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AWARDEE REPORT FORM

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| NAME | | Siobhan McMahon | | |
| TWITTER HANDLE\* *optional* | |  | | |
| UNIVERSITY | | University of Galway | | |
| NAME OF AWARD | | Public Engagement and Outreach Award | | |
| PURPOSE OF AWARD *conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.* | | | | |
| Financial support for a public engagement activity – My Amazing Brain Exhibition, University of Galway, Galway, Ireland, March 11th and 12th 2025 | | | | |
| REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| This two-day brain exhibition is an annual event that occurs on campus during international brain awareness week. The event allows the Galway Neuroscience Centre (GNC) staff and students to host visitors on the University campus over both days. This outreach event is the largest outreach activity organised by the GNC each year and brings together lecturers, postdoctoral researchers, postgraduate students and undergraduate students who have an interest in neuroscience. The event allows us to host school teachers and young students (age 15-17) on the campus grounds where they meet with and engage with our neuroscience volunteers in a fun and interactive way. School children from both the city and county of Galway were invited and participated in the event. Members of University staff and students also visited the exhibition. The outreach award from the Anatomical Society covered the cost of printing a series of educational posters for the brain exhibition. These posters provided background information and research studies on neurological disorders, stimulating conversations with visitors and the neuroscientists that volunteered at the exhibition stands. A series of A0 information posters were printed. These posters were on display for the duration of the two-day exhibition. The posters covered a variety of neurological conditions including Stress, Parkinson’s disease, Pain, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Anxiety, Depression, Schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s disease, Stroke, Multiple Sclerosis, brain injury and spinal cord injury. | | | | |
| COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event.  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| The “My Amazing Brain” exhibition took place at University of Galway on Tuesday 11th and Wednesday 12th March 2025. Over 300 transition year students and their teachers from schools in the Galway area enjoyed learning about how the brain and nervous system work. The event involved liaising with schools to schedule allocated timeslots for each school over both days and provide students with enough time to visit the exhibition stands. The exhibit consisted of interactive displays where students learnt about the brain in a very practical, hands-on way. In addition to the interactive exhibits, the students had the opportunity to speak and interact with lecturers, postdoctoral researchers, postgraduate students and undergraduate students where they could ask about the brain and current research within the Galway Neuroscience Centre. The student society NeuroSoc also participated in this event where they had an exhibition stand on reflexes. Brain and spinal cord models were available on various stands. Visitors enjoyed visiting the poster boards to learn about all the neurological conditions displayed. In order to facilitate further student engagement, students participated in a quiz focused on answering a number of questions related to the exhibit. Each year we add something new to the exhibition and it was great to see the addition of a new stand and posters at the exhibition this year. | | | | |
| REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant.* For public engagement/outreach awards what did your audience gain and how did you evaluate success?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| This exhibition takes place annually and is always a fun event for volunteers and visitors. Organisation for the event begins months in advance and requires many meetings to ensure an accurate schedule for schools is prepared and sufficient volunteers are recruited. Our volunteers can gain credit for this outreach activity by applying for an ALIVE certificate if they are undergraduate students or including the event as part of the Communication and Outreach structured PhD module if they are postgraduate students. Visitors to the exhibition enjoyed learning from the neuroscientists volunteering at the exhibition stands and participating in the interactive displays. Information leaflets on neurological conditions were freely available and the poster display was very educational. As visitors left the exhibition, they received neuroscience stickers and pins and visitors submitted their completed quiz sheet. A winner was drawn from each school group using the collection of quiz sheets and winners received a university hoodie prize. Visitors were surveyed at the end of the exhibition. Visitors were asked whether they enjoyed the exhibition and what part of the exhibition they enjoyed most. Feedback was assessed from all the different school groups. The results of this feedback was very positive, with over 250 respondents. Over 90% of students enjoyed the exhibit, with the majority of students enjoying the interactive displays and meeting neuroscientists. | | | | |
| REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? For public engagement/outreach awards how with the materials/knowledge generated by this activity be used in the future?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| The brain exhibition has been running for many years and has always been very successful. This year’s event involved bringing two schools from outside the city onto the campus, with the remainder being schools from the city. Although we are aware that the cost of hiring buses has increased, which is a deterrent for many schools, we are keen to encourage more schools from rural areas attend the event. The agenda for the exhibition will be sent to schools earlier to encourage forward planning.  It is clear that the introduction of new exhibition stands adds to the fun and interactive nature of this event and we are aiming to include more activities that are new in coming years.  This award provided funding for print and lamination of a series of A0 size posters. These posters were educational and presented information on various neurological conditions in lay language. As these posters are laminated, they will be used for many years into the future at this annual event during Brain Awareness Week. The feedback from schools highlighted the fact that visitors liked interacting with the displays and meeting neuroscientists. We are very grateful to the volunteers that we recruit each year and are conscious that we cannot run this event without this dedicated team. | | | | |
| Data Protection/GDPR: I consent to the data included in this submission being collected, processed and stored by the Anatomical Society. Answer YES or NO in the Box below | | | | |
| YES | | | | |
| Graphical Images: If you include graphical images you must obtain consent from people appearing in any photos and confirm that you have consent. A consent statement from you must accompany each report if relevant. A short narrative should accompany the image. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |
| Copyright: If you submit images you must either own the copyright to the image or have gained the explicit permission of the copyright holder for the image to be submitted as part of the report for upload to the Society’s website, Newsletter, social media and so forth. A copyright statement must accompany each report if relevant. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |
| SIGNATURE | Siobhan McMahon | | DATE | 25th March 2025 |

*If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature*

*File: AS-Award-Report-Form-171023 – International Conference*