch the newly titled Royal Society of Biology! We look forward to contacting you again over the coming weeks with an update on our progress and news of our celebratory plans.

Spotlight on... MedImmune

In 2013/2014, [MedImmune](#), the global biologics research and development arm of AstraZeneca, began to work with the Society of Biology and Cogent to pilot two Cogent 'gold standards' for training life scientists. Initially, this work provided the opportunity for MedImmune to take a closer look at its training approaches for entry level scientists.

However, this work culminated in a number of our employees applying successfully for their 'Registered Scientist' and 'Registered Science Technician' [professional accreditation](#) with the Society of Biology.

Each year, MedImmune takes around 12 Industrial Placement (IP) students for a one year period. These are life science students who have completed the first two years of their degree and come into MedImmune to work on Research and Development projects in order to gain practical industry experience. Students then return to university to complete their final year. Historically, a number of these individuals have gone on to complete PhDs and have applied successfully for permanent positions at MedImmune.

All of our 2013/2014 IP students, as well as a number of our laboratory support staff, went through an extensive interview process with the Society of Biology and were recommended to receive professional accreditation. This was highly beneficial, both to MedImmune as a company and to individual staff members seeking to further their careers in science. It provided MedImmune with external validation of the training that we provide to staff and it provided our IP students and staff with a professional qualification that will be recognised wherever they go. For our IP students in particular, the experience that they gained from the interview process alone was very significant and they were delighted to return to their studies with a professional accreditation that will benefit their future science careers.

Jacqui Hall

Vice President, R&D Skills, Training and Standards at MedImmune

MedImmune is a Supporting Member Organisation of the Society. Please [contact us](#) if you would like further information on organisational membership.

Professional registers from the Society of Biology

The Society supports scientists and science technicians in obtaining external recognition for their competencies and experience. Under license from the Science Council, the Society of Biology is able to offer professional recognition of skills, knowledge and expertise, including Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Today it is increasingly important to be recognised by improved competence and CPD provides a structured approach to learning. It can involve any relevant learning activity, whether formal and structured or informal and self-directed.

Via the Science Council, we offer members four Professional Recognition and Development awards - Registered Science Technician (RSciTech), Registered Scientist (RSci), Chartered Scientist (CSci) and Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach), in addition to our own Chartered Biologist (CBiol). All those who are committed to the biological sciences in industry are eligible to apply, and once joined registration is maintained through a record of CPD activities. Further information on how to apply is available [here](#), and our online application form is available via [mySociety](#) - our online portal.

Supporting Member Organisations (SMOs) who are interested in gaining professional recognition for their staff can enjoy a 30% discount on the cost of each individual membership fee for 2 years, The register fee is also free for 2 years.

For questions or further advice on applying please contact our [professional registers officer](#).

Science policy

Returners to bioscience working group

The Society of Biology has established a '[Returners to Bioscience](#)' working group to examine the experiences of those who face difficulties in returning to a career in the biosciences. This is in light of our continued concerns about the loss of trained and committed scientists from the bioscience workforce. A career break can occur for many reasons, such as the need to focus on caring responsibilities, illness, unemployment, or a desire to change career paths. Returning from a career break can pose difficulties across the spectrum of science careers; including academics, teachers, technicians and industrial scientists.

The working group features representatives from funders, employers, learned societies, and a number of former 'returners' themselves and seeks to provide resources and mechanisms to support scientists before, during and after a career break. An online '[returners portal](#)' has been developed as a collated source of the information and resources currently available. For further information please contact policy@societyofbiology.org.

Dowling and Nurse Reviews

The Society has responded to two key consultations on the research and development environment in the UK; in the [Dowling Review](#) of collaborations between businesses and university researchers, we highlighted the intellectual property and regulatory policy implications for successful collaborations, and in the recent Nurse Review of the Research Councils we commented on the needs to address interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary research in the balance of the funding portfolio.

Parliament

We will continue to make the case for investment in science and support for a vibrant research, innovation and development landscape.

Drug Discovery Pathways Group

Over recent years pharmaceutical R&D within the UK has undergone a significant transformation. Dominated in the past by large multinational pharmaceutical companies, an ecosystem of collaborative research partners is now emerging which encompasses small and large pharma, SMEs, academia, health charities and the NHS, with each contributing complementary skills and expertise.

In response to the challenges and opportunities presented by this changing world of medicines research, a number of learned societies have come together in an informal partnership termed the Drug Discovery Pathways Group (DDPG).

Further information is available on our [website](#).

Public engagement

Biology Week 2015: be part of it!

In October 2014 we celebrated the biggest Biology Week yet, with over 100 [events](#) and activities all over the UK and beyond. Everyone from children to research scientists got involved in debates, bug hunts, competitions, dinosaur digs, and Big Biology Days all in celebration of the life sciences. You can see summaries via our [News](#), [Blog](#), [Facebook album](#) or [Storify](#). Biology Week is a great opportunity to showcase your particular area of bioscience and to increase your organisation's following by taking part in (and enhancing!) the biggest week in the biology calendar! We were thrilled that so many MOs got involved in some great events and activities during the week and we are keen to involve even more of you in next year's Biology Week, which takes place from Saturday 10th – Sunday 18th October 2015 (inclusive).

If you are currently planning your public engagement programme for 2015, we would be grateful if you could consider doing something for Biology Week. Ways of getting involved include:

- running your own event
- putting on a hands-on activity at a Big Biology Day
- an online resource launch
- an educational outreach project
- a competition
- anything else you can think of!

Please contact [Natasha Little](#) for further information on becoming part of Biology Week 2015!

Education

Accreditation

The Degree Accreditation launch took place on 24th March at the Royal College of Surgeons. The launch saw over 120 representatives celebrate the launch of a new form of accreditation. The University of Aberdeen, University of Birmingham, Brunel University London, University of Greenwich, University of Kent, Royal Holloway, University of London, University of South Wales and University of Strathclyde were all presented with certificates for achieving accreditation during a successful pilot process.

The existing [Advanced Accreditation](#) introduced a skills profile for bioscience graduates entering research-based roles. The new [accreditation](#) focuses on employability and more general higher level skills acquired through studying the biosciences to Honours level. Accreditation follows an independent and rigorous assessment of degree programmes which contain a solid academic foundation in biological knowledge and key skills. We are delighted to now be taking formal expressions of interest for future applications.

For further enquiries, please contact the [accreditation team](#).

Training

The Society of Biology's [training programme](#) is expanding, with a wide range of courses being developed for all abilities and interests. Training courses allow individuals to continue their professional development ([CPD](#)). Their interactive format provides the opportunity to acquire new skills, cultivate existing ones and meet like-minded people.

Courses coming up include scientific laboratory management, persuasive report writing and presentation skills. Society of Biology members are entitled to [discounts of up to 75%](#) on all training events - and organisational members can have their own courses approved for CPD at no charge.

If there are any courses that you would like to see or if you would be interested in delivering a course, please [contact](#) the Society of Biology's training officer.

Forthcoming training events

26 May

[Taking Accurate Notes at Meetings](#)

12 June

[An Introduction to R](#)

18 May

[Creativity and Innovation Workshop](#)

14 Sept

[Expert report writing](#)

A full list of training events is available on [our website](#)

External news and opportunities

Could you provide mentoring support?

The Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) is seeking the help of professionals who can assist with mentoring a student. This takes just 15-30 minutes a week via email, and mentors advise on a range of topics: university applications, increasing understanding of careers and professional life, helping access more opportunities and providing CV and interview advice.

If you are interested in signing up to be involved in their Mentoring Programme for 2015, please [register online](#).

WISE Awards 2015 - nominations now open

Nominations are now open for the 2015 WISE (Women in to Science & Engineering) Awards, which aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Celebrate excellence and the contribution women make to Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Manufacturing
- Obtain stories to inspire others especially those that would otherwise consider that these subjects/careers were 'not for people like me'
- Recognise the critical role that organisations and individuals have in influencing the choices made by girls and women
- Identify winners who will actively work to achieve the goal of '1 million more women in STEM'

Further information is available on the [WISE website](#).

Nominations now open for the 2015 John Maddox Prize for Standing up for Science

The John Maddox Prize rewards an individual who has promoted sound science and evidence on a matter of public interest. Its emphasis is on those who have faced difficulty or hostility in doing so. Nominations of active researchers who have yet to receive recognition for their public-interest work are particularly welcomed.

The winner of the John Maddox Prize will receive £2000, and an announcement of the winner will be published in Nature. The award is presented at a reception in November. Full details are available on the [Sense about Science website](#).

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