

CAREERS
IN LIFE SCIENCES
SPRING SCHOOL

Press release about CarLiS Spring School 2022

Title: Career School for PhDs in Life Sciences Subtitle: CarLiS Spring School 2022 - 25 PhD students tested international career development curriculum - a new course offering that provides PhDs-to-be with tools for career choices beyond academia

Founding your own start-up or would you rather apply to the established research company? How can you protect your own innovation properly and market it convincingly at the same time? Questions like these were the focus of a five-day Spring School in Piešťany (SK), which included training sessions, panel discussions and career talks. Austrian and Slovakian experts from the Life Sciences sector, HR specialists, professionals in the field of patent protection and communication shared their expertise and experience with the young researchers.

Only about one third of doctoral students find employment after completing their studies at the university. Also, for this reason, SAIA, n. o., the Comenius University in Bratislava, the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the University of Vienna join forces with the aim of creating an international career development curriculum for doctoral students. Despite the fact that young scientists acquire expertise and research competences in life sciences at universities and research sites, they lack focus on acquiring other types of skills required in the professional world for a successful start to their careers.

"I am now aware of my career options after completing the PhD program."

(Janaki Devi Somasundaram, PhD candidate from the Department of Inorganic Chemistry, Comenius University Bratislava)

Soft skills, career competencies and skills for knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship formed the basic content modules of the five-day Spring School. Young researchers had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with effective communication strategies in various situations and contexts – from a coffee break to networking to a job interview, as well as to receive various tips and tricks to improve time management and professional appearance.

"The insight into the developments, structures and economic interfaces of the life sciences industry was particularly enlightening."

(Gamal Zain, PhD candidate from the Polymer Institute, SAS)

Pavol Čekan, CEO of MultiplexDX, as well as experts in the field of HR recruiting, explained to the researchers how the labour market works in the field of life sciences, focusing on questions about starting a business, up to current opportunities and difficulties in choosing a job. The journey from one's idea to the business model can be long. Therefore, the team of experts provided young researchers with information and shared experience in the field of

business plan preparation, legal principles and practical aspects of technology transfer and intellectual property protection.

"The Theranos scandal made us discuss our social responsibility and ethical issues in life sciences."

(Jelena Pavlovic, PhD candidate of the Institute of Molecular Biology, SAS)

But not only the personal career path in relation to the expected job prospects was the subject of discussion at the Spring School. The role of Life Sciences in the social context was also important. The responsibility of industry in climate protection issues, the distribution of resources in medical care, as well as the ethical principles of scientific work methods were discussed. Spring School 2022 was organized within the CarLiS (Careers in Life Sciences) project supported via Interreg V-A Slovak Republic – Austria program. The Austria-Slovakia action, supports the activities of the project.

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