Science communication: people, projects, events
Frequently Asked Questions

1   Who is leading the online course?

The course is led by members of the Science Communication Unit, University of the West of England, Bristol. The Science Communication Unit (SCU) is internationally renowned for its diverse and innovative activities, designed to engage the public with science. We are also known for the training offered in science communication. The SCU comprises a wide range of staff, with skills and research interests in all aspects of public engagement with science. Over the duration of the 10 weeks you will be working with the following Unit staff; Emma Weitkamp, Ann Grand, Clare Wilkinson, Laura Fogg Rogers, Margarida Sardo and Erik Stengler.

2   What will we study?

This training course is designed to build your skills in planning and managing science communication activities. It lasts 10 weeks (including 2 private study weeks) in which you will study:

- **The historical and social contexts of science communication**
  Exploring the role of science communication over time and in different national contexts.
- **Understanding audiences**
  How to segment, plan and develop relationships with different audiences.
- **Project planning and management**
  Designing effective project plans and the basics of managing a science communication project or activity.
- **Designing face-to-face activities**
  Considering activities that best meet desired outcomes and resources.
- **Facilitation skills**
  Effective facilitating in both face-to-face and online activities.
- **Presentation skills**
  Developing presentation and demonstration skills.
- **Working with the media**
  How news media formats (including online) work and how to work with journalists.
- **Evaluation**
  Purposes, types and creativity in evaluation.

In the final week of the course you will have an opportunity to reflect on your experience of the course and plan actions for your future science communication activities.

3   Who should take this course?

People taking this course are likely to be people new to the field who are seeking to develop their skills and knowledge in science communication and public engagement. Alternatively you might have some experience in science communication but looking for an opportunity to develop your practical skills or theoretical knowledge. You might be researchers, researcher support staff, or work in funding organisations, science centres, museums and learned societies or you might simply be someone that enjoys communicating science.

4   Do I need to meet any requirements to apply for the course?

It will be helpful if you already have an undergraduate degree. This can be in any subject area. Applicants without an existing degree, but with some relevant experience in the field will also be considered.

Although our training is primarily targeted at those interested in 'science' communication we regularly work with individuals who apply the same principles of communication to other subject areas. Applicants from other disciplinary backgrounds are welcome to apply.

The course materials and interactions with tutors will be in English. We don't require evidence of an English language qualification for this course but to get the most out of the course, you should be a confident reader and writer in English.

5   I have a full-time job; will I still be able to do the course?

Yes, we designed the course to focus on independent learning and self-directed activities. Each unit includes approximately 10 hours of learning activities, which you can work on at times that suit you. The only exception to this are the two live seminars linked to two units. The exact timing of these seminars will be decided when we know the locations of the participants. We know that many participants will be fitting the course around work and other commitments, so we have timetabled two private study weeks, with no timetabled activities, to allow you to catch up with anything you might have missed. A detailed timetable will be provided two weeks before the course starts.

6   How will the course be run?

The course will run entirely online, using UWE's [Blackboard](#) Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Registered participants will have access to the VLE and will also have full Library access for the duration of the course through which you can access UWE's online books, journals and other resources.

The course is divided into eight taught units, plus two private study weeks. Each unit will have opportunities for independent and directed learning, including narrated presentations, reading, group forums and self-assessment opportunities. There will be two live seminars, which will be an opportunity for you to directly interact with a tutor and your fellow participants.

7 Will I be able to ask questions?

Questions are encouraged! Participation in forums, wikis and seminars will be important for you and your fellow participants' learning, and we consider this to be an essential part of gaining your certificate of completion. Participants who do not participate in forums or seminars will not receive the certificate of completion at the end of the course.

Throughout the course you will be able to contact the course administrator and tutors if you have questions or queries.

8 Can I use other university facilities?

For the duration of the course, you will have online access to the UWE Library, which will enable you to have access to online books, journal papers and other related material.

9 Can I keep the course materials for future use?

You may keep the course materials for personal reference only. You may not distribute the course materials to others, as they are the tutors' personal intellectual property.

10 Can I attend in person?

No, this course is conducted entirely online. If you are looking for a face-to-face course, you might want to look at our annual [Masterclass in Science Communication](#), [PGCert in Practical Science Communication](#) or [MSc Science Communication](#).

11 How will the course be assessed?

There will be no formal examinations or other assessments for this course. You will receive feedback on your progress from the tutors and your fellow participants. You may receive a certificate of completion, subject to your full participation in all elements of the course.

12 What equipment will I need?

You will need a computer with appropriate Blackboard [system requirements](#) (minimum specification Windows 7, Mac OS x v 10.6.6 or later) and access to the Internet. Some course materials may also be accessible through a smartphone or tablet. For some online tutorials, you will need a microphone or webcam.

13 What software will I need?

You will not need any specific software.

Please send any other questions to science.communication@uwe.ac.uk