

Newsletter December 2025

School News

Dr. Raphael Darcy RIP

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Raphael Darcy, retired organic chemistry lecturer and former colleague. Our condolences go to his family and friends. Please see our tribute to Rafe [here](#).

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis



Evacuation 15th – 16th December 2025

Following the discovery of solid peroxides in a container of stored solvent the university approached professional disposal agents to destroy them. This required the temporary closure of the School and, for a time, the O'Brien Centre on 15-16 December. Hydroperoxides form in many frequently used lab ethers including diethyl ether and di-isopropyl ether once they are exposed to air, sometimes light is also required to activate the reaction. The School Safety Committee asks all groups to review their stock of opened ether bottles and to assess disposal routes as required, either disposing of these safely in-house, or adding to the inventory for professional disposal. This is part of the ongoing effort in the School to reduce both the solvent and chemical stock held in the building, moving instead towards more frequent orders of smaller amounts of both solvents and chemicals. The Safety Committee will also review storage options outside the building for those solvents destined for professional disposal.

Grace Morgan, Head of Safety

PhD & MSc Conferrings – 3rd December 2025



Sixteen PhD students were conferred with their degrees at 11am on Wednesday 3rd of December 2025 and we were delighted to celebrate with them at a school event after the ceremony in O'Reilly Hall. You can read more about our new PhDs and their research on the School website [here](#).

At the later conferring ceremony that day, two MScs by Research and our Taught MSc Class of 2024/25 were also conferred with their Masters degrees.



Congratulations to all of our new graduates.

Novartis Dr. Vincent Barry Medal 2025

The [Novartis Dr. Vincent Barry Medal](#) for 2025 was awarded to Arun Madathil, the best performing student across both Taught MSc programmes ([Taught MScs in Chemistry by Negotiated Learning and Advanced Synthetic Chemistry](#)) of the Taught MSc Class of 2024/25. Mr Shane Hayes of Novartis Ireland presented Arun with his medal before the conferring ceremony, and we were very happy to host the whole class at a school event to celebrate all of their achievements. Many thanks to Shane for coming along to present the medal and to Novartis for their ongoing sponsorship. See more on our website [here](#).



L to R: Shane Hayes of Novartis, Arun Madathil, Paul Evans & James Sullivan

School of Chemistry Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team with the Athena Swan Silver Award



L to R: James Sullivan, Marina Rubini, Kristy Stanley, Elaine O'Reilly (Chair), Deirdre Murphy, Celine Erkley, Jimmy Muldoon, Marianne Haarr. Members not present: Julia Bruno, Tom Hooper and Simon Smith.

School of Chemistry Ad Astra Scholar Jonas Stafford wins Gold

Congratulations to 3rd year Ad Astra Chemistry student and Elite Athlete Jonas Stafford who won a Team U-23 gold medal at the European Cross Country Championships in Portugal this weekend. You can read about the Irish Team's and Jonas' success on the Irish Times website at [here](#) and on RTE [here](#).

Technical Officers contribute to RSC report on disability-inclusive labs

The RSC has released its report on disability-inclusive labs in the chemical sciences, and best practices in catering for all forms of disability in the lab. Two case studies relate directly to our School. The first relates to Colin and his work with ALL in the early assessment of students' needs in the lab and putting in place the appropriate support. The second was in relation to Universal Design in the lab carried out by Kristy including making the CHEM00010 lab manual more accessible to neurodiverse students. You can read the full case studies [here](#):

[Creation of a dedicated role to liaise between the Chemistry School and disability team](#)

[Universal design course and managing adjustments in a university lab](#)

If you would like to read the full RCS report you can find it [here](#).

Research Group News

Loh Group News

As a kick-start to the successful awarding of the Young Scientist Grant – International Collaboration Program funded by the National Research Foundation of Korea awarded jointly to Charles Loh (UCD) and Jeonghyo Lee (Hanyang University) for **non-covalent interaction directed catalysis for selective polyol functionalization**, Charles was invited to South Korea and hosted in the first week of December 2025. Charles delivered multiple lectures to leading Korean institutions such as DGIST (Daegu, 1st December 2025), UNIST (Ulsan, 2nd December 2025), Hanyang University (Seoul, 3rd December 2025) and KAIST (5th December 2025, Daejeon) to share insights on the emerging sigma-hole catalyzed glycosylation strategy pioneered by the Loh group. Charles attendance at the annual meeting of the organic chemistry division Korean Chemical Society (Daejeon, 5th December 2025) also sets the stage for deepening research networks with leading Korean colleagues in organic synthesis and catalysis.

This collaborative initiative will lay the groundwork for a series of fruitful joint seminars, discussion meetings and collaborative Irish-Korean organic chemistry research between the Loh and the Lee research groups over a five-year funding period.



Morgan Group News

Francesca Adami - Morgan Group, Mary Flood – UCD School of Chemical & Bioprocess Engineering and NIBRT National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training, Wiktoria Brytan - University of Limerick, and Almudena Moreno-Borrallo - Trinity College Dublin, were honoured with an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Award from SSPC for their work within the ICI Young Chemists' Network EDI Committee.



The team was recognised for their commitment to fostering an inclusive chemical sciences community and for organising the first 'Young Chemists for Change – Advancing Equity in Chemistry' conference at UCD in May 2024, with 80+ attendees from seven universities and industry partners. <https://sspc.ie/sspc-equality-diversity-inclusion-award/>

Fung Group News

Filip Stypula, a 2nd year UCD Chemistry Undergraduate researcher at Senpai Learn, presented his work “*Using 3 GenAI to Self-Learn Modelling of an Anti-Tumour Prodrug*” as a Student Paper at the 33rd Irish Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science (AICS 2025) in Dublin on 2nd December 2025.

Dr. Fung was an invited participant at the [EU high-level Conference on Reforming Research Assessment](#) held in Copenhagen, Denmark on 3-4

December 2025. He participated in discussions with experts on the CoARA and DORA committees, among others.



Dr. Fung was an invited participant at the [UNESCO-GSoLEN](#) Annual meeting on the science of learning held in Paris, France from 11—12 December 2025. He contributed to discussions on addressing UN SDG 4 focus using knowledge brokering that inform the global and national policy discourses on transforming education.

Dr. Fung presented his work on Hydragen – a Machine Learning Intelligent Tutoring System for Mass Spectrometry at the [Singapore Scientific Conference](#) 2025, held 8-10 December 2025. At the conference, Senpai Learn member Jamie Khoo presented the poster on an international collaboration on preparing enhance the human potential and development of scientists using sustainable resilience.



Dr. Fung was selected to participate in a OPCW Technical Meeting of Experts from 4-6 November 2025 at the Hague, Netherlands. He had a successful nomination as a member of the OPCW Interim Coordinating Group to establish a Global Academic Network.



McGarrigle Group News

Congratulations to Finn McCaffrey on being awarded an NUI Travelling Doctoral Studentship in the Sciences. These awards are very rare, with no more than one chemistry PhD in Ireland getting one in any given year. Finn will spend a significant part of his PhD in Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in the lab of his co-supervisor Prof. Ona Illa Soler. His project focuses on organocatalytic asymmetric epoxidation.



Eoghan gave a research seminar on using light in organosulfur chemistry at the University of Nottingham while there to examine the PhD thesis of Joseph Driscoll, a student from the Liam Ball group in the CDT in Sustainable Chemistry.

The group enjoyed a Christmas Dinner in Shaku Maku in Rathmines with the Gilheany, Palma and Nikitin groups (we were having so much craic we forgot to take a photo!). Most of the lab also attended the ChemSoc Christmas Dinner.



Publications

Windle, C. J., Kim, Y., Han, J. Y., Ong, J. S. H., & Fung, F. M. (2025). Hydragen: An Open-Accessed, Personalized Learning Platform for Mass Spectrometry. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 102(10), 4479-4488.

<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/acs.jchemed.5c00722>

Pei, W. B., Liu, J. L., Wu, J., Fung, F. M., & Ren, X. M. (2025). Enhanced Accuracy and Efficiency in Measuring the Rate Constant for Ethyl Acetate Saponification. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 102(10), 4595-4602.

<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/acs.jchemed.5c00554>

Fung, F. M., Khoo, J. Z., & Liu, Y. H. (2025). Reframing Science Diplomacy: Building a Regional Academic Network for Disaster-Prepared Research Collaboration and Emotional Recovery. *ACS Chemical Health & Safety*.

<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/acs.chas.5c00140>

Fung, F. M., & Chiu, M. H. (2025). Continuing to bridge the gender gap in chemistry. *Trends in Chemistry*.

[https://www.cell.com/trends/chemistry/fulltext/S2589-5974\(25\)00181-9](https://www.cell.com/trends/chemistry/fulltext/S2589-5974(25)00181-9)

Conor Shine, John R. F. B. Connolly, Robert D. Murphy, Hazel Lafferty, Abdalmalek Alfnikh, Ned P. Buijs, Hawraa Shahroud, Nathaniel I. Martin, Eoghan O'Neill, George Amarandei, **Jimmy Muldoon**, Marc Maresca, Deirdre Fitzgerald-Hughes, Marc Devocelle ... First published: 18 June 2025 <https://doi.org/10.1002/cbic.202500258>

Synthesis of Trifluoromethylated Analogues of the Cyclic Lipopeptide Iturin A and Evaluation of their Antifungal Activity. Periklis Karamanis, Matthew Kiernan, **Jimmy Muldoon**, Paul Evans, Cormac D. Murphy, Marina Rubini First published: 12 December 2025 <https://doi.org/10.1002/cplu.202500590>

Upcoming Events

Seminar Series 2025/26 – The busy schedule of seminars by invited guests and visiting extern examiners continues. Details of all upcoming seminars can be found on the [School website](#).
