



QUB hosts the 2019 BREATH Annual Conference

BREATH is a highly ambitious €7.75M collaborative, cross-border project funded by INTERREG Va which is managed by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB). The project supports 16 PhDs and 8 PDRAs across the three partners, Queen's University Belfast, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) and the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and aims to build research capacity in the area of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The project was launched in November 2017 and since then an annual conference has provided an excellent opportunity for the students to present their work, participate in student training and for BREATH to engage with a wider network to include industry partners.

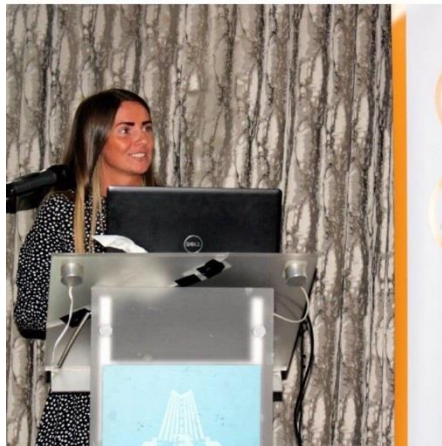
BREATH2019 spanned 3 days from 19th-21st June. On the 19th June we were delighted to offer, with support from the School of Pharmacy, an inclusive industry-led training event in the Great Hall entitled "Pharmaceutical Industry in Action" for which TEVA UK provided nine senior managers and directors from across the UK to act as facilitators and which is the subject of a separate report. That evening, the BREATH team then attended a Chiesi-sponsored ENGAGE event at Riddel Hall which provided dinner and the two plenary talks for the conference: the first talk from Professor Alan Wells, University of Leicester, who has played a pivotal role in UK Space Science for over 40 years, was entitled "The bad air that we breathe: Health impacts and hopes for preventative interventions". Dr Joe Kidney, Mater Hospital, Belfast, then gave a very informative talk on "Mechanisms of exacerbations in COPD", with inciteful associations made to Prof. Wells observations on air quality across the region.

On the 20th June, coinciding with **national Clean Air Day**, the BREATH and UWS-matched students had an opportunity to present their work to a broad audience of academics, funding representatives and industry partners from global pharma and SME biotech firms to QUB spin-outs, in the Penthouse Suite of the Europa Hotel. During the day, 19 student presentations were delivered of excellent standard highlighting the breadth and quality of work that is being conducted across the programme. The four sessions were chaired by the PDRAs who did a great job of keeping the programme to time and hosting Q&A. The day finished with a well-deserved evening reception and dinner in the Europa Piano Bar and Restaurant.

The last day of the conference was held in the Wellcome-Wolfson Institute of Experimental Medicine, and provided opportunity for the students to spend the morning with the PDRAs who presented updates on expertise and techniques available across the three partners, to encourage the students to think more about what they would like to achieve as part of their partner laboratory placements. A second session provided focussed training on how to write a scientific paper and thesis writing tips.

Overall, the conference was a great success as not only did it provide opportunity to promote the excellent, highly collaborative research and training that is being conducted by BREATH but it also showcased our productive links with industry, the high quality facilities provided by the university and the hospitality of the city of Belfast.











Funder:

BREATH is funded through the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme for a pioneering cross-border research project, and is designed to better understand and alleviate the impact of lung disease.