

ABE UK newsletter

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MTF update for techs and links for you to apply

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Welcome

By Dr Eddie Orija, director, UH Centre for STEM Education

Welcome to our autumn newsletter. In this edition we are pleased to share details of an offer of a gift card for completing the ABE Global Teacher Survey. Teachers and Technicians are invited to apply for Master teacher fellowship and LabXchange Teacher Ambassador Programme. We share a further reflection on our summer CPD, and some of our partnership activities.

I am delighted to share the exciting news that Dr Phil Smith, in addition to leading the Norwich ABE hub and ABE CPD lead, has joined the Centre for STEM Education here at the University of Hertfordshire in the capacity of ABE Science Coordinator. Securing Phil's permanent appointment is such great news for ABE UK. Phil is well known internationally for his ABE love, work and contributions over years, and I am excited about the associated possibilities to further secure ABE UK sustainability and development moving forwards.

In our previous [ABE UK newsletter](#), you may have read an article written by Alison Ackroyd, our ABE Hub lead at MidKent College, about how the Amgen Biotech Experience kit supports T Level science students in developing industry-ready skills. We are totally thrilled that Alison achieved international recognition and a mention of appreciation in the Amgen Biotech Experience programme office's own newsletter, which is distributed to ABE hub leaders and staff worldwide (extract provided below). This is another proud moment for ABE UK and it underscores all our reach and impact. Congratulations also go to Alison for her [recent announcement](#) that she has been appointed Chair of the new National Community of Practice for T Level Science for the [Association of Colleges and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation](#) – a vibrant new space for collaboration, innovation, and support for those delivering T Level Science.

ABE APPRECIATION

Alison Ackroyd, ABE United Kingdom



Dr. Alison Ackroyd is the ABE United Kingdom program leader at MidKent College, where she lectures in T-level science. Alison has successfully reimaged the ABE UK curriculum, tailoring it to complement and support the post-16 further-education applied-science ([T Level](#)) pathway – the positive impact and relevance of which she summarized [in this contribution](#) for the recent ABE UK newsletter.

Alison's efforts have led to expanded cross-MidKent College PDI delivery, and a 1,100% increase in school PDI delivery this year, significantly widening access and participation for local students within and beyond MidKent College.

In addition to representing ABE UK at national events, Alison has helped expand ABE UK partnerships through her strong connections across the STEM industry and professional organizations. These collaborations are enhancing the visibility, recognition, and credibility of ABE UK activities while creating new opportunities for engagement.

Master Teacher Fellowship news

Master teacher fellowship – our request for applications to be open to UK technicians as well as teachers has been successful!

We are delighted to share that through our Centre for STEM's negotiations and discussions with the programme head office, [Amgen Biotech Experience Master Teacher Fellowship](#) is being extended to include school science technicians in the UK.

The [Fellowship](#) is a year-long professional experience, with a stipend and benefits including technical curriculum advisement from subject matter experts. Going into its sixth year, the 2025-26 Fellowship is a continuation of a programme in which up to 12 experienced ABE teachers receive a \$2,000 stipend (approximately £1,490 at the time of writing) to participate in a community of practice with their ABE peers.

With support from the programme office, Fellows will dedicate 6-10 hours per month to explore a topic of personal interest in the biosciences, develop classroom resources, and become ABE teacher leaders.

Grant applications for the 2025/26 cycle, for all teachers and technicians with three or more years' experience in our ABE programme, should be submitted by 15 October 2025. Applicants will be notified of their status by the first week in November 2025. This prestigious fellowship is a great opportunity to develop your expertise in an area of personal interest in the biosciences and contribute to the development of ABE programme and resources, so apply soon!

[Learn more and access the application form.](#) Applications must be made by 15 October 2025.

Do get in touch on stem@herts.ac.uk if you require any further information.

LabXchange -new Teacher Ambassador programme

LabXchange are seeking experienced science teachers and technicians to train to become LabXchange Teacher Ambassadors and Master Teacher Ambassadors to help them develop resources on their platform for the community. Interested? Get in touch directly with andrew@labxchange.org from the LabXchange team.

[LabXchange Teacher Ambassador Programme UK.pdf](#)

[LabXchange Teacher Ambassador Program Overview.pptx](#)



ABE Global Teacher Survey – gift cards

The ABE Program is a global initiative, working with teachers in over a dozen countries around the world. This year, the ABE Program Office (based at Education Development Centre) seeks to better understand and document the impact that ABE has on teachers around the world by conducting a Global Teacher Survey. This is an exciting opportunity to collect common information from teachers all over the world, and we need your participation!



Please take 20 minutes to complete the ABE Global Teacher Survey. [You can access the survey here.](#) The survey

includes questions about the professional development and training you have participated in for ABE, your experience implementing ABE in your classroom, what you have learned from ABE, and how your students have responded to ABE.

If you do not currently teach ABE in your classes or were not able to implement ABE this year, we would still like you to complete this survey. After completing the survey, you will have the option to provide your email address to receive a gift card in appreciation for your time.

Please complete this survey by 24th October. If you have any concerns, please reach out to Jennifer Jocz, jjocz@edc.org or Sophia Mansori, smansori@edc.org at the ABE Program Office. Thank you for all you do!

Summer 2025 CPD metrics and photos

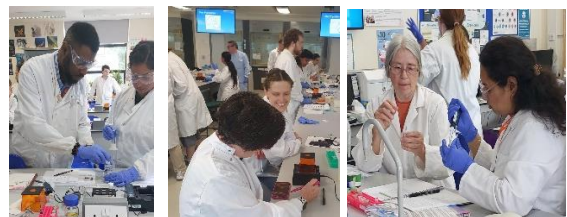
We had a terrific response to our summer 2025 CPD, with 205 teachers and technicians participating across the UK. We are glad to bring 32 new schools into the programme following the summer CPD. It's such a privilege to be able to equip schools and colleges to bring bioscience to life in their classrooms for students who would otherwise not have the opportunity.



Thanks to all of our participating schools and colleges and their hardworking teachers and technicians, since the Centre for STEM began coordinating the UK ABE programme, we have reached over 23,000 students.

We value all the feedback that participating teachers, technicians and students provide, and this year we received this very lovely feedback from a First Year Biochemistry Student, currently excelling at the University of Hull, whose experience of ABE while at school inspired and supported their future direction.

'I really felt the Amgen biotech workshop emphasised the different options in Biology for me. There was a large focus on ecology and so my love of Genetics and molecular biology felt neglected until my teachers were able to get involved with this project and so I'm personally quite grateful. The experience with Gilson pipettes as well I felt gave me a nice edge when coming to university.'



Let's do it again!



Upcoming events

As part of our outreach and dissemination efforts, we have an exciting programme of events coming up in the 2025/2026 academic year. We provide brief details below and hope to see some of your lovely faces among our attendees. The first event occurs this month, so please read on and secure your place at one or all of these opportunities to further engage with the ABE programme.



ETF (Education Training Foundation) – Live event via zoom (free)

We are presenting at the Education Training Foundation Industry Insights Workshop on 22nd October 2025. At this live event via zoom, we will provide some insights into a Practical Way of Supporting T Level Science Delivery and Preparing Students for Industry. To learn more and register visit the [ETF webpage](#).

ASE Annual Conference – in person event

We are presenting at the Association for Science Education (ASE) 2026 conference at the University of Nottingham. ABE centre director Eddie Orija and science coordinator Phil Smith will present on Thursday 8th January at 11.15am, sharing information about the ABE programme and its impact on students within participating schools and colleges - [Free research grade biotechnology kit for school use](#). ASE members benefit from discounted prices



Cambridge Wellcome Genome campus - March 2026 - Cutting Edge Biotechnology conference

We are so excited to tell you about the Cutting Edge Biotechnology Conference at the Wellcome Genome Campus, Cambridge, on the 18th March 2026.

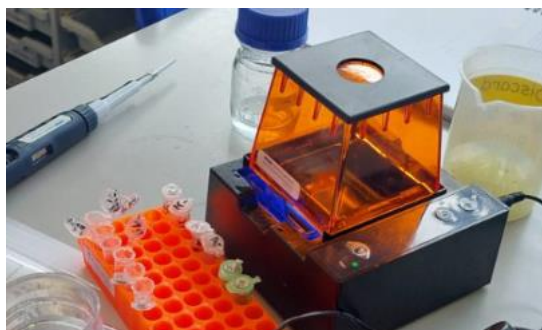
This was a vibrant and stimulating event last time we ran it, helping to bring together our ABE community. If you would be willing to contribute a short talk (approximately 10 mins) about how you use ABE in your classroom / the advantages it brings, please get in touch with us by emailing stem@herts.ac.uk. Teachers hearing from other teachers is always a powerful message.

In addition to sharing ABE case studies from the classroom, there will be opportunities to network and an open lab tour, and of course some cutting edge science talks. Perhaps best of all, the event and lunch won't cost you a penny.



Upcoming CPD

An autumn term Course 1 CPD will be hosted by Hull hub this year, for those new to the programme in 2025/26. The course will run on 4th November. Labs included in Course One are: - Micropipetting skills - Restriction digestion and ligation (Plasmid cloning) - Gel electrophoresis. This session utilises MiniOne kit and is a 1-day event. [Book via Eventbrite](#).



And finally – a word from Dr Phil

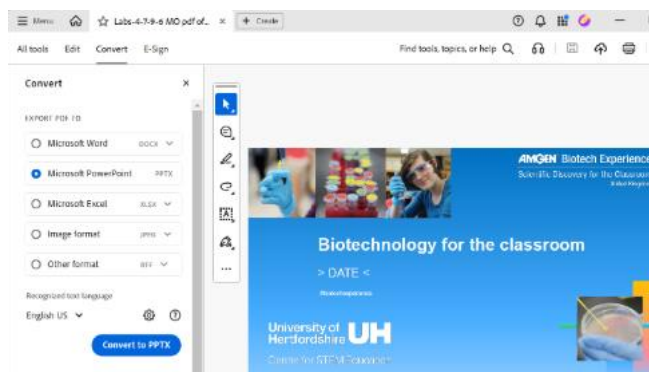
(Dr. Phil Smith, MBE)

It was great to see new cohorts of teachers and technicians at this year's summer CPD, and of course reconnect with some familiar faces who have been part of ABE for a number of years. With summer now behind us and the thermometer registering single figures for the first time in a while, it is time to make sure you have returned your Kit Loan forms to your hub leaders to reserve the kit for the coming year. Hub leaders will do their best to accommodate all your first-choice dates, but if you all request the same time slots then we work according to who has sent in their form first, so get to it!

Schools that wish to borrow kit in the 2025/26 academic year should complete the [school planning form for 2025/26](#) along with a signed [H&S and insurance advice form for academic year 2025/2026](#).

Speaking of the summer CPD, we are grateful to have received so much (positive) feedback, with about 60% of you responding to the evaluation questions. I have read it all carefully and want to use this opportunity to address some of the points you raised or asked questions about.

You asked about access to the course PowerPoints – these can be found within our [resources page](#) and following the link to [course PowerPoints](#). As these files in PowerPoint format are rather large, we have provided them in optimised PDF form, which you can convert back into PowerPoint files once downloaded for use in your teaching. To achieve this, select “open in Acrobat” rather than opening in your browser, then within the “All tools” Acrobat option you can choose “Export a PDF” and select Microsoft PowerPoint.



Similarly, the Flowcharts, which help summarise the lab procedures, are available in the Enrichment section of our resources, and a number of additional resources (including digital copies of the Student and Teacher & Technician Guides) are all available online.

When asked for improvements, over 30% either left this blank or gave positive comments, thank you! No single comment stood out, there were many small suggestions, which tells us overall we are doing lots right and we will try to address some of the logistical issues going forward.

For those of you on Course 1, keen to know about Course 2, then you have to wait a little bit longer, probably till next summer in most cases, when you can add to your skill set and get the chance to do more hands-on molecular biology. In the meantime, get running those first-year labs with your students! 😊