

Outreach Newsletter: March 2026

Welcome to the March 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.

Thank you for reading!

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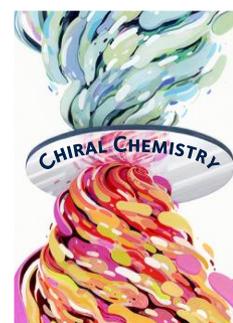
Learning Resource:

Nuclear stress slows down protein synthesis **[NEW]**

Upcoming Events

KS5 Chiral Chemistry Workshops **[REPEAT]**

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.



Final Workshop for 2025-26:
Wednesday 15th 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.



SIGN UP TO THE SERIES

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>

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) 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).

The Curiosity Cube Workshop [NEW]

What: A chance to bring science to life through hands-on, interactive challenges that spark deeper thinking and genuine curiosity about the world around them. This year fits beautifully with the official British Science Week 2026 theme: “Curiosity: what’s your question?”, encouraging young learners to ask questions, explore ideas and discover how science answers real-world mysteries.

Why schools love The Curiosity Cube:

- Engaging practical activities that get children experimenting and enquiring.
- Encourages pupils to ask why and what if, helping them build confidence in scientific thinking.
- Shows science as a dynamic and exciting subject linked to real careers.
- A memorable experience that stays with students long after the session.

Where: Greyfriars Catholic school, OX4 3DR

When: 17th – 20th March (only 3 workshop slots remain, these are Tuesday at 9.30, Thursday at 9.30 and Friday 9.30).

Who: Year 4, 5 and 6 classes in primary schools in OX4. Priority for twinned primary schools.

How: Book a place [here](#). For further information contact sarah.hilton@biology.ox.ac.uk.

Balliol College Chemistry Taster Day [NEW]

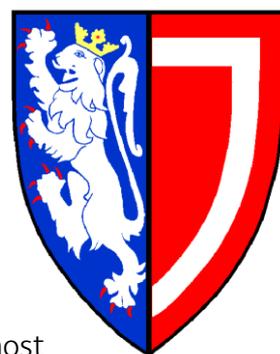
What: Booking is now open for Balliol College’s Chemistry Taster Day. This event is aimed at state school students in Year 12 who are seriously considering applying to Oxford to study Chemistry. This event will include an admission session, lectures, a demonstration interview and an opportunity to meet undergraduates who are studying Chemistry at Balliol. A two-course hot lunch will be provided, free of charge.

Please note that support with travel costs will be only be available for the most disadvantaged applicants who live in households which fall into POLAR 4 categories 1 or 2 or IMD decile 1 or 2.

Where: Balliol College

When: Friday 5th June 2026.

How: Sign up [here](#). **Deadline to apply 17th May.** Applicants will be notified as to whether their application has been successful or not as soon as possible after the deadline.



Effective delivery of practical work – In-person course [REPEAT]

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.

Oxford Online Maths Club [REPEAT]

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](#).

Maths & Computer Science Open Days **[NEW]**

What: This year, the Department of Mathematics are holding two Mathematics & Computer Science Departmental Open Days; the first will take place in-person at the Maths Institute in Oxford on Saturday 25th April 2026 and then there will be an online open day on Saturday 23rd May 2026.

For the in-person open day on Saturday 25 April, there are three options to choose from:

- Mathematics/Mathematics & Statistics, Mathematics & Philosophy (10:00am start)
- Mathematics/Mathematics & Statistics, Mathematics & Philosophy (11:00am start)
- Mathematics & Computer Science (10:00am start)

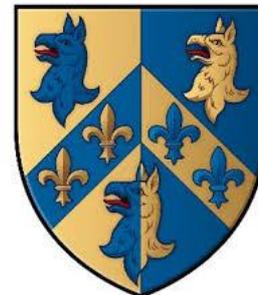
When: Saturday 25th April (in-person) and Saturday 23rd May (online)

How: Booking is required for the in-person event and places will be allocated on a first come first served basis, book [here](#). Registration is not necessary for the virtual event however you can register your interest [here](#).

Beyond the Classroom! - Online Academic Enrichment Programme

[NEW]

What: Online after-school academic enrichment programme new series of mini lectures, Oxplore taster sessions, academic skills talks and advice about preparing for university study and submitting a competitive application to university and the University of Oxford. Gain a certificate demonstrating your commitment to super-curricular enrichment!



Where: Online on Teams.

When: On Tuesdays at 4:30pm-5:30pm, beginning Tuesday the 10 March 2026, (excl school holidays) for 15 sessions running to Tuesday 7 July. Students can opt in for the sessions of their choice.

Who: Any state school student in Year 7 to 12 who is interested in exploring learning across a broad range of themes and across subjects beyond the classroom, and/or may be interested in applying to Oxford.

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

EMPower 2026 **[NEW]**

What: What An exciting opportunity for young scientists! EMPower Oxford connects students of Black heritage with cutting-edge research and inspiring role models. Meet scientists, hear their stories, and discover all the amazing things you can achieve in STEM! EMPower is a two-year programme for students of Black heritage which includes online workshops, academic mentoring and, for some Y10 students, a short residential course in Oxford. Participation in the programme is completely free.

Where: Online (with a Y10 residential event in Oxford for some students)

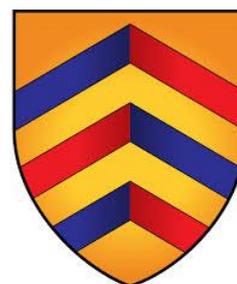
When: 11th & 18th March; 29th April, 6th & 12th May 2026

Who: UK-based Year 10 state-school students

How: More information and applications, can be found [here](#).

Merton College Year 12 Study Days **[NEW]**

What: These residential Study Days are designed to give students from non-selective UK state schools who are considering applying to competitive universities an insight into what life and study is like at an Oxford college. The Study Days will include a series of academic taster sessions and the opportunity to speak to current Oxford undergraduate students.



Where: Online

When: April to November 2026

Who:

- Year 12 students (or equivalent) at UK state schools. Priority will be given to students from their [link areas](#) as this is Merton Pathways' inaugural year.
- Identify as belonging to a Black or Minority Ethnic background.
- GCSE (or equivalent) Grade Profile average of 6 and above.
- Be interested in applying to competitive university courses, which may include Oxford and Cambridge.

How: For more information, please go to [Merton's Access and Outreach: Schemes and Events](#). Application available at [Merton Pathways: Sign Up Form – Fill out form](#). The deadline to submit your application is **Sunday 15th of March 2026**.

Lady Margaret Hall Taster Days **[NEW]**

What: LMH Taster Days are an opportunity for Year 12 students to have a taste of what it is like to study at the University of Oxford. These free events include lectures and hands-on academic sessions which have been designed and delivered by LMH's subject tutors, alongside insight into the Oxford application process. Participants will also be given a tour of the college by a current undergraduate student, and lunch in their dining hall.



Where: Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford

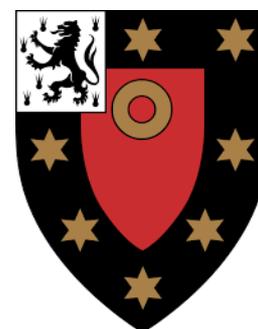
When: Mathematics and Computer Science - Wednesday 6th May & Physics - Monday 27th April

Who: Yr 12 students from state schools in the UK who have the potential to make a competitive application to the University of Oxford.

How: Find out more and register for this event [here](#). If you would be unable to attend without support with travel expenses, please contact outreach@lmh.ox.ac.uk. **Application deadline 12 noon on 18th March.**

St John's College study / subject exploration days **[NEW]**

What: What Inspire Study Days are immersive, subject-specific events that take place at St John's College that enable Y12 students to experience what it is like to study their chosen subject at university. These events are free and include various workshops and lectures, college tours, and free lunch.



Where: St John's College, Oxford

When: 28th March - Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (virtual), 29th April - Maths & Computer Science.

Who: Year 12 UK state school students

How: The application forms for different subjects can be found [here](#). Please note students should only apply to one event. **Deadlines: Applications close 7 weeks ahead of each event.**

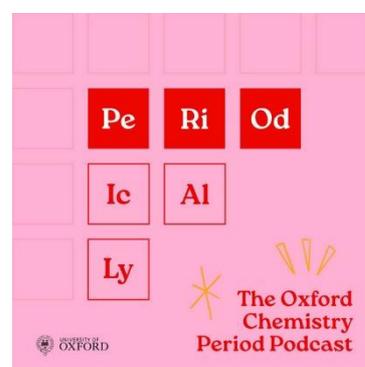
Other Opportunities: Enrichment and CPD

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](#).



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 deadline for submission is **Monday 16th March, 2026, at 23:59 GMT.**

Trinity College Teacher CPD Programme [REPEAT]

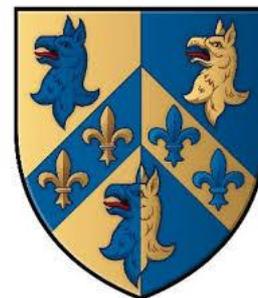
What: A programme made up of six sessions, running between January and October each year, that each provide up to date practical information and guidance relating to the Oxford application process and the purpose of each stage, for example, the admissions tests and interviews.

Where: Online.

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

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

How: Register [here](#).



Learning Resource:

Nuclear stress slows down protein synthesis [NEW]

A study by the [Aye group](#) at Oxford Chemistry demonstrates how localized accumulation (or build-up) of lipid-derived metabolites can have an impact across the cell, ultimately slowing protein synthesis. [You can read the full study in Nature Chemical Biology](#). The group's work is the first study that links nuclear stress buildup to a decrease in translation. It also identifies one of the earliest known gain-of-function mechanisms triggered by small-molecule cellular stressors – that is, a process in which a single chemical modification on a fraction of the specific *upstream* protein activates new *downstream* cellular functions.



The NCBP1 protein with nuclear stress-sensing function, as discovered in this study, in the cell nucleus (pink) as shown by live fluorescence