

## **Electron Microscopy Summer School**

### *The Purpose:*

The aim of this funding request was to receive a contribution to participate to the Electron Microscopy Summer School, organised by the Royal Microscopical Society held in University of Leeds from 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

This course provided a training in both the theoretical and practical aspects of electron microscopy, from the principles of microscopy and diffraction, to the sample preparation and operation modes of both scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and transmission electron microscopy (TEM).

The course was divided into three main fields, one in relation to the use of SEM for biological samples, the other two on SEM and TEM for inorganic samples. I preferred to focus more on the TEM part of the course since I am less experienced in this technique and this is fundamental for my research.



A view of Leeds. (Credits: <http://business.leeds.ac.uk/masters/life-at-leeds/>)

### *The Experience:*

I got a positive experience from this course, starting from the beginning.

My trip from London (where I live) to Leeds went well, I decided to go there by coach, as this was the cheapest way to go there. I reached the University on Sunday evening, the campus was almost empty and I started rooming around to find my accommodation. Luckily, a nice guy saw me lost and helped me in finding the right direction.

My room, despite being part of the student accommodation, was really nice and tidy, as a proper hotel room. With coffee and cookies included!

All the meals were comprised in the booking fee, and I got a really good hospitality during the course. I was really surprised how much the food can be good in a university cafeteria.

I went on Monday, the first day of the course, to the cafeteria for my first breakfast there. I was bit agitated and worried about the course and the people attending it. My doubts faded away since the beginning, indeed I met immediately my course colleagues during the breakfast and, from that moment, I had never been alone.



*The university cafeteria. (Credits: <http://www.mightyemu.co.uk/tag/leeds/>)*

There were around 30 people in the summer school, from different ages, cultures and life experiences. I tried to talk to everyone, asking about their jobs and their ideas about different topics, not only in relation to chemistry.

The course was divided in different classes, from 9 am to 6 pm, with lectures and demo in laboratories. The teachers were really good and professional, with a deep knowledge in the field of electron microscopy.

At the end of the day, my course mates and I, used to go for a dinner or a drink all together, knowing each other and relaxing after the course.



*Picture of the engineering building, where the course was located.  
(Credits: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-35352595>)*

### *The Benefits:*

This summer school helped me both to acquire a deeper knowledge about some techniques related to electron microscopy that I have already worked with, and some new type of analysis that gave me other ideas in relation to my work.

All that information is essential for a proper analysis and characterization of the samples for my scientific research.

Moreover, I had the opportunity to meet really interesting people and learned scientists who were helpful in widening my thinking about microscopy and gave me valuable information, not only in relation to my research but more general to different scientific topics. Overall it was an enriching experience for me as I gained invaluable insights into Microscopy along with the exchange of scientific ideas among intellectuals.

In conclusion I would like to express my gratitude to the Queen Mary University of London for awarding me with the Expedition Fund, making the participation of this summer school possible. That has been an experience that I will never forget!