Module Specification

Contemporary Science Communication

Version: 2025-26, v2.0, Approved

Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Contemporary Science Communication

Module code: USSJM3-30-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2025-26

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Applied Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field: Applied Sciences

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module explores a range of contemporary routes through which the public encounter science and technology, including science centres and museums and digital technologies, as well as developing students' understandings of communication strategy, planning and management.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: This module aims to introduce students to a range of contemporary practices in science communication, including communication management, a range of communication channels (such as museums, digital spaces and a wide range of other places where science communication occurs) as well as introducing science communication roles and competences.

Outline syllabus: Students will explore a range of theoretical perspectives relevant to contemporary science communication, consider approaches to communication planning and management as well as become acquainted with the wide range of approaches used by science communicators proactively seeking to engage the public with science. Students will also explore the methodologies that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of science communication initiatives.

The concept of the public will be returned to in this module with a view to understanding current conceptualisations of 'public' audiences, including consideration of aspects of inclusion. Issues of attracting audiences as well as current dilemmas surrounding the fragmentation of publics will be examined. Linked to this, the module will explore emerging opportunities to communicate science via digital technologies.

This module also has a focus on exploring the roles science communicators adopt and the competences necessary to work in the field. As such we have a focus on developing science communication skills, including presentation and teamwork skills.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: This module will be taught using a block structure. During the intensive teaching sessions, material will be delivered through a variety of lecture, seminar and workshop sessions. Students will be expected to take an active role in developing and running workshop and seminar sessions. In addition to the intensive teaching periods, students are expected to completed directed and independent learning. These may take a variety of formats including participating in local science communication activities where these are available.

Synchronous or asynchronous group work organised in the student's own time will be required to support assessed work.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Demonstrate critical awareness of a range of traditional and emerging approaches to science communication and the factors that influence engagement with them.

MO2 Apply conceptualisations of the public to the communication of science.

MO3 Plan an original science communication intervention grounded in current theory and professional practice, and clearly communicate and justify the approach to a professional audience.

MO4 Demonstrate critical understanding of professional science communication roles.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ussjm3-30-m.html

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Assessment 1: Presentation (20 minutes + 5 minutes question and answers)
A group presentation with an individual reflection (approx. 500 words). This assessment is designed to develop professional skills, such as presentation skills, as well as allowing students to explore in depth a specific science communication approach. The reflection encourages students to consider their skills as a science

communicator and to demonstrate their personal learning journey through this project. It also allows for an element of individual marking.

Assessment 2: Report (3000 words)
A critical review of a science communication project of the student's choosing. This allows students to deepen their understanding of a particular science communication approach and relate this to relevant science communication theory.

Inclusion of a group presentation and written assignment provides variety of assessment types on this module and contributes to the diversity of assessments on the programme as a whole. The inclusion of group work encourages students to develop their team work skills, which are important in many science communication roles. Presentation marks will be allocated equally to all members of the group; individual marks will be allocated to the reflection. Combining this with an individual assignment ensures students must demonstrate their abilities.

Formative feedback opportunities are offered, specifically to support students in developing the topic area for their presentation and in choosing an appropriate science communication project to critique. These feedback opportunities also enable feedback to students on the appropriateness of the theoretical lens through which they choose to explore their chosen topic areas.

Assessment tasks:

Presentation (First Sit)
Description: Presentation and reflection (25 minutes).
Weighting: 50 %
Final assessment: No
Group work: Yes
Learning outcomes tested: MO2, MO3

Report (First Sit)
Description: Report (3000 words)
Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO4

Presentation (Resit)
Description: Presentation and reflection (25 minutes).
Weighting: 50 %
Final assessment: No
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO2, MO3

Report (Resit)
Description: Report (3000 words)
Weighting: 50 %
Final assessment: Yes
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Science Communication [Frenchay] MSc 2025-26

Science Communication [Frenchay] MSc 2025-26

Science Communication [Frenchay] MSc 2025-26

Science Communication [Frenchay] MSc 2025-26