

[News story: GC offers APA validated postgraduate residential course](#)

The Association of Public Analysts (APA) Educational Trust and the Government Chemist Programme in LGC organise an annual RSC-approved, fully residential week long postgraduate course on the analysis and examination of food and feed. The course will take place from 16 to 20 April 2018.

See attached programme for full details.

PDF, 370KB, 2 pages

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The course, over a two year cycle, offers a distinctive learning experience, validated by active practitioners in the APA Training Committee, with unique features:

- a vibrant mix of lectures, laboratory practical sessions and interactive exercises
- wide range of experts, not available together elsewhere
- up to date teaching of safety (chemical and microbiological), authenticity, analysis and the law of food, water, feeding-stuffs and fertilisers
- professional networking with peer group and leading experts, National Reference Laboratories, senior academic researchers and policy officials
- alignment with the MChemA*syllabus
- practical and relevant training in microbiology theory and hands-on laboratory work
- tuition on foreign body identification and hands-on lab training in microscopy.

The MChemA (Mastership in Chemical Analysis) is the statutory qualification prescribed to practice as a Public Analyst by the Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) Regulations 2013

Who is this course for?

This course is particularly appropriate for aspiring MChemA candidates but

will also be valuable for anyone working in a Public Analysts' or food /animal feed laboratory who wishes to equip themselves with additional skills.

Course details

Topics will include food authenticity, microbiology theory and lab practical work, microscopy lab practical tuition, toxicology, drinking and bottled water quality, contaminants, food contact materials and food packaging taints. An evening session offers training in foreign body identification.

The accommodation will be in University hotel grade bedrooms with breakfast and evening meals taking place in 'The Cedars', located centrally on Reading University Campus. The teaching will take place in seminar rooms and laboratories.

Booking information

If you are not able to join us for the whole week, do not hesitate to consider daily attendance. See leaflet for daily rates.

Return the completed [Registration form](#) (MS Word Document, 31.7KB) to [Michael Walker](#) to book the course by 29 March.

For any queries about the course or the activities of the Government Chemist please contact

[Press release: Kent Law School puts Solicitor General in the 'hot seat'](#)

Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP will visit the University of Kent's Law Clinic today to see the pro bono work happening there.

While there, the Solicitor General will also take part in a 'hot seat' Question and Answer session. The students will have the opportunity to ask questions about pro bono work and Public Legal Education.

The Solicitor General will also tour the new £5 million Kent Law Clinic as part of his visit and meet staff and solicitors from the local community who volunteer there. The Law Clinic takes on pro bono cases for individuals and community organisations who are unable to afford other legal services.

The Solicitor General said:

Pro bono work often starts at universities and colleges, where

students gain first-hand experience of providing legal advice and help to those in need.

The advice these students give will help make a real difference to people's lives as well as to the communities in which they live.

They are the next generation of lawyers, and the skills they gain now will put them in good stead in their future professional careers.

The students gain practical experience of the law in the clinic, and are involved in all aspects of casework. They undertake such tasks as interviewing clients, carrying out legal research, drafting statements of cases, negotiating and appearing as advocates before the County Court and other forums.

Professor John Fitzpatrick, Kent Law Clinic director said:

We are delighted that the Solicitor General is to visit the Kent Law Clinic, and warmly welcome his support for pro bono legal projects in universities.

Working in law clinics to provide a free legal service to those who need, but cannot to pay for access to the law offers students not only a new way of learning the law itself and very useful vocational skills, but also a new perspective on law and society.

We can only make a small contribution of course, but we hope a rich one to those clients and students who are involved.

Press release: Climate change means more frequent flooding, warns Environment Agency

Flooding like this will become more frequent, the Environment Agency has warned, and people should know their risk

Intense bouts of flooding are set to become more frequent, the Environment Agency has warned today (Friday 16 February).

The warning follows a pattern of severe flooding over the past 10 years linked to an increase in extreme weather events as the country's climate

changes. Met Office records show that since 1910 there have been 17 record breaking rainfall months or seasons – with 9 of them since 2000. As intense storms are becoming more frequent, sea levels are also rising because of climate change.

The Environment Agency has today launched its [Flood Action Campaign](#), targeting younger people through social media and online advertising to encourage them to check their flood risk at GOV.UK, sign up for free warnings and be prepared to take action when flooding hits. Research shows that 18 to 34 year olds are least likely to perceive flood risk to their area, know how to protect their homes or where to go for information. They are also at highest risk of fatality as they are less likely to perceive their personal risk.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is likely to mean more frequent and intense flooding. Floods destroy – lives, livelihoods, and property.

Our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding, and our flood warnings help keep communities safe when it threatens. But we can never entirely eliminate the risk of flooding. Checking your flood risk is the first step to protecting yourself, your loved ones and your home.

In summer 2012, the lengthy period of drought the country had experienced came to an abrupt end when prolonged and intense rainfall increased the risk of flooding from rivers and surface water for long periods. Almost 8,000 homes and businesses were flooded across the country, particularly in the south west.

The winter of 2013 to 2014 started with a coastal surge and record sea levels on the north and east coasts. This was followed by 12 storms in succession and became the wettest winter for 250 years – 11,000 homes were flooded.

Winter 2015 to 2016 brought widespread flooding to 17,000 properties across the north of England, with named storms Desmond, Eva and Frank causing December 2015 to be the wettest month ever recorded.

The threat of flooding is real and increasing – as is also demonstrated by its listing as one of the [nation's major threats](#).

Last year, the Met Office published new innovative research which found that for England and Wales there is a 1 in 3 chance of a new monthly rainfall record in at least one region each winter.

By their very nature extreme events are rare and a novel research method was needed to quantify the risk of extreme rainfall within the current climate.

Professor Adam Scaife, who leads this area of research at the Met Office, said:

“The Met Office supercomputer was used to simulate thousands of possible winters, some of them much more extreme than we’ve yet witnessed. This gave many more extreme events than have happened in the real world, helping us work out how severe things could get.”

[News story: Congestion busting scheme rolled out to benefit drivers](#)

Long traffic jams caused by roadworks could be a thing of the past as a scheme which has already significantly reduced delays in Kent and London is rolled out nationwide.

Lane rental schemes, where utility companies are charged up to £2,500 a day for digging up the busiest roads at peak times, could now be adopted by councils nationwide after successful trials in the south-east.

They incentivise firms to work on quieter roads or outside of rush hour, or even to collaborate with other companies to stop roads being dug up multiple times, to reduce the impact of roadworks on drivers.

Pilot lane rental schemes in London and Kent have seen congestion on the busiest roads drop, saving drivers time and boosting the economy.

Transport Minister Jo Johnson said:

Drivers often see red when roadworks cause them delays, especially if no one is working on them.

Lane rental has seen a massive drop in disruption to drivers as utility companies have changed when and where they carry out work. Now we want millions of motorists around England to get the same benefits.

The Department for Transport carried out a [consultation into the scheme last year](#), and the majority of those responding supported its rollout nationwide. Many said they wanted to take advantage of the ‘clear benefits’ of lane rental schemes.

RAC head of roads policy Nicholas Lyes said:

This is a very welcome announcement. Trials showed that some of the worst congestion caused by planned utility works in London was reduced by half on roads where lane rental was in operation, so rolling this out will extend the benefits nationwide.

While motorists accept that some roadworks and congestion are unavoidable, lengthy and unnecessary queues are incredibly frustrating. RAC research suggests congestion on our roads and journey time reliability are growing concerns for motorists so introducing lane rental should encourage better planning and coordination of roadworks, and mean utility works are completed in a swifter, more efficient manner.

About 2.5 million roadworks are carried out each year, costing the economy £4 billion in increased costs to businesses through late employees or deliveries.

In London, utility companies have worked together more than 600 times since lane rental was introduced in 2015, up from just 100 beforehand.

The Department for Transport will produce guidance in the autumn to help councils develop lane rental schemes for approval. The first schemes could start by the end of 2019.

Press release: £45 million funding boost to support councils unlock land for thousands of homes

A £45 million cash injection into key community projects will help kick-start the building of thousands of new homes, Housing Minister Dominic Raab announced today (16 February 2018).

As part of government's drive to get Britain building homes again, a total of 79 projects from Newcastle to Plymouth will receive funding to support building up to 7,280 homes on council owned land.

To support local councils to meet their ambition to unlock enough of land they own for at least 160,000 homes by 2020, they will be able to use the Land Release Fund money to combat barriers which would otherwise make land unusable for development.

The projects – which aim to support building strong communities – include a range of necessary works such as asbestos removal and bat alleviation, as well as schemes that will significantly improve quality of life such as essential relocating of a pelican crossing.

This move comes 2 weeks after the projects set to benefit from the first wave of funding from the [£5 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund were announced](#), helping to get up to 200,000 homes off the ground through investment in local

housing projects. This is part of the government's comprehensive strategy of planning reform and targeted investment to build 300,000 homes a year.

Housing and Planning Minister Dominic Raab said:

We are investing £45 million to build roads and provide utilities, so councils can release the land to get up to 7,280 new homes built.

It's part of our strategy to build the homes Britain needs, and carry local communities with us.

We're determined to make buying or renting more affordable for young families and those on low or middle incomes.

Projects from Newcastle to Plymouth will receive funding from the Land Release Fund, which will enable:

- Poulton-Le-Fylde, Lancashire, to build new roads, roundabouts, and utility services, which will unlock up to 330 homes potentially built with Japanese modular housing techniques. The works will cost £1.7 million.
- Worcester to demolish a leisure centre and undergo asbestos decontamination works near its city centre, helping to unlock up to 50 homes. The project will cost £750,000.
- Paignton, Devon, to build a new 350m sewer, drainage upgrades and 2 new roads, which will help unlock up to 200 homes. The works will cost £1.9 million.
- Brighton, Sussex, to divert a public sewer and make electricity substation and highways improvements. The £335,000 project will help unlock up to 30 homes.

The Land Release Fund is being administered through a partnership with the Local Government Association and Cabinet Office's One Public Estate (OPE) programme, which make the best use of council land and resources through practical advice and support.

OPE already works with over 70% of councils in England to transform local communities and services through large scale economic growth, delivering new jobs and new homes.

Further information

The Land Release Fund competitively assessed bids from local authorities on value for money, innovation, and the contribution to wider government housing objectives.

A total of 79 bids were successful in the assessment process, which will see £45 million being awarded to 41 authorities.

The fund was oversubscribed with more than £100 million received in funding requests for 143 projects.

The successful bids will release land for homes by March 2020.

In a [funding announcement](#) on 11 December 2017, One Public Estate gave councils – and their public sector partners – access to £8.7 million of funding, as well as practical support and expertise, to help them develop and deliver ambitious property programmes to benefit their communities.

OPE provides councils with funding and access to practical support and expertise to deliver property-based projects with wider public sector partners, including central government departments.

The joint initiative enables publicly-owned land and buildings to be used more efficiently and deliver real benefits to communities across the country, including new jobs and better services.

See details on the bids:

MS Excel Spreadsheet, 24.7KB

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