

## Practical skills of new undergraduates: research workshops

**Invitation to take part in a review aimed at securing a central and sustained role for high quality practical work in secondary school science.**

**Aimed at Undergraduate Admissions Tutors in science subject areas, First Year Laboratory/ Practical Teachers and other interested individuals.**

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation has a deep and long-standing interest in the quality of science education in the UK, and considers practical work to be a fundamental part of teaching and learning in the sciences and engineering.

The Foundation is currently investigating the standard of practical skills possessed by students with science A-Levels (or equivalent) embarking on undergraduate science and engineering courses. A small-scale study into the views of undergraduate teachers by Laura Grant Associates in May 2011 revealed widely held perceptions about a deficit in practical skills of new undergraduates, and a decline in these skills perceived by many.

As part of a wider review the Gatsby Charitable Foundation has now commissioned further research aimed at understanding how science A levels (or equivalent) can better prepare young people for undergraduate courses in the sciences and engineering in terms of practical work. Policymakers and awarding bodies have made clear their intention to better respond to the needs of Higher Education and the Foundation is confident that the outputs from this research will be of significant interest to them as they redevelop post-16 science qualifications.

**You are warmly invited to contribute your views at one of a series of workshops.**

### Workshop outline

*Aim: to understand how science A levels (or equivalent) can better prepare young people for undergraduate courses in the sciences in terms of practical work.*

The workshops invite participants to discuss this issue further and identify the specific needs of the different scientific disciplines, as well as engineering. They will explore the following questions:

- What practicals are undertaken in first year? Which are common across institutions?
- What key skills/competencies do first years need to come equipped with to succeed? Do these differ between subjects, types of universities and students from different countries within the UK and beyond?
- Which of these skills are first years well equipped with, and which do they lack? Are certain skill levels improving or declining? To what extent is there consensus among undergraduate teachers about trends?
- What are the implications for university departments?

	Venue	Subject Area Focus (inc. associated applied courses)	Dates 12.30 - 4.30pm
<b>Manchester</b>	University of Manchester	Chemistry-Physics	Tue 6 Sep
<b>Bristol</b>	University of Bristol	Biology-Chemistry	Wed 7 Sep
<b>London</b>	Institute of Physics	Biology - Chemistry	Thu 8 Sep
<b>London</b>	Institute of Physics	Physics-Engineering	Tue 13 Sep

### Registration

(You may reserve places for more than one contributor from your University, but we ask that no more than two participants attend from the same Department.)

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