

## STEM, LGBTQ and You Conference 2021 - Biochemical Society Report

The Diversity in Science grant awarded by the Biochemical Society allowed the Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (oSTEM) at University of Birmingham and UK Professionals and Postgraduates chapters to organise the 3rd STEM, LGBTQ and You Conference. This grant provided invaluable support and was the first guaranteed financial backing that allowed us to fully commit to running this event.



STEM, LGBTQ and You was a day-long online conference, which took place on the 19th February 2021, and explored LGBTQ+ experiences in STEM. The day consisted of a variety of talks, focussing on the experiences of being LGBTQ+ within STEM settings. Speakers came from a broad range of disciplines, including biology, physics, engineering, mathematics and science communication. Topics covered included: the impacts of homophobia and transphobia; heteronormativity within teaching; authenticity within the workplace, and LGBTQ+ visibility within science communication. There was also a panel discussion focussing on the impact of the pandemic on LGBTQ+ communities and STEM communication.

This conference was hosted virtually on Gather.town and allowed participants to network and meet with a range of people across STEM, within both academia and industry. Part of the Diversity in Science grant went directly towards funding this platform and allowed the conference to adapt to an online format, compared to in-person events in previous years. All registered participants were also sent promotional material, to allow everyone to have mementos of the event and bridge the gap between the virtual event and 'regular' conferences.

The conference focussed on the intersection between being LGBTQ+ and working within a STEM field, as this presents additional challenges that are often overlooked by members of these individual communities. LGBTQ+ individuals are disproportionately underrepresented within STEM disciplines and often those within these disciplines are not out to their colleagues. Hence, this conference presented an opportunity to network with individuals facing similar issues and gain a sense of community. This was especially important during a

year of lockdown and potential isolation from other members of the LGBTQ+ community. We were able to provide a space where everyone could reconnect with their community and present their authentic selves in a safe environment. In addition, the conference provided a space for LGBTQ+ allies to learn about issues, directly from those most affected.

This year, the conference was attended by more people than ever before. In total, 246 people registered to attend, with attendees from a wide range of subjects and backgrounds. The event was well attended by those in the LGBTQ+ community, as well as over 40 allies. Being online allowed us to reach people across a large geographical area, with both speakers and attendees from the UK and the USA, as well as attendees joining from all over the world.

This grant has helped continue the legacy of the STEM, LGBTQ & You conference and its growing impact among the LGBTQ+ community within STEM. We are very thankful to the Biochemical Society for awarding us this grant and enabling this event to take place.

For more information about this event and to hear about the 2022 conference - follow STEM, LGBTQ and You on Twitter - @STEMLGBTQYou. All the recordings of the talks and panel discussion have been archived on Youtube for longevity and to allow this content to be accessible to a wider audience. They can be found here: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnlozNy\\_4SmQiOouG\\_gTxQQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnlozNy_4SmQiOouG_gTxQQ)

