

Engaging science: Irish science teachers go back to the university lab!



Second level science teachers and educators from across Ireland attended the 9th SSPC Annual Chemistry Demonstration Workshop on engaging science at the University of Limerick this week. The residential workshop, hosted at the Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) headquarters at the University of Limerick, is designed to upskill and promote engaging science amongst secondary school science teachers and educators in Ireland. The workshop provides participants with the skills to promote problem and inquiry-based learning within the classroom, and to conduct over 40 engaging and interactive science demonstrations, which are linked to real world science applications.

Dr Sarah Hayes, SSPC Education and Outreach Officer said: “The 9th SSPC Annual Chemistry Demonstration Workshop provides teachers with a unique opportunity to enhance their professional toolkit, and develop dynamic and engaging skills, enabling them to return to their classroom and engage young people in a love of science. The residential element of the course offers the opportunity for teachers to fully immerse themselves in their own professional development, and develop a repertoire of demonstrations linked to the physical sciences and all aspects of the Junior and Leaving Certificate curriculum. Supporting teachers’ development is vital for the enhancement of the Irish education system”.

The 9th SSPC Annual Chemistry Demonstration Workshop is an important element of SFI's public engagement remit and SSPC's education and outreach programme. Jon O'Halloran SSPC General Manager said: "As one of Science Foundation Ireland's twelve research centres, SSPC has a critical role supporting STEM education in Ireland. The SSPC's education and outreach programme aims to inspire young minds as to the possibilities and application of science in our everyday lives, and develop Ireland as a country with a scientifically literate population. This workshop provides teachers with the time and space in which to develop new and exciting content for their lessons that will excite and stimulate students' interest in science and scientific careers".

The 9th SSPC Annual Chemistry Demonstration Workshop was supported by the Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre, the Department of Chemical and Environmental Sciences, University of Limerick, Pharmachemical Ireland, and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

The Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC), a Global Hub of Pharmaceutical Process Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, funded by Science Foundation Ireland and industry, is a unique collaboration between 22 industry partners, 9 research performing organisations and 12 international academic collaborators. The SSPC leads the way for next generation drug manufacture and spans the entire pharmaceutical production chain from synthesis of the molecule, to the isolation of the material, and the formulation of the medicine.

The 9th SSPC Annual Chemistry Demonstration Workshop has been developed upon the foundations of Student Active Learning in Science (SALiS), an international project, which utilises best-practice teaching methods within science education, funded by EU-TEMPUS. On-going research is continuing through the EU FP7 funded project TEMI (contact peter.childs@ul.ie). For further information contact SSPC Education & Outreach Officer, Dr Sarah Hayes, email: sarah.hayes@ul.ie.

To find out more information go to www.sspc.ie or contact SSPC Education and Outreach Officer Dr Sarah Hayes: sarah.hayes@ul.ie