

Workshop on effective conference talks

Dr. Avril Arthur-Goettig, bioXpress

Instructions to participants: Before the course, each participant should prepare a preliminary talk, including ppt slides, for a short oral presentation of about 7 minutes. Participants should bring their ppt slides on a USB stick, and an A4 printout of one example slide, as well as their own laptops to work on their presentations. Those participants with few or no data/results should choose a theme they are working on and similarly put together information and visual material for a scientific talk (e.g. background, experimental set up, aims, predicted results and potential contribution to the field). A 7-minute presentation means about 7-9 slides (1 introduction; 5-6 content; 1-2 summary/conclusions) and is ample to highlight the various key points in an oral presentation. In addition one can have a title slide (with institute / affiliation) and acknowledgement slide.

First day: The morning comprises an introduction to the key points about choosing the content, organizing, structuring, designing, and presenting a scientific talk (in English), as well as tips to increase confidence, paying attention to body language, and dealing with question and answer sessions.

In the afternoon, depending on the size of the group, we will split into two. One sub-group can work directly on polishing up + tips for optimally presenting material as a group together with the trainer. The other sub-group session will have time to prepare/modify/improve their presentation on their own. The sub-groups then swap over.

Second day: Participants give their talks in the context of a “mini-meeting”, which will be filmed. Everyone will take part in a “question and answer session” (which will not be filmed) and provide general feedback about the talk as a whole. Participants should bring a USB stick to make a copy of the video to watch later on for their own personal feedback and the opportunity to see themselves “in action”.

Workshop trainer: The trainer is a native English speaker with a PhD in molecular biology. She spent many years in research as a joint group leader before becoming a full-time scientific editor, writer, translator, and trainer.