

# Biochemical Society Science Communication Prize 2021

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For over a decade, the Biochemical Society has looked to identify and celebrate outstanding science communication talent in molecular biosciences with an annual Science Communication Competition. In 2020, to mark the 10th anniversary of this scheme, the Biochemical Society renamed its Science Communication Competition as the 'Biochemical Society Science Communication Prize'.

The prize has always attracted an international portfolio of engaging and creative voices, and the 2021 edition was no exception. Entries had to be bioscience themed and aimed at the general public and were accepted as written pieces of up to 1500 words or in a media format – such as video or audio, 2–5 minutes long – across two categories: one open to foundation/undergraduate students and another to postgraduate students.

The Biochemical Society and the prize judges were impressed with the number of very high standard entries, making competition for this year's prize as fierce as in previous rounds. These entries were judged by a panel of four experts across science communication practice: Dr Heather Doran (Public Engagement Manager at the Leverhulme Centre for Forensic Science, University of Dundee, and Science Editor for *The Biochemist*), Dr Sorrel Bunting (Head of Communities and Engagement at Springer Nature Group), Dr Anthea Lacchia (freelance science writer and journalist, audio producer and science communicator) and Joe Burton (Education and Public Engagement Manager at the Linnean Society).

The Society is pleased to celebrate the 2021 Biochemical Society Science Communication Prize winners, all of them video entries! The winners of each category receives a cash prize – £300 for the first prize, £200 for the second prize and £100 for the third prize – and access to a mentoring session with an experienced science communicator who can provide advice based on their own career experiences. This prize follows a continued recognition from the Biochemical Society of the importance of science communication and outreach practice and training, which includes the Scientific Outreach Grants and the Introduction to Public Engagement and Science Policy online course.

The winning entries in the foundation/undergraduate category covered biomolecular topics as wide as painkillers and the answer to the age-old question 'How much coffee

is too much?' Resorting to an impressive array of creative techniques, from digital to stop-motion animation, these videos showcased clear and engaging science with remarkable media mastery.

The first prize in the foundation/undergraduate category went to Faye Singleton, a third-year undergraduate studying biomedical sciences at the University of York. On receiving the prize, Faye commented: "I've been making YouTube videos since I was 10 years old and have built my audience to 25,000 subscribers. I now focus my videos on all aspects of student life. I wanted to create a topic on something that could be useful to the general public. After some research I found a news article surrounding the adverse effects of Paracetamol. I felt the mechanism to how the drug works as well as the potential dangers of it, were not so commonly known within the general public. This was my gap! I decided to illustrate the complexity of this painkiller into an easy-to-understand narrative, hoping to inform my audience. I was over the moon to find I had received first place in this competition. I'm hoping to pursue a career in medical science communications and hopefully this is just the beginning!"

The postgraduate category comprised another inspiring set of prize-winning videos. The first prize went to Madeleine Ball, a PhD student at the Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge. On her prize-winning entry, Madeleine said: "I decided to make my video about the Sonic Hedgehog gene because I had heard about it before even going to university – it made me smile and realise that science wasn't just about very serious academic pursuits, but that there was light-heartedness and a human-side behind scientific work also."

Madeleine also added: "I love science, and getting the chance to communicate what I'm so passionate about is something that I've always wanted to do – this competition was the first time I ever made any video, or piece of science communication aimed at the public and I'm thrilled it went so well! Winning this prize has motivated me to continue making science videos, and has reminded me that no matter where my scientific career may take me, I can embrace the human side of research and keep having fun with it."

The six winning entries can be viewed on the Science Communication Prize webpage hosted on Biochemical Society website. ■