

***Aberdeen's Young Scientists Enlightened by Fish that Glow in the Dark***

Aberdeen's scientists of the future are to be set a smell challenge, investigate deep sea creatures that glow in the dark, explore the extraordinary properties of water and discover how fossils are used as evidence for the development of life on Earth from 3.5 billion years ago to the present day. These events are organised by The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) and supported by aim4uni, a widening access scheme developed by the University of Aberdeen, which encourages students in schools and colleges to find out, prepare for and, experience university life.

The *Startup Science* series offers junior secondary pupils who have shown an enthusiasm and flair for science and technology, exposure to the inspiration of experts, and the opportunity to roll-up their sleeves and take-on practical, hands-on challenges. The series starting in Aberdeen on February 26th will be delivered by leading academics on a voluntary basis. Successful classes covering other varied, scientific topics have recently been run successfully by the RSE in Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St.Andrews.

The masterclasses, which are free, are aimed at enthusiastic S1 & S2 pupils who are likely to make positive responses to new ideas, and who do not give in too easily. These popular classes, which operate on a first-come, first-served basis are already full, but the RSE plans to run more in the Spring. Masterclasses in other towns and cities have also been highly oversubscribed. There will be a break for refreshments and on completion of the classes, pupils will be presented with a certificate.

The Royal Society of Edinburgh Education Officer, Dr Harinee Selvadurai said:

*These masterclasses in Aberdeen are extremely important in helping to inspire our young people. We must engage and nurture their interest in science and technology and encourage them to consider the exciting career opportunities in science and engineering. As a nation of pioneers and explorers, we can build upon Scotland's great legacy of invention and ingenuity, and urge our young people to strive for excellence. The Royal Society of Edinburgh will continue to work with teachers and leaders in business and academia to help our young people meet, and seek solutions to the challenges of the twenty first century.*

Aim4uni Project Officer Seema Miah said:

*We are extremely glad that we are working with the Royal Society of Edinburgh on these masterclasses. There is a very real demand in Scotland for expertise in science and engineering. We therefore hope that these masterclasses will encourage pupils to consider these areas as future study and career options.*

**The dates and topics for the sessions to be held at The University of Aberdeen are as follows:**

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| Saturday 26 February | <i>Wonderful Water</i> led by Dr Lesley Glasser.<br>Find out about some of the extraordinary properties of water, and how these affect life on earth.  |
| Saturday 5 March     | <i>Flavours and Fragrances</i> led by Professor Marcel Jaspers.<br>Find out about the nature of flavours and fragrances. After a 'smell challenge' work in the laboratory to extract your own fragrance components.                                  |
| Saturday 12 March    | <i>Fossils: The History of Life</i> led by Dr Nigel Trewin.<br>Find out how fossils are used as evidence for the development of life on Earth from 3.5 billion years ago to the present day.   |
| Saturday 19 March    | <i>Fish that Glow in the Dark</i> led by Professor Monty Priede and Miss Nikki King Find out how staff at Oceanlab study deep-sea animals. Explore what weird and wonderful animals live in the deep, and how they are adapted to their environment. |

**For Further Information on the masterclasses** and to register, please contact:

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**Notes for Editors:**

### 1. *The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)*

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) is Scotland's National Academy of Science & Letters. A wholly independent, non party-political body with charitable status, the RSE is a knowledge resource for the people of Scotland. Organising conferences and lectures both for the specialist and for the general public, the RSE is a forum for informed debate on issues of national and international importance.

The Society draws upon the expertise of its multidisciplinary fellowship of approximately 1300 peer-elected men and women of international standing, to provide independent, expert advice to key decision making bodies, including Government and Parliament. Strengthening links between academia and industry and boosting wealth-generation at home, the Society's Research Awards programme annually awards well over one and a half million pounds to exceptionally talented young academics and potential entrepreneurs. Today, operating a successful programme of inspiring lectures and hands-on workshops for primary and secondary school pupils, the RSE is also active in classrooms from the Borders to the Northern Isles.

The multidisciplinary membership of the RSE makes it unique amongst learned Societies in Great Britain. Its peer-elected fellowship encompasses excellence in the Sciences, Arts, Humanities, the Professions, Industry and Commerce. Born out of the intellectual ferment of the Scottish Enlightenment, the RSE was founded in 1783 by Royal charter for the "advancement of learning and useful knowledge". A progressive Scottish Society, working as part of the UK and within a global context, the Royal Society of Edinburgh is committed to the future of Scotland's social, economic and cultural well-being. The RSE is Scottish Charity No. SC000470

### 2. *Aim4Uni*

In line with the Scottish Executive's policies for Lifelong Learning, the University of Aberdeen, through its **aim4uni** scheme, provides a range of activities and events aimed at widening access to higher education for pupils and staff in schools.

These activities are held for pupils on the University of Aberdeen campus or arranged within and among schools. They are designed to familiarise pupils with a university through interactive talks and workshops, study sessions, inductions, lectures, tours and Open Days.

By becoming better informed about university courses and student life and becoming more familiar with the university environment, pupils might see higher education as a possibility for them.

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