



# RCIScience

Connecting Canadians with Science since 1849

## SCIENCE COMMUNICATION CERTIFICATE

RCIScience's Science Communication Certificate offers program participants access to learning modules and hands-on learning opportunities to practice their science communication skills on a range of platforms. Developed and successfully piloted in collaboration with the University of Waterloo, the program supports a critical need for professionalized science communication training in Canada, particularly for those who don't have the capacity to complete additional higher education diplomas.

### THE OPPORTUNITY

RCIScience is inviting a limited number of post-secondary institutions across Canada to partner with us to further scale the Certificate program. Sponsoring institutions are entitled to enroll:

- a maximum of 10 students in the program year with a \$10,000 sponsorship;
- a maximum of 4 students in the program with a \$5,000 sponsorship.

Students who successfully complete the program will receive an official RCIScience Science Communication Certificate and can include these credentials on their resumes, websites and professional networking sites. This program provides an invaluable learning experience and an opportunity to join RCIScience's extensive network of leading science communication experts.

### ABOUT RCISCIENCE

A registered charity, the Royal Canadian Institute of Science (RCIScience) is Canada's oldest, continuously operating scientific organization, founded in 1849 and hosting public talks since 1913!

Since 2019, RCIScience events have engaged over 10,000 Canadians and featured over 300 scientists. We've produced over 80 hours of broadcast content including panel discussions, cooking demonstrations and documentary screenings. We built a book club community, played video games and foraged for fungi, all while tackling important issues like vaccine hesitancy, misinformation and racism. We also steward the SciCommTO Network in partnership with Toronto Metropolitan University's SciXchange, and together co-hosted the first enormously successful *SciCommTO Conference* in 2020.

RCIScience provides scientists with an opportunity to hone their communication skills on a real platform, with a real audience. In addition to our extensive portfolio of online and in-person events, we support science communication through Instagram takeovers and written articles for our annual magazine, blog, social media and other projects. Our experienced staff provide guidance and training throughout.



RCIScience's access to an impressive network of science communicators provides unique opportunities for participants to learn from leading experts in the field. In addition to experts at major academic and research institutions, RCIScience has relationships with celebrated Canadian scientists and science communicators who have been the recipients of its prestigious Fleming Medal. Previous awardees include household names like André Picard, Col. Chris Hadfield, Prof. Timothy Caulfield and Bob McDonald.

## THE RCISCIENCE COMMUNICATION CERTIFICATE

The RCIScience Science Communication Certificate Program provides an opportunity to centralize science communication training at participating institutions. The program is a unique learning experience that offers access to professional science communication learning modules developed by Canada's leading science communication experts. It leverages RCIScience's long-standing expertise and tradition of providing opportunities for scientists to hone their science communication skills on a real platform, with a real audience, under the guidance of our senior staff.

## LEARNING MODULES

Learning modules cover specific topics and best practices in science communication, including:

- understanding different genres and audiences;
- methodologies for communicating science;
- designing accessible communications;
- considering government and policymaker communications;
- supporting communities to build science knowledge and conversations;
- understanding how citizen scientists expanded the range of science communication genres;
- how to evaluate science communication activities;
- discussing inclusive practices, fostering cultures of respect and ethical communication practices;
- rhetorical strategies to communicate more effectively in different contexts; and more!

Each module contains specific learning objectives, but overall some of the learning objectives for the Certificate include:

- Understanding the fundamentals of science communication as a profession;
- Learning about current research in fields studying science communication;
- Recognizing the role of different audiences (scientists, activists, citizen scientists and various public audiences) in shaping science communication practices;
- Examining how science communication varies across rhetorical situations, including local and global cultural contexts;
- Identifying and examining ethical considerations and practicing ethical thinking in science communication; and,
- Gaining confidence in the capacity to communicate science effectively.

## PRACTICUM

After completing the learning modules, participants are invited to showcase their science communications skills by producing their own communication project for RCIScience (a blog post, infographic, webinar, magazine article, social media takeover, etc.) with training and guidance from RCIScience's experienced staff, who are recognized science communicators.

## AMA'S (ASK ME ANYTHING)

Introducing aspiring scientists and communicators to the range of career possibilities associated with effective science communication skills is another aim of the program. We have successfully hosted Science Communication Career Panels since 2020, featuring individuals in professional roles requiring expertise in science communication and providing opportunities for budding science communicators to ask questions about their careers. These event are extremely popular and we will host similar activities exclusively for participants in the RCIScience Science Communications Certificate, inviting Fleming Medalists and other prominent figures in the field to chat with participants, alongside 'near peers' establishing themselves in the industry.

## THE TEAM

This program was developed in collaboration with the following team of science communication experts with support from an NSERC Science Communication Skills grant:

- Dr. Ashley Rose Mehlenbacher, Canada Research Chair in Science, Health, and Technology Communication at the University of Waterloo
- Carrie Boyce, Executive Director, RCIScience
- Kirsten Vanstone, Former Executive Director, RCIScience
- Dr. Chantal Barriault, Director, Science Communication Grad program, Laurentian University
- Dr. Brad Mehlenbacher, Professor, University of Waterloo
- Devon Moriarty, PhD candidate, University of Waterloo
- Sarah Ruffell, University of Waterloo

## BENEFITS

### PARTICIPANTS

- Meaningful, relevant opportunities to enhance co-curricular transcripts.
- Opportunities to hone science communication skills through completion of asynchronous learning modules, complemented by experiential learning opportunities.
- Flexibility to complete modules and practicums around their schedules.
- Access to RCIScience's extensive network of scientists and communicators.
- Specialized support from senior RCIScience staff.

*As we're all living through a global health crisis, we see first hand the dangers of poor communication and the damage of public mistrust. It is more important than ever that opportunities, like those provided by RCIScience, are made available to bring scientists and science communicators together to share best practice and foster discussion and training."*

– The STEAM Sisters

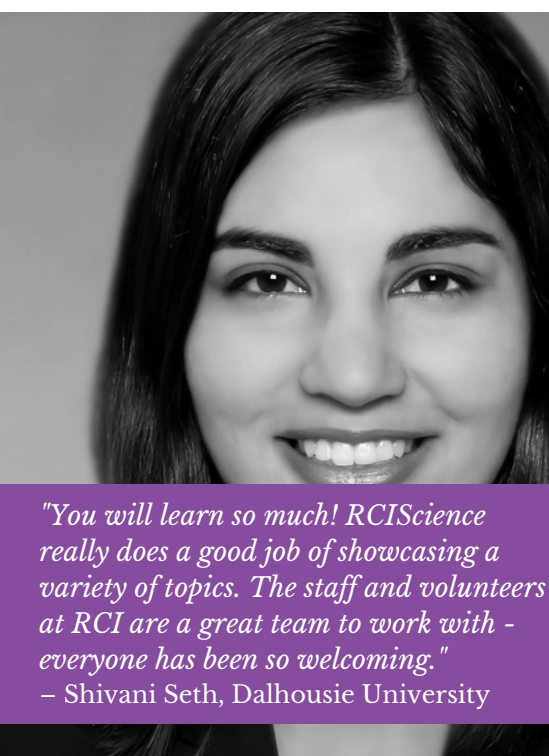






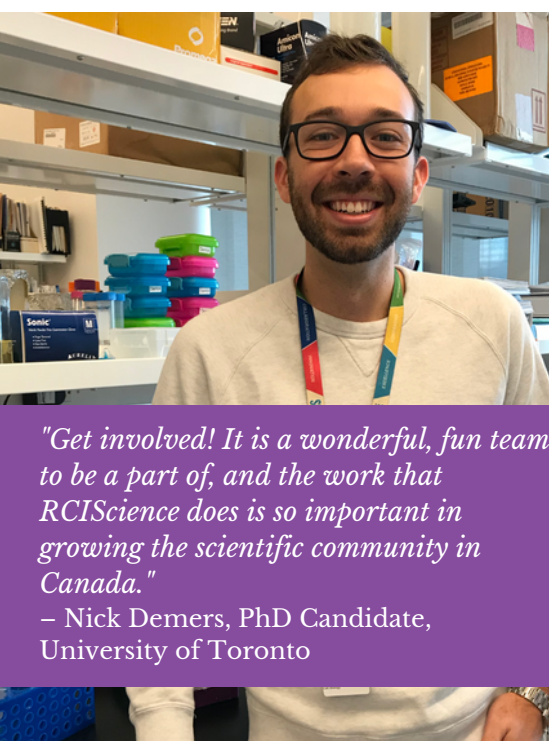
*"Very accommodating to those with busy schedules and an amazing and supportive team to be a part of!"*

–Alexa Fitzpatrick, PhD Candidate,  
University of Toronto



*"You will learn so much! RCIScience really does a good job of showcasing a variety of topics. The staff and volunteers at RCI are a great team to work with - everyone has been so welcoming."*

– Shivani Seth, Dalhousie University



*"Get involved! It is a wonderful, fun team to be a part of, and the work that RCIScience does is so important in growing the scientific community in Canada."*

– Nick Demers, PhD Candidate,  
University of Toronto

## PARTICIPANTS (contd.)

- The opportunity to connect with other program participants from a range of science disciplines.
- Opportunities to discover careers in science communication by participating in Q&As with leading experts in science communication, including Fleming Medal awardees.
- A creative community partnership enables students to positively contribute to a well-respected Canadian charity and have a broader impact on Canadian society by fostering science literacy.
- Association with a prestigious, long-standing institution with an unparalleled reputation in providing Canadians with direct access to scientific information and scientists.

## PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

- Exceptional offerings for students, including experiential learning opportunities.
- Opportunities to connect with RCIScience's extensive network of science communication practitioners.
- Regular opportunities to provide feedback on the program.
- Opportunities to contribute to program evaluation methodologies.
- Recognition as a Program Partner on RCIScience's website (over 17,000 visits per year), social media channels (over 7,000 followers across multiple platforms), annual magazine (available in print and digitally, reaching thousands of Canadians) and Certificate materials.

The RCIScience Science Communication Certificate promises to fill an important niche in Canada as science communication becomes increasingly important as a professional field. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you about how your institution and students can be a part of this exciting new initiative that has the potential to strengthen Canada's science culture, showcase the diversity that Canadian science and scientists have to offer the world and transform the delivery of science communication training in this country.

## CONTACT US

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