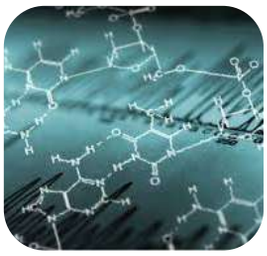

Berita IKM - Chemistry in Malaysia

March 2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

IKM – Looking Back and Moving Forward

We are coming into 2026 with high expectation. Looking back and moving forward, I would first like to review what we have done in 2025 and from there, what are coming in 2026.

For 2025, we have the following three major events:

- The first is the **IKM 58th Annual General Meeting (58AGM)** which was held on 22nd March 2025 with a record **223** members present. The IKM Council for 2025/2026 was elected.
- The most significant event in 2025 is the **IUPAC 2025** that comprised the **IUPAC 53rd General Assembly (53GA), 50th World Chemistry Congress (50WCC)** and **LabAsia 2025. IUPAC 2025** was held from 12th – 19th July 2025 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with a record number of **3,450** delegates from **97** countries. It is also rated as one of the best IUPAC events.
- **Malam Kimia 2025 – 54th IKM Gala Dinner and Presentation of IKM Awards** was held on Saturday, 6th December 2025. A record **690** guests attended this IKM gala dinner.

In addition to the above, we also have the following events and functions:

- **IKM Professional Centre** providing professional development programmes and continuing education to our chemists and other professionals. A record number of **52** courses were conducted in 2025.
- **Kuiz Kimia Kebangsaan Malaysia (K3M) 2025** with a record number of **41,273** students from **879** schools taking part
- **LMIC Examinations 2025** with a record number of **82** candidates
- **IKM Refresher Course 2025** with **63** participants
- **IKM Laboratory Excellent Awards 2025** with a record number of **79** laboratories taking part
- **Six (6)** issues of **Malaysian Journal of Chemistry (MJC)** were published in 2025.

There were also many other events which we organised or participated in 2025.

For 2026, we also have the following major events:

A major development in 2026 is the **Accreditation of Undergraduate Chemistry Programmes** in local universities. In accordance with Subsection 7(i) of the Chemists Act 1975 [Act 158], Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM) is mandated to approve or reject the accreditation of Chemistry and Chemistry-related programmes at public and private higher education institutions in Malaysia, pursuant to the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) Act 2007 [Act 679].

In 2024, IKM came up with the Chemistry Programme Standard for Malaysian universities. This Standard is approved by the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) for accreditation of undergraduate chemistry programmes in Malaysian universities.

Subsequently, MQA approved and appointed IKM as the Accreditation Body of chemistry undergraduate programmes in Malaysian universities. This accreditation will start in the year 2026. In accordance with this, an **IKM Chemistry Accreditation Board** is appointed by IKM.

Other major events in 2026 include the following:

- The first major event in 2026 is the **IKM 59th Annual General Meeting (59AGM)** which was held on 28th March 2026 in M World Hotel, Petaling Jaya with a record **253** members present. The IKM Council for 2026/2027 was elected. There is a report on the **59AGM** in this issue of Berita IKM.
- Another major event in 2026 is the **51st IUPAC World Polymer Congress** (**MACRO 2026**) which will be held in BCCK, Kuching, Sarawak from 28 – 31st July 2026. **MACRO 2026** is expected to attract up to 600 delegates from all the world. The response so far is quite encouraging.
- Another significant event is the **International Congress on Pure & Applied Chemistry (ICPAC)** which will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 13 – 16th October 2026. **ICPAC Colombo 2026** is jointly organised with the Institute of Chemistry, Ceylon (ICC) and Asia Chem Corporation Japan.
- The annual **Malam Kimia 2026 – 55th IKM Gala Dinner & Presentation of IKM Awards** will be held on Saturday, 5th December 2026 in the HGH Galaxy Hall, Sentul, Kuala Lumpur.

There will also be other major events, such as Refresher Course and LMIC Examination, CPD and continuing education programmes at IKM Professional Centre, publication of MJC, etc in 2026.

All in all, we have a great and rewarding year in 2025 and we look forward to an even more successful year in 2026.

Datuk Dr Soon Ting Kueh

President, Institut Kimia Malaysia

Date: 31st March 2026

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East Coast Regional Chromatography Seminar Strengthens HPLC Expertise and Industry–Academia Collaboration

Kuantan, Pahang, 14 August 2025 — The *East Coast Regional Chromatography Seminar: HPLC Theory and Application* was successfully conducted at the Kulliyyah of Science, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) Kuantan, bringing together chromatography practitioners from academia, government laboratories, and industry across the East Coast region.

The full-day seminar was organised by the Department of Chemistry, Kulliyyah of Science, IIUM, in collaboration with IT Tech Research (M) Sdn Bhd and Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM) – Pahang Branch. The programme aimed to strengthen both theoretical understanding and practical competency in High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), a core analytical technique widely used in research, quality control, and industrial applications.

More than 60 participants attended the seminar, representing universities, government agencies, and industrial organisations. Academic participation included representatives from IIUM, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Strong representation was also seen from government laboratories such as Jabatan Kimia Malaysia (various states), Department of Agriculture, Jabatan Biosekuriti Perikanan, MKAV Salak Tinggi, and STRIDE. Industry participants included professionals from Eastman Chemicals Malaysia, IKOP Pharma Sdn Bhd, Shennong Animal Health, Flexsys Malaysia, and Petronas Kerteh.

The seminar featured four technical sessions delivered by experienced speakers from IT Tech Research. The opening session, *Identification of Asymmetrical Chromatography Peaks: Causes and Solutions*, was presented by Ts. Bradley Terence Skelchy, who provided practical guidance on recognising peak distortion and addressing common causes such as column degradation and mobile phase issues. This was followed by a session on *Identification of Sample Matrix, Challenges and Sample Preparation* by Ms. Ho, which focused on managing complex sample matrices and implementing effective sample preparation strategies.

Prior to lunch, Ms. Musfira delivered a concise overview on *Certified Reference Materials*, highlighting their critical role in ensuring analytical accuracy, method validation, and compliance with international standards. In the afternoon, Ts. Bradley Terence Skelchy returned to present *Troubleshooting New Column Installations*, sharing hands-on insights and preventive measures based on real laboratory experience.

An open forum and Q&A session concluded the programme, allowing participants to engage directly with the speakers, discuss real analytical challenges, and exchange experiences across sectors. This interactive segment was particularly well received and contributed to meaningful knowledge sharing among chromatography users.

A notable feature of the seminar was that all costs were fully sponsored by IT Tech Research (M) Sdn Bhd, enabling free participation and encouraging attendance from students, early-career researchers, and professionals from smaller institutions. Ten exclusive slots were reserved for the Kulliyyah of Science community, ensuring strong engagement from the host institution.

Overall, the seminar successfully met its objectives by enhancing technical competency in HPLC, strengthening industry–academia collaboration, and fostering a regional network of chromatography practitioners. The collaboration between IIUM, IKM, and industry partners demonstrated an effective model for capacity building and professional development within Malaysia's analytical chemistry community. Positive feedback from participants indicated strong demand for similar application-focused training programmes in the future.

Report prepared by:
ChM Dr Muhammad Idham Shukor &
Associate Professor ChM Ts Dr Saiful 'Arifin Shafiee



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SUSTAINABILITY STARTS BEFORE THE REACTION BEGINS

Associate Professor ChM Dr. Mohd Bakri Bakar
Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

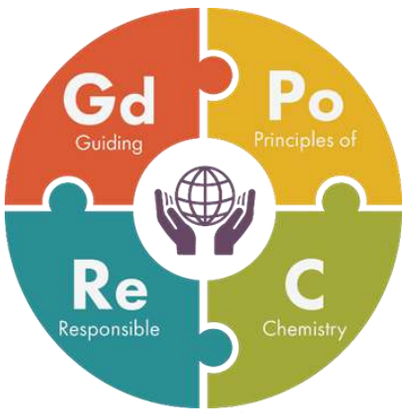
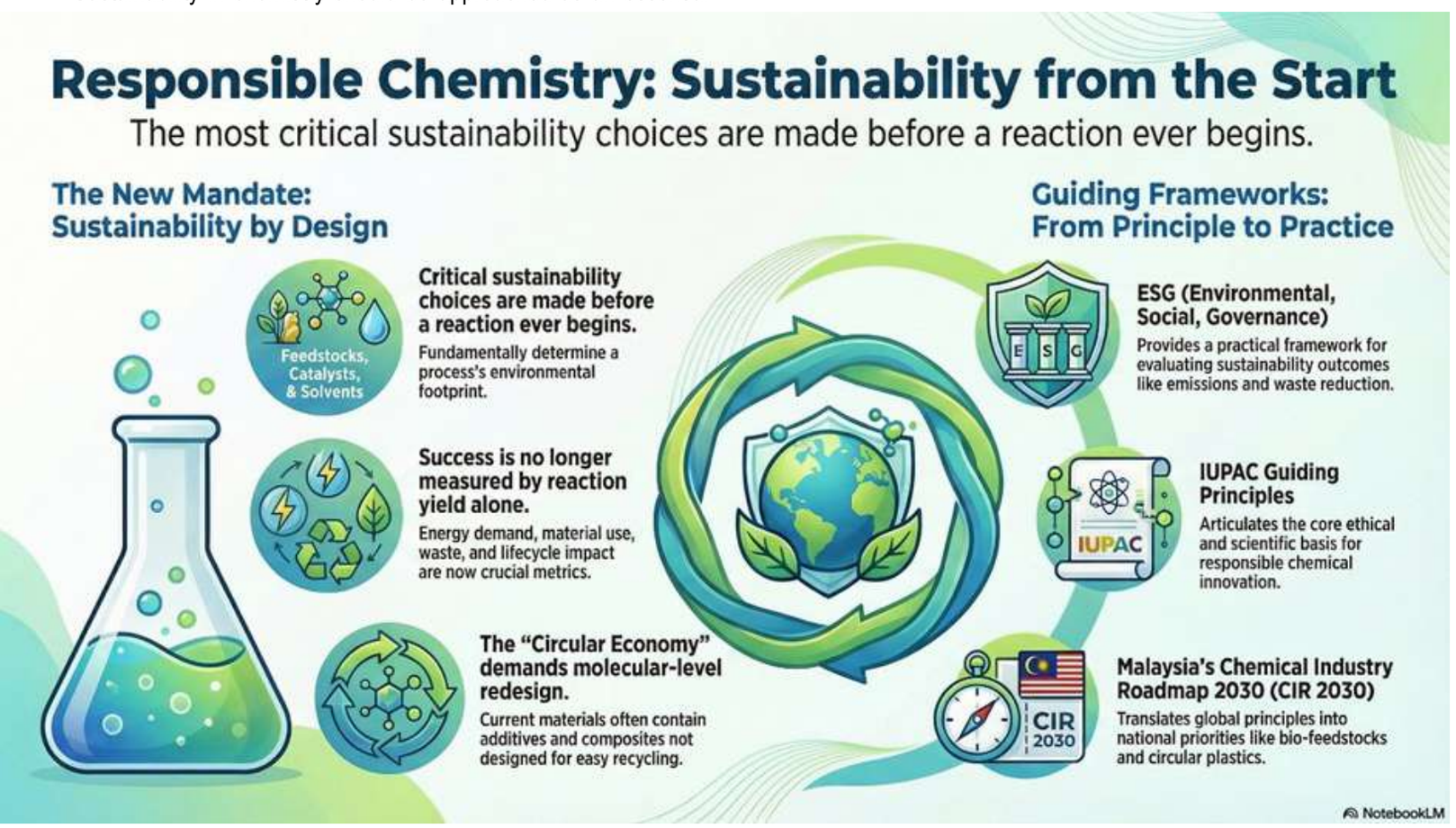


Image source: IUPAC website

On 14 July 2025, the IUPAC Guiding Principles of Responsible Chemistry were officially launched in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during the IUPAC World Chemistry Congress organised by the Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM). This marked a strong signal that sustainability, responsibility and ethical chemical practice are now central expectations, shaping the future of chemistry worldwide. For decades, chemistry has been dominant to industrial development, enabling the large-scale production of pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals, materials and consumer products that define modern life. Nevertheless, this very success has also placed chemistry at the middle of some of today's most pressing environmental challenges. Climate change, environmental pollution and the depletion of natural resources have become structural pressures that directly challenge how chemical processes are designed, scaled and governed. In response, sustainability has increasingly entered chemical discourse through formal frameworks such as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), international scientific guidance and national roadmaps. Sustainability in chemistry should be approached as an essential chemical responsibility. It is embedded within the discipline's scientific values and professional practice, rather than limited to compliance or reporting functions.

Sustainability Begins with Chemical Choices

From a chemical perspective, the most decisive sustainability interventions occur upstream, long before emissions are measured or waste is treated. Choices related to feedstocks, reaction pathways, catalysts, solvents and separation strategies fundamentally shape a process's environmental footprint. Within the ESG framework, these decisions relate directly to environmental performance, including emissions reduction, waste minimisation, efficient resource use and responsible management of water and raw materials. ESG becomes meaningful to chemists when it is translated into tangible chemical practices. This translation shifts the basis of evaluation from reaction yield alone to broader process-level considerations, including energy demand, material use, waste generation and lifecycle impact. While ESG provides a practical framework for evaluating sustainability outcomes, the ethical and scientific basis for such responsibility is articulated more clearly in the IUPAC Guiding Principles of Responsible Chemistry, particularly the principles of responsible innovation and safety, security and sustainability. IUPAC emphasises that chemists should maximise benefits while minimising unintended consequences, reinforcing the idea that



sustainability must be designed earlier into chemistry rather than addressed retrospectively.

Circular Economy Beyond Slogans

The circular economy has become an increasingly influential sustainability narrative within the chemical industry, promising reduced waste and improved resource efficiency through recycling, depolymerisation and closed-loop material systems. As these approaches move from policy ambition to industrial practice, significant chemical challenges emerge. At the molecular level, many materials in current use were not originally designed with circularity in mind. The presence of additives, composite structures and material degradation during use complicates recycling and recovery processes. Chemical recycling technologies such as pyrolysis or depolymerisation can recover valuable feedstocks, but often at the cost of high energy input, complex separations and reduced material quality. These limitations demonstrate that material recovery alone does not guarantee sustainability. Therefore, the IUPAC principles of integrity and accuracy are especially important. For instance, responsible chemistry requires transparent and honest evaluation of what recycling technologies can realistically achieve, rather than relying on simplified claims that ignore chemical, energy and process limitations.

Sustainability Under Industrial Constraint

In practice, sustainability is tested most rigorously at industrial scale, where chemical processes operate under cost pressures, regulatory requirements and supply chain complexities. Malaysia's Chemical Industry Roadmap 2030 (CIR 2030) provides a good illustration of how sustainability principles should be translated into national industrial priorities. The roadmap highlights several sustainability-focused initiatives, including environmentally friendly fertilisers, low-carbon ammonia, biopesticides, circular economy initiatives for plastics and rubber, and bio-feedstock integrity

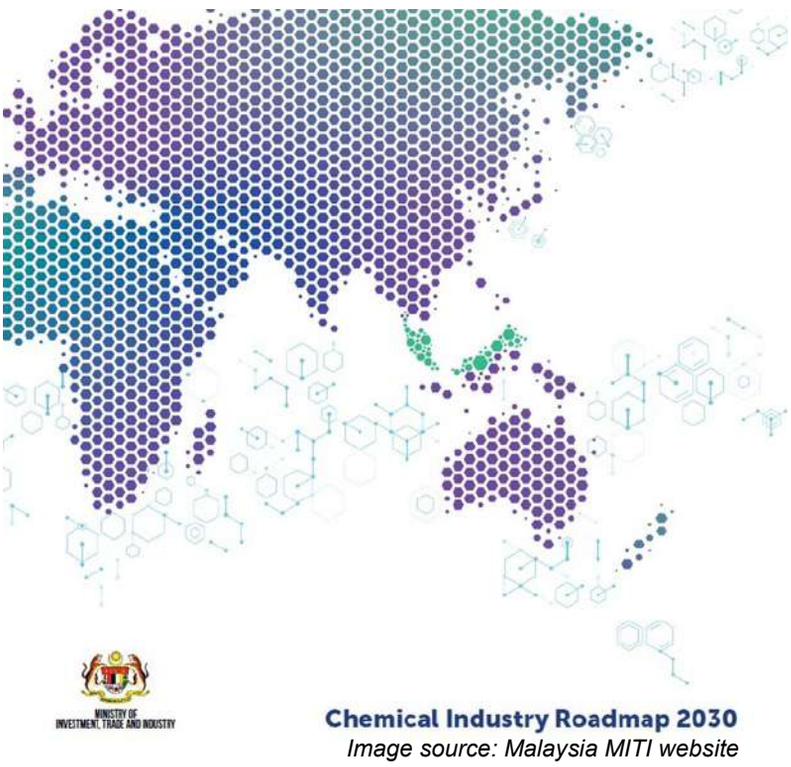


Image source: Malaysia MITI website

Image source: generated using Google Gemini

supported by certification and traceability systems such as the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) scheme. These leads reflect a deliberate effort to align chemical production with ESG expectations while maintaining international market access. From a chemical standpoint, these ambitions present practical challenges that cannot be resolved by technology alone. While bio-based feedstocks offer environmental advantages, they also raise concerns related to land use, certification requirements, price volatility and compatibility with existing processes. Similarly, increasing recycling rates depends on both infrastructure investment and the fundamental redesign of materials and chemical processes. In this context, sustainability represents an evolving balance between chemical feasibility, economic viability and responsible governance at industrial scale.

The Evolving Responsibility of Chemists

Viewed together, ESG frameworks, the IUPAC Guiding Principles and national roadmaps such as the CIR indicate a redefinition of what chemistry is expected to deliver. Chemists are no longer evaluated on technical performance alone. Sustainability now shapes how chemical work is conceived, justified and assessed. This shift places new demands on chemical education, research and professional culture. Chemists are increasingly required to think beyond yield, purity and cost, and to engage with lifecycle impacts, worker safety, ethical supply chains and long-term societal outcomes. These expectations extend the scope of professional judgement rather than adding new technical criteria.

The IUPAC Guiding Principles of Responsible Chemistry consolidate this direction by aligning ethical conduct, communication and accountability with sustainability goals. In doing so, they affirm that sustainability must be built into the foundations of chemical practice, rather than treated as a separate or optional concern. The future of chemistry will be defined not only by its outputs, but by the responsibility of its practices and their implications for planetary health. In this sense, sustainability serves as a measure of chemistry's capacity to evolve in service of society, human well-being and ecological systems.

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Seminar Report: "Tiny Plastics, Big Reactions: The Chemistry Behind Microplastic Fate and Mitigation"

Teh Lee Peng, Norizah Abdul Rahman, Phang Sook Wai

A seminar entitled "Tiny Plastics, Big Reactions: The Chemistry Behind Microplastic Fate and Mitigation" was successfully conducted on 16th December 2025, from 10.00 am to 11.30 am at Bilik Aktiv, Bangunan Kedekanan, Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The programme was organised by the Division of Physical & Theoretical Chemistry (DPTC), Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM), with institutional collaboration from UKM and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The session attracted a total of 35 participants, comprising academic staff, postgraduate students, undergraduate students, and interested researchers in chemistry, polymer science, and environmental sustainability. The seminar also leveraged online engagement through Facebook Live, expanding access beyond the physical venue.

The invited speaker, Prof. Ts. ChM Dr. Rizafizah Othaman (Professor, Department of Chemical Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology, UKM; Head of Polymer Research Center (PORCE)), delivered an insightful lecture highlighting the chemistry that governs microplastic formation, transformation, and impacts in real environments. The talk began with an overview of microplastic sources and pathways, linking everyday polymer use to fragmentation processes that generate persistent particles. Prof. Rizafizah then explained how environmental factors such as UV exposure, oxidative reactions, mechanical abrasion, and interactions with natural organic matter can alter microplastic surface chemistry, influence sorption behaviour, and affect transport in aquatic and terrestrial systems.

A key strength of the seminar was its chemistry-based focus on mitigation, covering photocatalysis, Fenton oxidation, thermal cracking, and enzymatic reactions. Prof. Rizafizah also highlighted bioplastics (e.g., PLA, PHA, and starch blends) and the importance of assessing their chemical degradability and performance trade-offs. In addition, the seminar emphasised the importance of policy and community-driven initiatives, complemented by education and outreach, including microscale experiments, teacher training, and community engagement to sustain long-term mitigation efforts.

Overall feedback was highly positive, with participants noting the talk's clarity, relevance, and strong linkage between polymer chemistry and environmental outcomes. The event successfully strengthened awareness on microplastic science.

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- **ICPAC Colombo 2026 General Session (IGS)**
- **Symposium on Organic and Biomolecular Chemistry (OBC)**
- **Symposium on Inorganic and Coordination Chemistry (ICC)**
- **Symposium on Physical Chemistry and Catalysis (PCC)**
- **Symposium on Analytical and Environmental Chemistry & Engineering (AEC)**
- **Symposium on Polymer and Materials Chemistry (PMC)**
- **Symposium on Analytical Chemistry (ANC)**

REGISTRATION FEE AND PAYMENT

Those interested to participate or make oral or poster presentation are required to register at the ICPAC Colombo 2026 website: **https://icpaccolombo2026.org/**. Please submit your **REGISTRATION and ABSTRACT ONLINE**. Only those who have paid their Registration Fees are considered as delegates to ICPAC Colombo 2026.

Participants	Type of Registration	Early Bird (by 30th June 2026)	Regular (from 1st July 2026)
MALAYSIAN Participant	IKM members	RM1300	RM1500
	Non IKM members	RM1600	RM1800
	Postgraduates Students (full-time)	RM1000	RM1200
Congress Banquet (additional guest)		RM320	RM320
Tour (additional guest)		RM320	RM320

The deadline for Early-Bird Registration is **30th June 2026**. Registration fee entitles the ICPAC Colombo 2026 delegates to the following: Attendance at all ICPAC Colombo 2026 scientific sessions, Congress Dinner & Tour, and all ICPAC Colombo 2026 documents and materials. **All delegates MUST pay their registration fee by 31st July 2026. Abstracts MUST be submitted online via congress website, https://icpaccolombo2026.org. The deadline for abstract submission is 10th July 2026.**

ACCOMMODATION

Please refer to congress website for updates - **https://icpaccolombo2026.org/**.

MORE INFORMATION / CONTACT US

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Email: **secretariat@icpaccolombo2026.org** website: **https://icpaccolombo2026.org/**

Program Chemistry Bonding 4.0: IKM Undergraduate Seminar – Chemistry in Action

22 January 2026 — The *Chemistry Bonding 4.0: IKM Undergraduate Seminar – Chemistry in Action* was successfully conducted on Thursday, 22 January 2026, at the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu Convention Centre (UMTCC), from 8.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

The programme was jointly organised by the Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM) Terengganu Branch in collaboration with the Bachelor of Science (Chemical Science) with Honours Programme, Faculty of Science and Marine Environment (FSSM), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). The objective of this seminar was to provide a structured platform for final-year Chemical Science students to present their findings from the Final Year Research Project 2 (PITA 2 – CHM4994), as well as to receive professional evaluation and constructive feedback from industry practitioners and academic assessors. The programme also forms part of the knowledge-sharing initiatives under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IKM and UMT, signed on 17 September 2024.

Key highlights of the programme included industry guest lectures delivered by ChM. Teo Chook Kiong, Ts. ChM. Al-Malek Fahd Abdul Hamid, and Ts. ChM. Radi Hairil bin Mat Jusoh @ Ramli. The speakers provided insights on IKM Professional Membership, the Application of Chemistry In Water Quality Management, and Career Pathways for Chemistry Graduates, particularly within the Oil and Gas Industry.

A total of 72 final-year students presented their research projects, which were assessed by 16 IKM-registered industry jurors and 19 academic staff members from the Chemical Science Programme. The programme was further enhanced by a student quiz session and the presentation of the Best Presenter Awards in four major chemistry disciplines: Organic Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry, Physical Chemistry, and Materials Science.

Excellence Awards: Best Presenters

The following students were recognized for their outstanding presentation skills and research quality across four specialized fields:

- Organic Chemistry: *Nur Syafiyah Mursyidah binti Mohd Sharif* (S72305)
- Inorganic Chemistry: *Muhammad Hashim bin A. Buhardeen* (S70239)
- Physical Chemistry: *Krithysa a/p Kumaran* (S70839)
- Materials Science: *Siti Nur Aqilah binti Nuruahadi* (S72341)

Overall, Chemistry Bonding 4.0 was a resounding success, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from both industry partners and students. The seminar not only met its primary objectives but also significantly strengthened the symbiotic relationship between Universiti Malaysia Terengganu and Institut Kimia Malaysia, ensuring that our graduates are well-prepared for the professional landscape.

Report prepared by Assoc. Prof. ChM Dr. Syara Kassim

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59TH IKM AGM & 5TH IKM LAW HIENG DING FOUNDATION AGM

The 59th IKM Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 28 March 2026 at M World Hotel, Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya, Selangor. IKM President, Datuk ChM Dr Soon Ting Kueh welcomed members to the 59th AGM of IKM. A total of 253 members attended the AGM.

The President presented PowerPoint slides describing IKM activities for the term 2025/2026. The year 2025 was described as a good year. IKM Hon. Secretary, ChM Chang Hon Fong, presented PowerPoint slides of the Annual Report for 2025/2026. IKM Hon. Treasurer, ChM Dr Malarvili Ramalingam presented the Annual Statement of Accounts and Auditor's Report for 2025.

The highlight of the AGM was the election of 5 Council members to fill vacancies created by retired Council members.

Elected Council Members for 2026 - 2029 are:

- Datuk ChM Dr Soon Ting Kueh
- ChM Chang Hon Fong
- Prof. ChM Dr Juan Joon Ching
- Assoc. Prof. ChM Ts Dr Rozzeta Dolah
- ChM Ahmad Zaharuddin bin Zahari

The AGM ended at 6.00 PM and followed by the 5th IKM Law Hieng Ding Foundation AGM. During the AGM, the following Directors were elected to the Board:

- Prof. ChM Dr Juan Joon Ching
- ChM Dr Malarvili Ramalingam

The 347th IKM Council meeting was held after 5th IKM Law Hieng Ding Foundation AGM to elect principal office bearers for 2026/2027 term. This was followed by appointments of Committee / Division Chairpersons.








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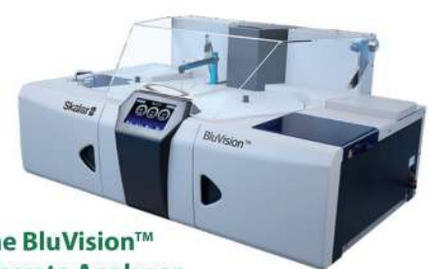

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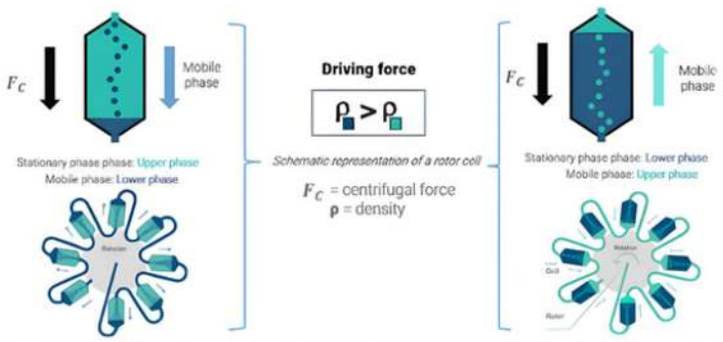

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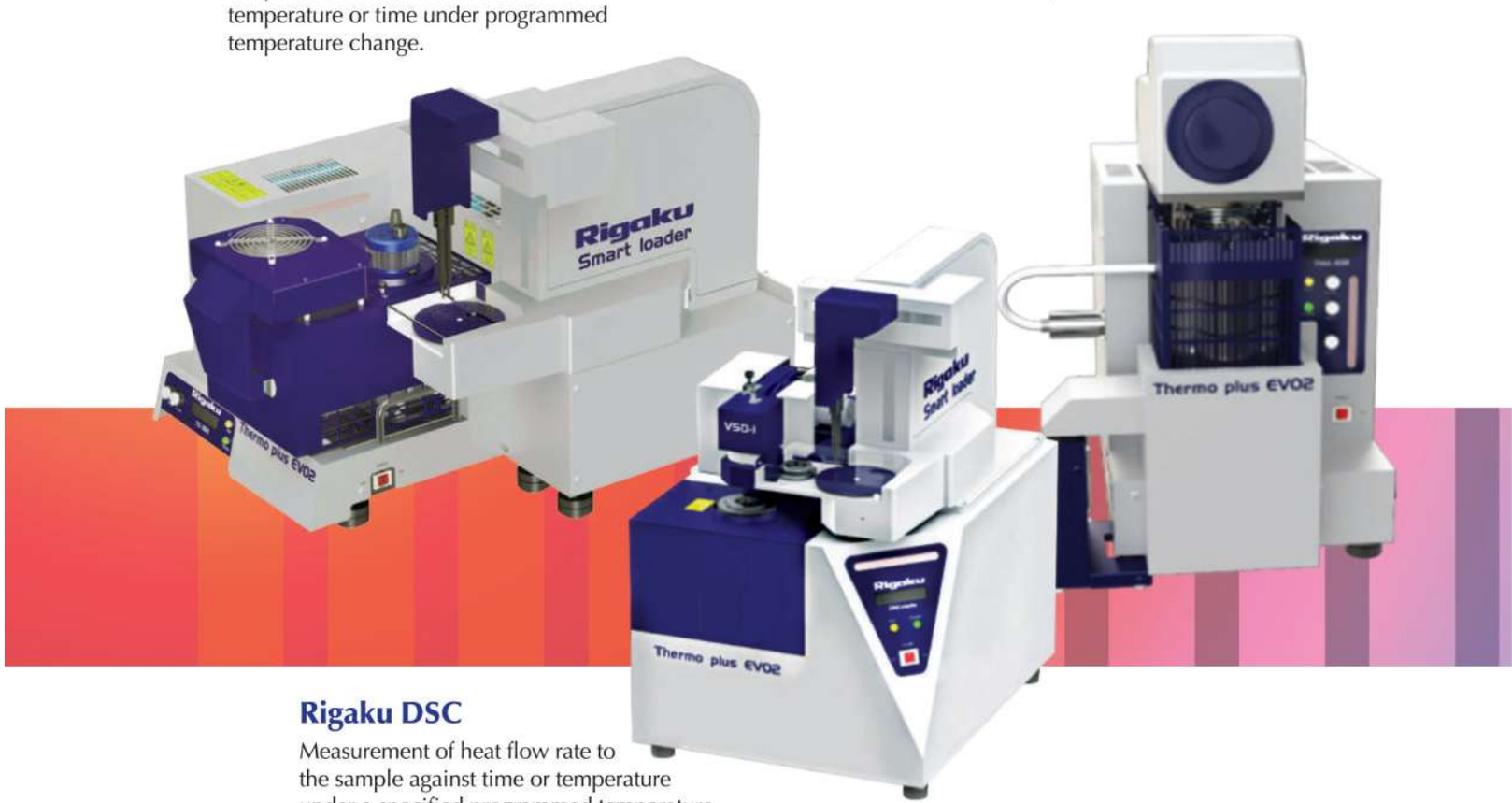

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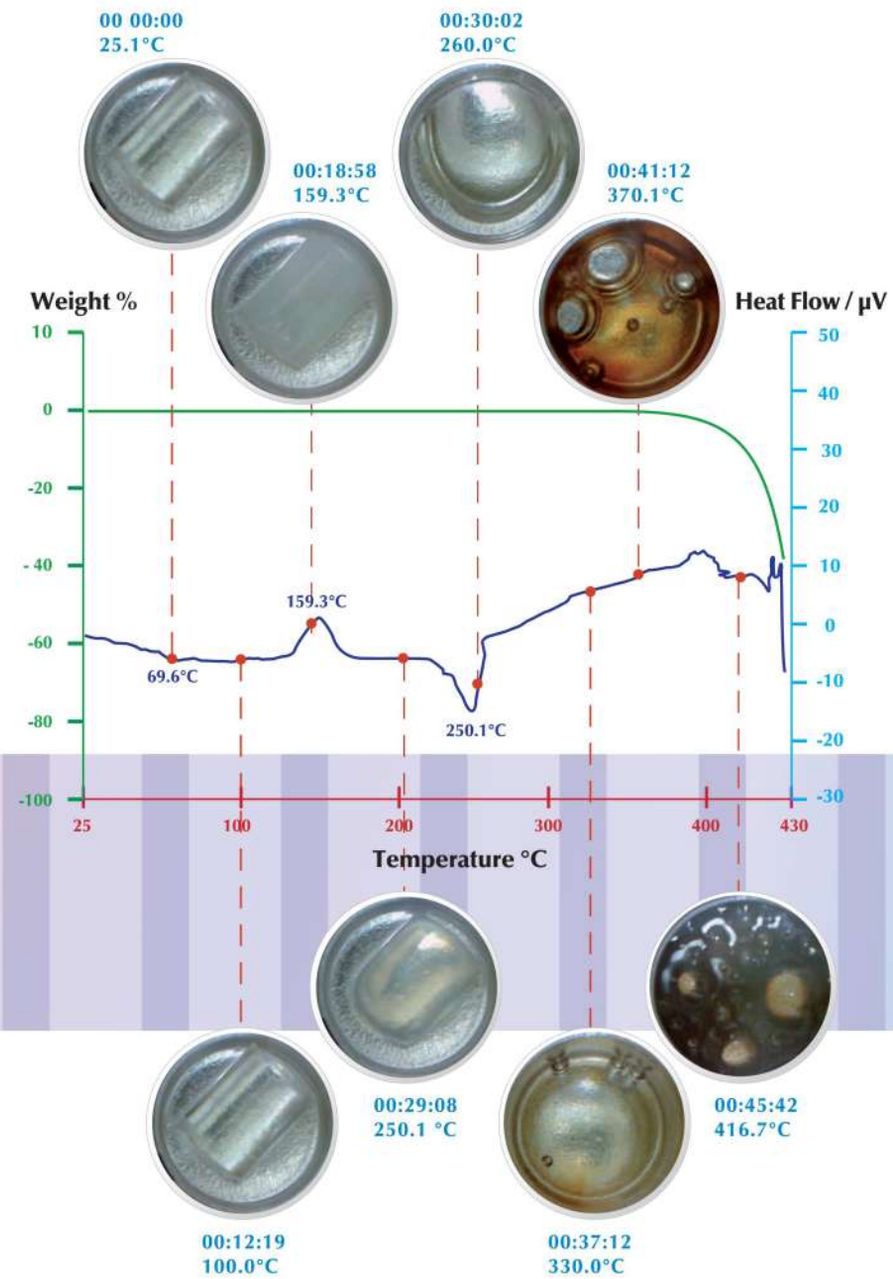

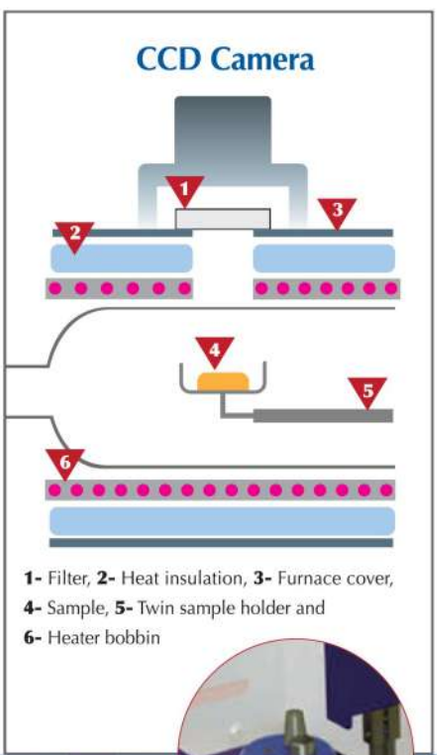

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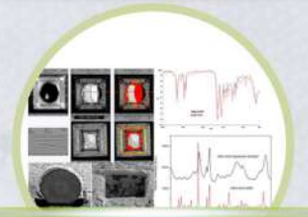

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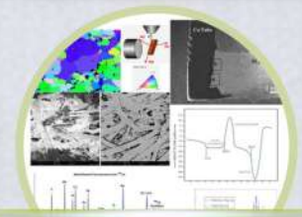

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IUPAC Global Women's Breakfast 2026: Many Voices, One Science (*Pelbagai Suara, Satu Sains*)

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The IUPAC Global Women's Breakfast (GWB) continues to stand as one of the most visible global initiatives championing inclusivity and gender equity in science. Since its inception in 2019, in conjunction with the United Nations International Day of Women and Girls in Science, the programme has grown into a worldwide movement aimed at fostering a strong and inclusive global network of scientists of all genders to address barriers to equality in scientific careers. Over the past seven years, more than 2,500 GWB events have been organised across over 100 countries, reflecting its expanding international reach and sustained global impact.

The theme for #GWB2026, "Many Voices, One Science" (Pelbagai Suara, Satu Sains), highlights the importance of inclusivity, interdisciplinary dialogue, and collaborative engagement. It calls upon scientific communities, from schools and universities to industry, government agencies, professional societies, and non-governmental organisations, to unite across sectors and amplify diverse scientific voices. The theme recognises that meaningful scientific advancement is strengthened when different perspectives converge toward shared goals. In Malaysia, the sustained growth and nationwide consolidation of GWB activities have been strongly supported by the Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM). Since 2024, IKM has provided a targeted RM300 mini-grant to each registered Malaysian GWB organiser. This strategic support has significantly lowered participation barriers, empowered local organisers to host impactful programmes at their respective institutions, and strengthened grassroots engagement in advancing gender equity in science. Beyond financial assistance, this initiative has enhanced IKM's visibility and leadership as a national advocate for inclusivity, capacity building, and community-driven scientific outreach.

All Malaysian GWB2026 programmes were officially registered on the IUPAC GWB2026 platform. Building on the successful consolidation of Malaysian organisers during GWB2024 and GWB2025 through a one-hour national webinar forum, IKM, in collaboration with the ACS International Malaysia Chapter, once again co-organised a national webinar aligned with the 2026 theme. This year, fifteen institutions and organisations across Malaysia were brought together in a unified one-hour live forum, comprising fourteen physical breakfast organisers and one institution, Xiamen University Malaysia, which registered as a webinar participant only. This brings the total number of Malaysia-registered GWB2026 events on the official portal, including the national webinar, to sixteen. The physical breakfast participating institutions are Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), IMU University, Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP), Monash University Malaysia, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), and Jabatan Kimia Malaysia (Petaling Jaya and Melaka). Each organiser hosted a physical breakfast session at their respective institutions while integrating the national webinar into their local programme. Beyond the breakfast gathering itself, organisers creatively embedded additional activities such as sharing sessions, forums, mini chemistry projects, and team-building exercises, demonstrating how GWB has evolved into a platform for both dialogue and meaningful engagement.

The national forum was organised by Assoc. Prof. ChM Dr. Fatimah Salim (UiTM, IKM) and Assoc. Prof. ChM Dr. Lee Hooi Ling (USM, IKM), and officiated by the IKM Vice President, ChM Dr. Yang Farina Abdul Aziz. In alignment with the 2026 theme, the webinar featured three distinguished speakers whose career journeys bridge academia and industry, offering broader perspectives on professional growth and equity in science: Prof. Dr. Leong Chee-Onn from AGTC Genomics, Ts. ChM Dr. Hjh. Rozzeta Dolah from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Ts. ChM Dr. Mohamad Shazeli Che Zain from Universiti Sains Malaysia. Moderated by ChM Dr. Sheela Chandren from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, the forum explored how diversity of thought, background, and discipline enriches scientific innovation. Panelists shared candid reflections on challenges faced in their careers, strategies for resilience, and the importance of ensuring that every scientific voice is heard equitably. As a token of appreciation, early attendees received vouchers sponsored by the ACS International Malaysia Chapter, further strengthening international collaboration and support. With increasing


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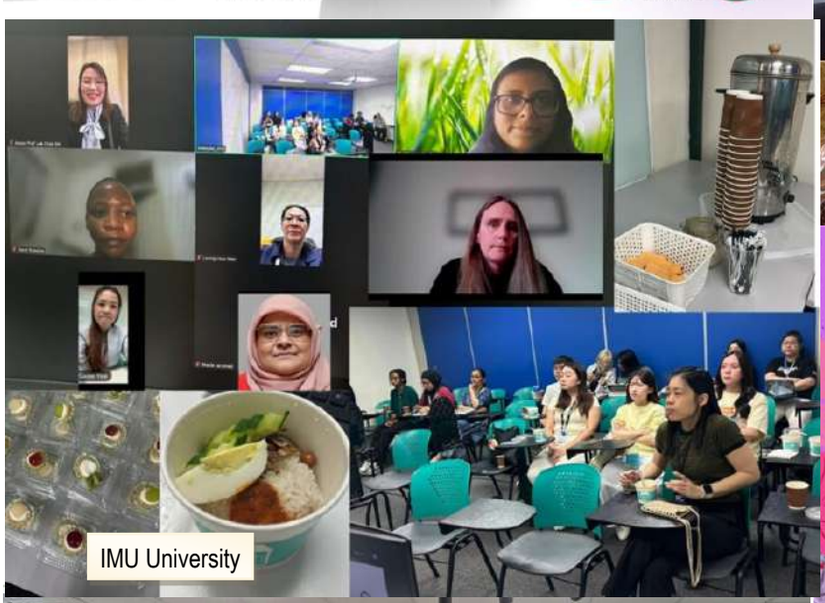
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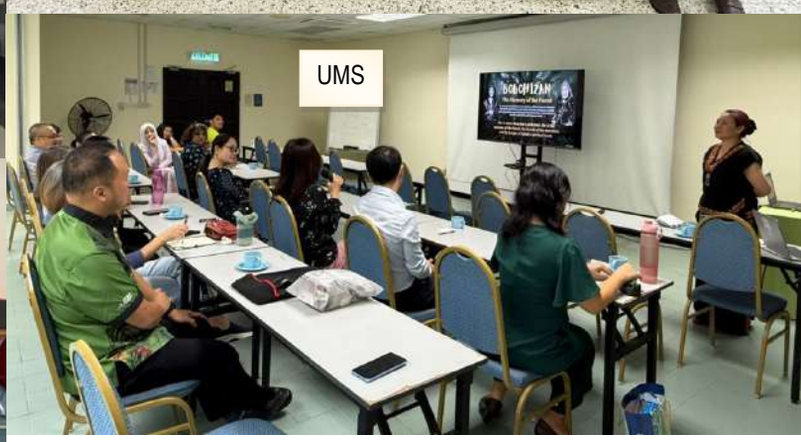
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institutional participation and stronger national coordination each year, Malaysia's GWB movement continues to gain momentum. The spirit of "Many Voices, One Science" reminds us that scientific excellence thrives when diversity is embraced, dialogue is encouraged, and collaboration is strengthened. Looking ahead to GWB2027, the organising team anticipates an even more dynamic lineup of webinars and breakfast events, continuing to inspire, empower, and connect scientists across disciplines and communities.

Stay tuned and join us in championing every voice in science.

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Outstanding Young Chemist Award 2025: Recognizing Excellence in Chemistry

Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM) proudly announced the recipients of the Outstanding Young Chemist Award (OYCA) 2025 during the Malam Kimia 2025 – 54th IKM Gala Dinner held on 6 December 2025 at One World Hotel, Petaling Jaya.

This prestigious and highly competitive award recognizes young chemists under the age of 45 who have demonstrated exceptional contributions to the advancement of chemical sciences in Malaysia through research, innovation, and professional leadership. The selection process was conducted by a panel of twelve distinguished experts from academia and industry, ensuring a rigorous and impartial evaluation of all candidates.

For 2025, the Academic Category award was presented to Assoc. Prof. ChM Dr. Goh Pei Sean from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, while the Industry Category award went to ChM Dr. Ng Sing Muk from Sarawak Energy Berhad. Both recipients exemplify excellence in their respective fields and have made significant impacts through their work, reflecting the spirit of innovation and dedication that the award celebrates.

The OYCA remains one of the most sought-after recognitions in the Malaysian chemical community. Past recipients, including the 2024 winners, have received national attention, with features in major media outlets such as *The Star*, highlighting the award's prestige and visibility.

Following the award presentation, Dr. Goh and Dr. Ng were interviewed during the gala, and their achievements will be further highlighted through upcoming promotional campaigns and advertisements aimed at inspiring the next generation of chemists.

As IKM continues its commitment to recognising excellence and nurturing future leaders in the chemical sciences, eligible young chemists are encouraged to consider submitting their nominations for the Outstanding Young Chemist Award 2026. The award provides a valuable platform to showcase impactful work, expand professional visibility, and contribute to the growth of Malaysia's chemical community.

Further details on the OYCA 2026 call for nominations will be announced in due course through IKM's website and Malaysia Young Chemist Network (MYCN) social media.

Report by
ChM Dr. New Siu Yee
University of Nottingham Malaysia

Assoc. Prof. ChM Dr. Goh Pei Sean

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Engaging Inclusive STEMChem Activities for Underrepresented Female Students

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Countries around the world have encountered challenges in implementing education policies aimed at creating equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their gender or socioeconomic background, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Researchers and educators have called for greater equity in STEM education, emphasizing the importance of gender, race, diversity, inclusion, and opportunity (Lynch et al., 2018; Ong et al., 2018; Vakil & Ayers, 2019). They point out the contradiction between the promising economic prospects in STEM fields and the obstacles faced by women and underrepresented groups, as well as the uneven development of STEM education across various regions. Although STEM fields offer significant economic benefits, the educational needs of disadvantaged groups are often overlooked. Therefore, additional research into issues related to gender, ethnicity, and the disparities in STEM education across regions is necessary (Clark et al., 2021; Takeuchi et al., 2020; Vakil & Ayers, 2019).

Students typically develop strong academic preferences and specific likes and dislikes for certain subjects during middle school (Fryer & Levitt, 2010). During this critical phase of adolescence, many girls begin to show a decreased motivation to pursue STEM topics (Kerr & Kurpius, 2004). This decline contributes to the ongoing gender inequality in STEM fields, as evidenced by the low female employment rates in areas such as engineering and technology (Ceci et al., 2009; Verdugo-Castro et al., 2023), along with the gender wage gap in STEM professions (Blau & Kahn, 2017). The lack of female visibility and representation in STEM workplaces is closely tied to young women's diminishing interest in STEM subjects early in their education. This trend indicates that gender gaps in STEM begin well before women enter the workforce (Kijima et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is vital to nurture girls' interest in STEM topics as soon as they start forming their academic preferences. This project aims to enhance female students' interest in chemistry by providing inclusive STEM activities during their secondary school chemistry studies. Inclusive STEMChem activities are STEM chemistry related disciplines learning experiences designed to engage and support female students, regardless of their background or ability. This project adopts STEM teaching methods and provides opportunities for female students to participate (Kewalramani et al., 2024; McLean & Harlow, 2017). During this visit, two hands-on STEM activities were conducted aimed at helping young female students grasp new chemical concepts.

The projects were conducted in schools located in middle- and low-income communities, where young female students often exhibit less interest in STEM subjects early in their education. This lack of interest can stem from various factors, including gender stereotypes, negative self-perceptions among girls, and a shortage of female role models (Verdugo-Castro et al., 2023). The aim of the project was to provide examples of inclusive STEM activities as a strategy to enhance their interest in STEM and promote gender equity in STEM education within the Malaysian context.

Figure 1 Creating gas bombs

The first activity focuses on acid-based reactions. We organized an outdoor experiment where students created gas bombs, as illustrated in Figure 1. We provided baking soda, vinegar, plastic bags, and rubber bands. The students had to quickly mix the baking soda and vinegar in the plastic bag and secure it with a rubber band. This classic acid-base reaction occurs when vinegar (acetic acid) and baking soda (a base) combine, resulting in fizzing and bubbling as gas is produced. Because the gas is trapped inside the plastic bag, the pressure builds until the sealed bag bursts. The dramatic release of carbon dioxide gas is easy to observe, clearly demonstrating that a chemical change has taken place. This hands-on experiment helps female students learn fundamental chemistry concepts such as

Figure 2 Modelling chemical elements

acids, bases, and chemical reactions, resulting in the formation of sodium acetate, water, and carbon dioxide in a fun and engaging way.

The second activity involves students in learning about chemical elements by using candy to model atoms and molecules in groups, as shown in Figure 2. We provided different colors of candy, illustration boards, and markers. Students were tasked with modeling chemical elements by using colored candies to represent protons, neutrons, and electrons, placing them in the correct electron shells. This process required them to identify the number of subatomic particles, assign a specific color to each particle, draw the electron shells, and correctly position the electrons within those shells. This hands-on modeling offers a visual representation of atomic structure, making abstract concepts more concrete, increasing engagement, and promoting the understanding of chemical elements.

These two examples demonstrate the benefits of inclusive STEMChem activities, such as fostering a greater sense of belonging for underrepresented female students, offering choices in how to demonstrate their learning, employing multi-modal approaches to accommodate different learning styles, and increasing female students' persistence in STEM subjects by creating equitable and accessible learning environments.

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