

## Communicating Your Research to Non-specialists

It is becoming increasingly important for researchers to be able to clearly communicate their research to a broader audience, such as the public, the press, and even funding organizations. However, communicating complex specialized findings in an understandable and general manner is challenging for many researchers.

This 1-day workshop first focuses on the importance of science communication and what can happen when the public is misinformed. We then review how to communicate findings in a way that will be of interest to the public as well as writing strategies to improve understanding. Finally, we discuss how to work well with press offices and journalists to communicate your message to the public, as well as other communication platforms that can be used by the researchers themselves.

### **1. The importance of communicating science to non-specialists: Understanding the audience (09:30 – 10:30)**

This module introduces the importance of communicating science with the public. We begin by discussing why scientists are often reluctant to discuss their research publicly and how this miscommunication can lead to misconceptions by the public regarding scientific research. Next, we emphasize how public communication can benefit researchers directly in terms of their reputation, citations, and funding. We then discuss what makes a study newsworthy to help researchers identify which studies should be promoted. Finally, most of the section will focus on identifying the audience and how to understand their interests to ensure the message is appropriate for them.

*Break (10:30 – 10:40)*

### **2. Effective writing strategies (10:40–12:00)**

Given the lack of a scientific background for most public readers, this module focuses on how to discuss complex scientific ideas in a clear and simple manner. We begin by discussing the importance of logical flow and structure in a news story and ways to improve the readability of public stories. Because public awareness and interest is so important, we review ways to keep public readers attention with using more subjective terminology, personal anecdotes, and concrete examples to better engage readers who lack scientific backgrounds. Lastly, we discuss some of the common mistakes when describing complex ideas, such as using technical jargon or not explaining theories that may be unclear or unknown to the public.

*Lunch (12:00 – 13:00)*

### **3. Communicating research with the public (13:00 – 14:30)**

This module is introducing how to communicate complex scientific ideas to the public who likely do not have scientific backgrounds. We first discuss how to structure a story that can logically guide a non-specialist reader through the study in an engaging manner. We also introduce strategies to help researchers identify what information should be included to make the study relevant for the target audience. Lastly, we introduce the importance of a narrative to engage the reader along with its key elements.

*Break (14:30 – 14:40)*

## **4. Platforms for communicating science (14:40 – 15:40)**

This last module is focused on the output of this communication. For most researchers, they will not be the ones writing the news stories. This will be done by the press offices of their institutions as well as scientific journalists working with the media. Therefore, we discuss how researchers should work well with these individuals to ensure that they clearly understand the significance and interest their research has for the public. We also review some of the common mistakes that are made while preparing press releases and the impact that can have on the subsequent news story and societal impact. Lastly, we conclude the workshop by reviewing platforms that researchers can explore to communicate with the public directly, such as institutional websites, blogs, social media, and videos.

*Break (15:40 – 15:50)*

## **5. Effective Research Sharing and Communication with Generative AI (15:50 – 17:15)**

Generative AI is revolutionizing the way we share and promote research. In this module, you will learn to harness AI tools to brainstorm ideas, generate engaging press releases, and craft social media posts that bring your scientific work to a broader audience. We will also explore responsible AI use, ethical considerations, and limitations that comes with AI. Lastly, we will cover practical techniques for prompt engineering to transform complex research into accessible, captivating content. By the end of this session, you'll be equipped with the skills to elevate your science communication and broaden your research's reach.

*Final Q&A (17:15 – 17:30)*

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