



# UCD SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY

NEWSLETTER | April 2025



UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion  
Cultivating a Culture of Respect and Belonging

## FYI - EDI

The University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report for the academic year 2023/2024 is now available on the [EDI website](#) and sets out some of the achievements, initiatives and activities over the last academic year.

## Congratulations

Robert Johnson has recently been promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor.

Huge congratulations Robert on this well-deserved recognition!



## Thank you!

A huge thanks to all the speakers and chairs who have contributed of this trimester's [Lessons in Chemistry](#) series:

Celine Erkey, Ram Rajesh, Ioanna Bampouri, Simon Nicholas Smith, Eleanor Windle, Smit Patel, Marianne Haar, Fionn Mc Neill, Christine Coffey, Philip Jamieson, Innes McClelland, Daniel Graczyk, Dominik Duleba, Amber Barry, Sandhya Kapurwan, Ramesh Golla, Craig Chamney, Olivia Breen, Conor Kelly, Emmelyne Cuza, Aisling Byrne, David McLaughlin, Viktorija Mikaite, Liam Jowett, Gawain Boyce, Liam Casey.

It has been a pleasure listening to you speak and learning about your research!





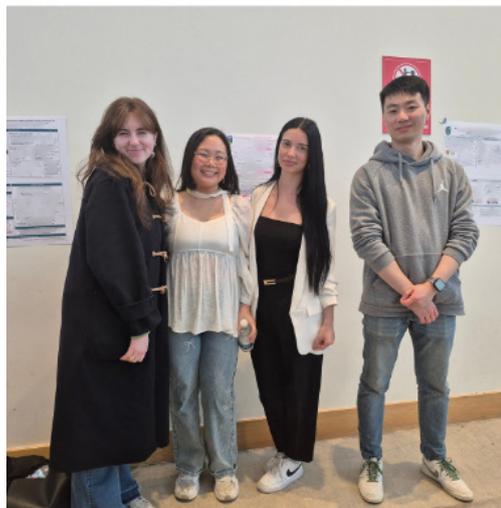
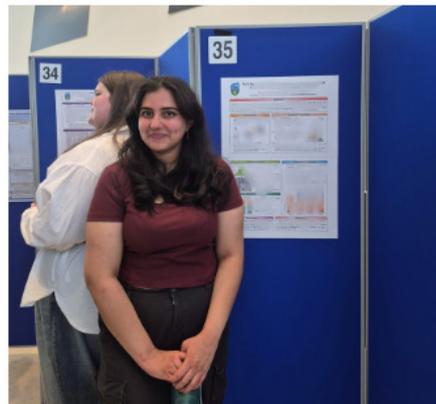
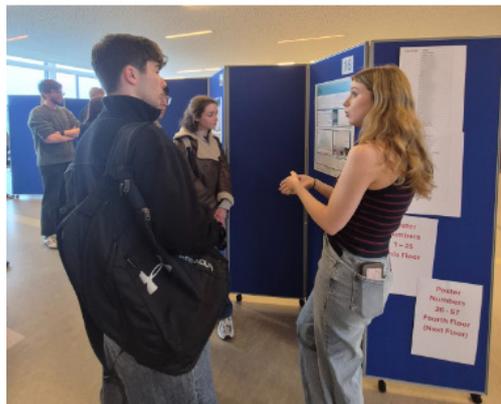
# BSc Stage 4 - Project Posters

Congratulations to our Stage 4 students from the BSc programmes for presenting their project posters on 22nd of April. We are proud of your achievements and the journey you have made so far! See some pictures below.





# BSc Stage 4 - Project Posters



# ChemSoc 79th Inaugural Lecture

Well done to the UCD Chemical Society for organizing the 79th Inaugural Lecture. The lecture took place last Thursday, 24th of April, and featured Professor Helma Wennemers from ETH Zürich, who presented a lecture called "Peptides: Molecular Allrounders."



## UCD CHEMICAL SOCIETY



CORDIALLY INVITES YOU

TO THE 79<sup>TH</sup> INAUGURAL LECTURE BY  
**Prof. Helma Wennemers, ETH Zürich.**

**3:00 PM THURSDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025**  
THEATRE CO04 - HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW: FOURTH FLOOR ATRIUM, SCIENCE EAST  
AFTERPARTY: FARMER BROWN'S, CLONSKEAGH

# congratulations

## BOC Gases Award for Grad Research Students 2024/2025



The award presentations took place on Thursday, 24th of April. Mr. Kieran Hennessy, Business and Relations Manager from BOC Gases joined Associate Professor Vitaly Buckin to announce the winners and to present their awards. The standard of entries was extremely high and all applicants were congratulated for their entries. Read more [here](#).



**Congratulations to the joint winners:**

>>Dominik Duleba

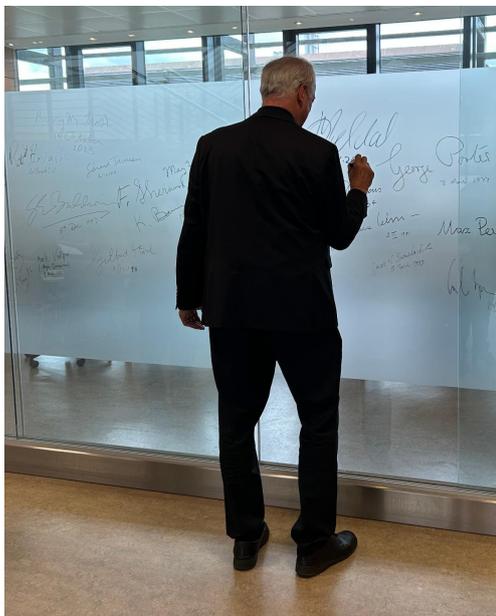
>>Ruairi Crawford



L to R: James Sullivan, Kieran Hennessy BOC Gases Ireland Ltd., Ruairi Crawford, Dominik Duleba, Robert Johnson, Marcus Baumann, Vitaly Buckin.

# Professor Morten Meldal Signs UCD Chemistry Wall

On Tuesday 15th of April, the School was honoured with a visit from Nobel Laureate Professor Morten Meldal to sign the glass wall on the 3rd floor of Science South as is the longstanding tradition in UCD School of Chemistry. Professor Meldal's signature joins those of Nobel prize winners, Wheeler lecturers, and other eminent chemists who have visited the School in the past.



Professor Morten Meldal Signing UCD Chemistry Wall



Staff look on as Professor Meldal signs the Chemistry glass wall.

Some of our graduate research students, postdoctoral research staff, and final year undergraduate students were also given the opportunity to meet with Professor Meldal in an informal careers session organised by Dr. Marina Rubini.

The visit was an invaluable experience for both students and staff in the School and we are very grateful to Professor Meldal for taking the time to come and see us. Read more [here](#).



Left to Right: Marcus Baumann, James Sullivan, Marina Rubini, Professor Morten Meldal, Aniello Palma

# Publications from staff and students in the School

## News from the Cussen Research Group

### Developing longer-lasting saggars for battery cathode production

Reducing costs is the holy grail of battery production at scale – a philosophy that extends right through the supply chain, with any cost savings benefiting consumers. A collaboration between Morgan Advanced Materials and Professor Serena Cussen has helped Morgan develop a new, longer-lasting saggarr – a ceramic box used in the production of cathode active materials – that could help manufacturers save money and avoid preventable accidents during manufacture.

Professor Cussen's team (then at the University of Sheffield) provided Morgan with two kilograms of high-quality Ni-rich cathode precursors for crucial in-house qualification and testing to develop their finished product. Morgan believes its finished saggarr offers up to a 100% longer life compared to other products on the market. The saggarr is also fully recyclable, and several companies have already shown an interest in using it in their production processes. A demonstration line has been set up in India to make the saggars, and by the end of 2025 it will be capable of producing 10,000 units annually.

**Read more at** <https://www.faraday.ac.uk/success-stories/developing-longer-lasting-saggars/>

## Publication from the O'Reilly Research Group

### Transaminase-Triggered Cascades for the Synthesis and Dynamic Kinetic Resolution of Chiral N-Heterocycles

(Adam O'Connell, Marianne Haarr, James Ryan, Xingxing Xu, Aoife Martin, Simon Smith, Nadia Elghobashi-Meinhardt, Patricia Fleming, Beatriz Macia, Vittorio Capprio, Elaine O'Reilly)

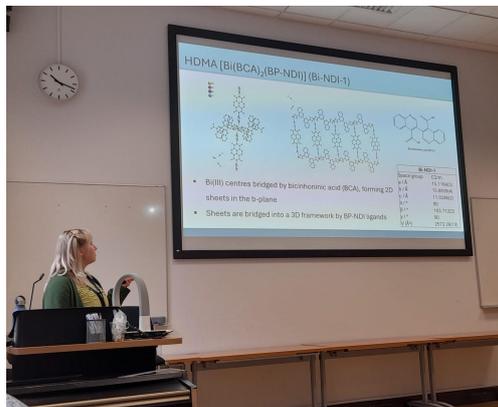
Congratulations to Dr Adam O'Connell (former PhD student in the O'Reilly group) for publishing his PhD thesis work. The publication showcases how enzyme triggered reaction cascades for the formation of sp<sup>3</sup>-rich heterocycles can be used to set up to five stereocentres in one pot.

Coauthors on the paper include a technical officer, academics, postdocs, PhD students, a master student and an undergraduate student from UCD and Manchester Metropolitan University.

**Read more at** *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* 2025, e202422584. <https://doi.org/10.1002/anie.202422584>

# Conferences Attended

At the beginning of April, Christine and Ronán from the Hooper Research Group travelled to the University of Warwick in Coventry for the biannual RSC Dalton conference. Speakers at this conference included Michael Hill, Claire Carmalt, and Paul Pringle. Christine and Ronán both presented posters detailing their research on phosphonium cations, their tunability, and reactivity to a diverse organometallic and main group inorganic audience.



The Keene Research Group attended the British Crystallographic Association Spring Meeting in Leeds, where Viktorija presented her research on "Big Ligands, Big Possibilities: Shining a Light on NDI-Based Coordination Polymers" at the Early Stage Crystallographers Group Satellite Meeting. Olivia presented her research on "Diverse polymorphism in metal ammonia oxalate hydrate coordination polymers" in the main meeting. Colm presented a poster on "Synthesis and Characterisation of Porous Discrete Complexes".

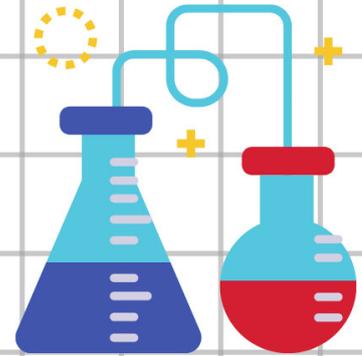
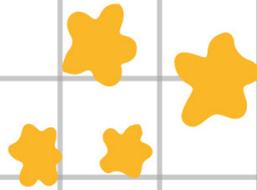
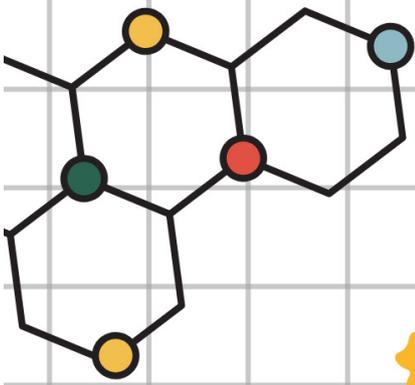
## News from the Keene Research Group

Olivia, Viktorija and Tony from the Keene Research Group recently got the chance to carry out experiments at Diamond Light Source in the UK for 48 hours with the help from the team on the I19 beamline. They carried out single crystal X-ray diffraction experiments on samples with pressures reaching 8 GPa.



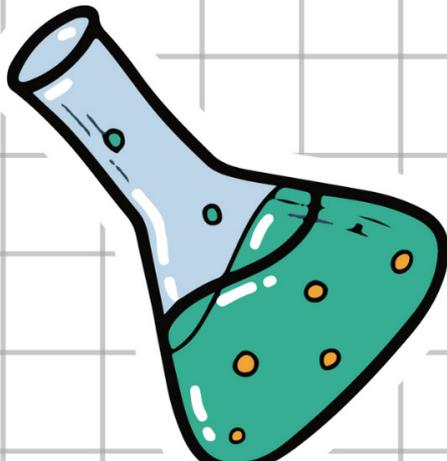
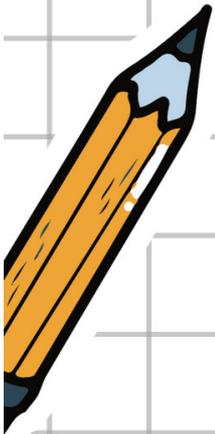
# What is on in UCD?

## Exams



**TO ALL OUR  
STUDENTS**

**Good luck in  
your exams!**





# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## **Technical Staff Mentor Training Programme** **Thursday – 8th May 9am–2pm**

The CoS and SoC EDI are running this training and they still have a few spaces left. If anyone knows any other technical staff in the College who would be interested in joining they can email Kristy Stanley at [kristy.stanley@ucd.ie](mailto:kristy.stanley@ucd.ie) (organiser).

Chemistry Third Year PhD Talks in UCD

**21st of May 2025**

programme will be circulated in due course

76th Irish Universities Chemistry Research  
Colloquium Mon 16th and Tue 17th June 2025  
at Maynooth University