

## Outreach Newsletter: February 2026

Welcome to the February edition of our Outreach newsletter!

Please do pass this on to anyone who may be interested in receiving this bulletin. They are very welcome to subscribe using this [link](#). If you wish to be removed, please email [outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk).

Thank you for reading!

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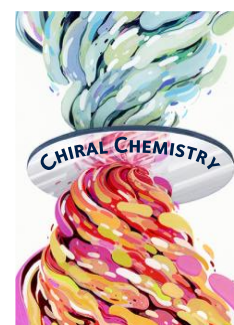
#### Learning Resource:

Oxford chemists design OLEDs  
that electrically flip the  
handedness of light **[REPEAT]**

## Upcoming Events

### KS5 Chiral Chemistry Workshops **[REPEAT]**

We would like to announce the 2025–2026 academic year dates for our Chiral Chemistry workshop. This is our online workshop for UK state school KS5 Chemistry students and teachers, which is delivered by our Department Ambassadors. Dates and times have been designed to avoid interruption of lessons. The session focuses on 3D shapes, chirality, the role of chirality in biological systems and the resources available to research chemists looking at proteins, such as the main protease in SARS-CoV-2, the latter being an active area of research in our Department. There is also an opportunity to ask our Ambassadors questions about their research and their academic careers to date. Students may attend without a teacher, provided we have a teacher contact.



Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026

16:45–18:00

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026

15:45–17:00

**REQUEST A SPACE**

### Explore Chemistry – A super-curricular series **[UPDATE]**

KS5 UK state school students and their teachers are invited to sign up for this series of online live talks and Q&A sessions delivered by researchers.



Please note that for Chiral Chemistry and Explore Chemistry places are limited to students from state schools in the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands, and where we are oversubscribed, we will prioritise places for students who meet our widening participation and access criteria. Further information about this can be found at

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/increasing-access>

**SIGN UP TO THE SERIES**

The following science talks, run by Balliol College, will replace our Explore Chemistry talks for February 2026.

## Balliol's Insight into Science Talks [REPEAT]

**What:** Booking is now open for Balliol College's Insight into Science Talks for Yr 12 and interested Yr 11 students. Applications must be made at least 48 hours before the relevant talk date. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and the talks will be recorded and uploaded at a later date.

**Where:** Online

**When:**

- Monday 9th February 2026 4.00-5.00pm How We design New Medicine: From Atoms to Treatment
- Wednesday 11th February 2026 17.00-5.00pm The Science of Crystals: From Clock to Chocolate

All the talks can be booked on the [Insight into Science booking form](#).



## Oxford College Workshops [REPEAT]

You are warmly invited to request a **College Workshop** when arranging a group visit with a College. Find out about your link colleges [here](#). Please note, the inclusion of one of our workshops is subject to the college's capacity to host your visit. Please do copy us ([outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk)) into any correspondence with the College team regarding the inclusion of one of our workshops. *If you do not hear back from your link college within 14 days, do get in touch directly with us.*



### Unlock the OXbox – Graffiti Game

A puzzle box workshop for Year 9 (13-14 yrs), featuring a series of practical and theoretical problems. Minimum of 12 students from UK state schools.

### Unlock the OXbox – Poison Puzzle

This is for KS4 (14-16 yrs) and is a series of practical and theoretical chemistry problems. Minimum of 12 students from UK state schools.

*"It is fantastic for the students to have this opportunity to apply their knowledge to a problem-solving activity and so enjoyable for them."* – Teacher

### Unlock the OXbox - Lab Lurker

A series of practical and theoretical chemistry problems for KS5 (16–19 yrs) students. Would suit a class where at least half of the students are studying A level (or equivalent) in Chemistry. Minimum 12 students (at least six studying Chemistry A level, or equivalent), from UK state schools.

*You can mix and match Graffiti Game, Poison Puzzle and Lab Lurker puzzle boxes for groups including Year 9, KS4 and KS5 students, as long as there is a minimum of 12 students in total (a minimum of three from a Key Stage is required).*

### Short Story Competition 2026 [NEW]



**What:** This year's theme: **Invisible Forces. The Chemistry**

**Behind Everyday Actions**, celebrates the hidden chemical processes that quietly power our modern lives and invites writers to explore the science that supports our daily routines, comforts, and conveniences; revealing the extraordinary chemistry behind the ordinary.

**How:** Submit an original short story on how chemistry can be seen in our everyday actions. Choose any angle: fiction, non-fiction, essays, historical accounts, science fiction, or mystery. Stories should be in prose, without illustrations or diagrams, and be up to 500 words. Find out more [here](#).

**When:** Entries should be submitted by midnight on 9th February, **with the email Subject Title of STORY to [secretaryrscm@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryrscm@gmail.com)**

### Schools' Analyst Competition 2026 [NEW]



**What:** The competition kits will allow teams of three students to compete against each other in a series of challenges combining forensic and cosmetic science! These flexible challenges will offer students the chance to apply their chemistry knowledge in a fun and rewarding way, with individual sessions able to be scheduled to fit around your timetable. The winning team from each school will receive a certificate to recognise their achievement, but will also have their entries compared to the other winning teams in your region for the chance to be crowned champions! Regional winners will also receive a prize to acknowledge their achievement.

**Who:** Students aged approx. 16–17 years old equivalent to Year 12 in England and Wales, Y13 in Northern Ireland, S5 in Scotland, or 5th Year in Republic of Ireland.

**When:** Registration closes on **Friday 27th February 2026**.

**How:** Find out more and sign up [here](#).

## Effective delivery of practical work – In-person course **[NEW]**

**What:** Want to feel more confident when delivering practical work and managing your classroom during experiments?



This **one-day, in-person** course aims to increase teachers' confidence in delivering practical work as well as developing strategies for managing their classroom during practical work. The course is designed to be delivered **on a date agreed with your school**.

**When:** Monday 8th September 2025 – Friday 18th December 2026 (flexible dates).

**How:** Find out more and sign up [here](#).

## Other Opportunities: Application Support for Oxford

### Oxford University Islamic Society **[REPEAT]**

The Oxford University Islamic Society (OUIsoc) is expanding its outreach efforts to support prospective Muslim students applying to Oxford. Their dedicated Access Team runs a range of initiatives designed to ease the transition to higher education, address common misconceptions, and involve parents in the process. To stay up to date with upcoming opportunities, events, and resources, teachers and school representatives are encouraged to join the OUIsoc Access Mailing List.



**Who it's for:** Muslim students in sixth form, regardless of background or level of spirituality, as well as teachers and school staff supporting them. Stay connected: Join the OUIsoc Access [Mailing List](#). For more information, visit [OUIsoc's website](#) or email the Access Team directly at: [ouisoc.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:ouisoc.outreach@gmail.com).

### Materials Science Open Days **[REPEAT]**

Applications are open for the Materials Science open days in February and March 2026. Attendees will experience lectures, tour the department, meet students, and more!

**When:** 17th & 18th February, 17th & 18th March 2026 – in person, 20th February 2026 – online.

**Where:** Department of Materials/Online (Zoom webinar).

**Audience:** Prospective Y11 & Y12 students

**How:** Register for the 17th & 18th February [here](#); Register for the 20th February [here](#); Register for the 17th & 18th March [here](#). To find out more visit their [website](#).

## Lincoln College Study Days **[NEW]**

**What:** Lincoln College is continuing to run in-person Study Days for prospective students in Year 12 from UK state schools. The programme is designed to support students from non-traditional Oxbridge backgrounds who are on track to do well and potentially make an application to a selective university. Accommodation will be provided free of charge, onsite, in Lincoln College rooms. They can also offer support for travel with a reimbursement.



**When:** The study days for Physics and Engineering will take place from Monday 30th March to Wednesday 1st April. The application deadline for this is **Friday 13th February at 5pm**. Find out more and sign up [here](#).

## Oxford Online Maths Club **[NEW]**

**What:** The Oxford Online Maths Club is a weekly livestream that is free, interactive, casual, and relaxed, and the livestreams are recorded so that you can watch back afterwards if you can't make it to the live broadcast on Thursday afternoons. The regular host is Dr James Munro, and they often have current Oxford students answering questions in chat and appearing on the livestream to talk about maths.

**Who:** The club is mostly aimed at people about to apply to university or about to start a Maths course, but everyone's welcome and there's no registration needed.

**When:** Live each Thursday at 17:00–18:00 (UK time).

**How:** Find out more [here](#).

## Other Opportunities: Enrichment and CPD

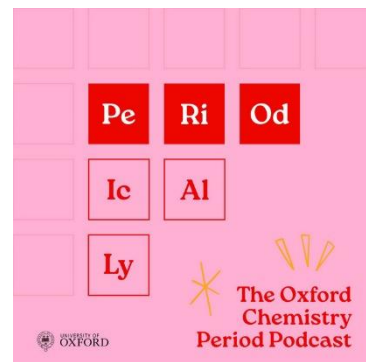
### RSC Women in Chemistry **[REPEAT]**

A reminder that there are resources for practical challenges, information about research and profiles of team members available via their [website](#). These are particularly suitable for Science Clubs in schools, community groups, such as Scouts and Guides, as well as for enjoyable holiday challenges.



### PERIODically Podcast [REPEAT]

PERIODically is a podcast created by undergraduate and postgraduate Chemistry students at the University of Oxford to discuss their experiences of how having a period has affected their time studying Chemistry. The podcast aims to discuss how the physicality and intensive nature of studying Chemistry can be affected by symptoms of periods (such as cramps, mental health and medical issues) and seeks to shed light on these problems, tackle stereotypes and misconceptions, and start a conversation on how study can be improved for those with periods. You can find further information and links to listen [here](#).



### Trinity College Teacher CPD Programme [REPEAT]

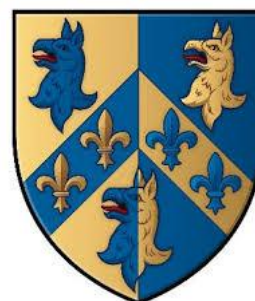
**What:** A programme made up of six sessions, running between January and October each year, that each provide up to date practical information and guidance relating to the Oxford application process and the purpose of each stage, for example, the admissions tests and interviews.

**Where:** Online.

**When:** Selected dates on a Monday and Thursday after school from 12<sup>th</sup> January to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026.

**Who:** State school teachers with responsibility for and an interest in student progression to university.

**How:** Register [here](#).



### Lincoln College Life Sciences Essay Competition [REPEAT]

**What:** Students will be invited to write an essay of up to 1,500 words in answer to a question. They welcome creative submissions, and entrants are welcome to approach the question in whatever way is most meaningful to them, as long as they demonstrate that they are thinking scientifically. The questions are designed to test creativity and scientific intuition rather than knowledge.

**Who:** UK students in Year 12 or equivalent. They welcome entries from students studying in any school in the UK, but they particularly encourage entries from students who: are currently attending a state-maintained school; would be the first in their immediate family to go to university; are or have previously been eligible for Free School Meals; are young carers or have been in care.

**When:** Questions released in January 2026.

**Where:** Online

**How:** Find out more and sign up [here](#).

## The Oxford Choral Experience Residential **[NEW]**

**What:** Worcester College are running a choral residential where you will look at the admissions process for Oxford, including how and why choral scholarships might be relevant to you. You will learn some amazing choral music together and there will be opportunities for individual vocal lessons, an example Oxford lecture, and more choral rehearsals which will culminate with everyone singing Evensong in the spectacular Worcester College Chapel.

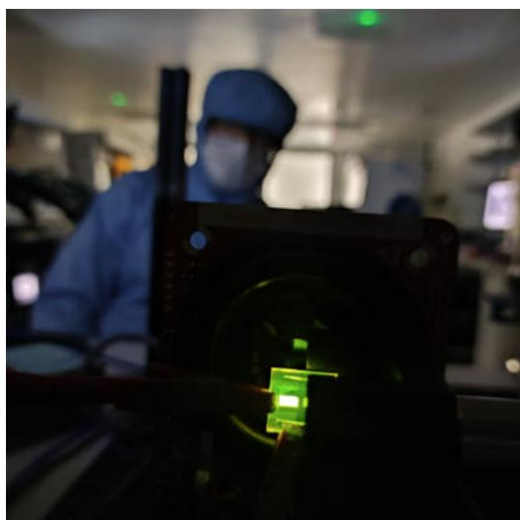
**Who:** Year 12 state school students who are interested in taking part in singing at university.

**When:** Friday 27th March to Sunday 29th March 2026.

**Where:** Worcester College

**How:** Find out more and sign up [here](#). **Application deadline:** Tuesday 17th February 2026, 12 noon.

## Learning Resource:



A photograph of an OLED device from the study.

## Oxford chemists design OLEDs that electrically flip the handedness of light **[REPEAT]**

Researchers from the University of Oxford have for the first time discovered an approach to electrically switch organic LEDs (OLEDs) to emit either left- or right-handed circularly polarized light without changing the light-emitting molecules. This could be useful for a range of technological applications, from more energy efficient OLED displays, to optical information transfer. Find out more [here](#) and read about their results in a study published in [Nature Photonics](#).