

SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition Winners Announced

“Crystals are all around us and in every aspect of our lives, from chocolate to medicine to paints and plastics” Prof Kieran Hodnett, SSPC Scientific Director.



The Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) today (19th March 2015) announced the winners of its first SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition, which was launched as part of Science Week in November 2014, to celebrate the International Year of Crystallography. The SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition was open to primary and post-primary schools from across Ireland.

At today's award ceremony, Professor Michael Zaworotko, one of the world's top 20 chemists, announced the winners of the SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition as Youbeel Hagi, Galway Community College, Galway and Jason Folan, Colaiste Bhaile Chlair, Galway. Due to the exceptional quality of the entries, Professor Zaworotko also announced two runners up as Oisín Tobin, Colaiste Bhaile Chlair, Galway and Clare McKernan, St Aloysius' Secondary School, Cork. The competition judging criteria centred on the quality of the single crystals that were grown by students, considering elements such as the definition of the crystal faces, along with the clarity and size of the crystal, which are important factors

that need to be taken into consideration when controlling crystal growth within the pharmaceutical industry when making medicines.

Judging panel members for the SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition paid tribute to the high standard and excellent quality of entries. Professor Kieran Hodnett, SSPC Scientific Director said:

“The standard and quality of the crystals submitted for the SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition was outstanding. It is very encouraging to see such a high level of enthusiasm by the students and their teachers in growing the crystals over the last number of months”.

Professor Mark Ferguson, Director General of Science Foundation Ireland and Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government of Ireland said:

“As one of Science Foundation Ireland’s twelve research centres, SSPC has a critical role supporting Ireland’s pharmaceutical sector. Ireland’s first SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition is an important element of SFI’s public engagement remit and SSPC’s education and outreach programme, which aims to inspire young minds as to the possibilities and application of science in our everyday lives. Congratulations to the deserving winners.”

Jon O’Halloran, SSPC General Manager, said:

“The SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition is an active part of the SSPC’s education and outreach programme, which is dedicated to developing the next generation of scientists and crystallographers in Ireland. The SSPC look forward to engaging with Ireland’s schools on future initiatives”.

The crystals submitted to the SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition will be kept on public display at SSPC headquarters at the University of Limerick.

The SSPC, funded by Science Foundational Ireland and industry, is a world-leading research centre focused upon next generation medicines by developing more environmentally sustainable methods for drug manufacture; increasing the range of medicines available to the public; and reducing drug manufacturing costs. The pharmaceutical industry employs over 25,000 individuals directly and 24,500 indirectly in Ireland, and produces over 50% of all exports, making Ireland the second-largest pharmaceutical exporter in the world. The primary

objective of the SSPC is to retain existing jobs and to create new jobs within the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland.

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.

For further information go to http://www.sspc.ie/crystal_growing or contact SSPC Education and Outreach Officer Dr Sarah Hayes: sarah.hayes@ul.ie

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