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AWARDEE REPORT FORM

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| NAME | Orla Mitchell |
| TWITTER HANDLE\* *optional* | N/A |
| UNIVERSITY | Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland |
| NAME OF AWARD | Barclay-Smith Travelling Fund |
| PURPOSE OF AWARD *conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.* | |
| Barclay-Smith Travelling Fund, as the winner of the Dr. Sophie Miller Memorial Prize Lecture, for the attendance of the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting 2025, hosted by the University of Oxford. The award supported my travel, accommodation and registration fees for this meeting. | |
| REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | |
| As the winner of the Dr. Sophie Miller Memorial Prize Lecture, I had the privilege of delivering an oral presentation on my most recent PhD project. I presented this lecture at the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting 2025, hosted by the University of Oxford. For an early career researcher, opportunities to present orally are both limited and highly competitive, making this experience especially valuable. I was looking forward to developing my oral presentation and scientific communication skills, as well as receiving feedback from more senior researchers on the methodology and the position of my work in the field.  The Anatomical Society Meeting are known to bring together a range of researchers across disciplines and experience levels. I was hoping that by attending, I would be able to expand my knowledge beyond my own PhD focus and get a sense of where the field is heading as well as gain insight into the progression of other, parallel fields. I also believed it would be a great chance to hear about new research techniques and approaches that I might be able to apply to my own work.  I also anticipated the Summer Meeting being a meaningful networking opportunity. The informal conversations around posters and after sessions are just as valuable as the talks and they often spark practical suggestions. I was especially keen to meet other early-career researchers and PhD students, compare notes on methods, and see the breadth of projects the Society supports, as well as receive practical commentary form more senior academics. | |

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| COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event.  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | |
| Attending the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting was a valuable experience for me, both professionally and personally. One of the main highlights was being able to present my research in such a prestigious setting. The questions and feedback I received afterwards were incredibly useful, allowing me to think about my work in new ways and pointing me towards possible directions I could take in the future. Beyond its support for early-career researchers, the Dr. Sophie Miller Memorial hold particular significance. I was able to meet Dr. Miller’s family at the meeting and thank them for their generosity and long-standing commitment to the community.  My PhD research is very closely linked to the main focus of the meeting (“Human Cerebral Cortex Development III”), so the programme felt especially relevant for me. It was great to hear from researchers who are in areas that closely align with or even overlap with the topic of my PhD. I was able to attend several talks and visit posters that introduced techniques that were novel to me. This allowed me to widen my knowledge and allowed some insight into my own methodology. It also permitted me to see where my PhD topic fits into the wider field and how it contributes to ongoing discussions.  Beyond the formal sessions, the atmosphere of the conference was very supportive. I had the chance to meet and chat with a range of researchers, from fellow PhD students to senior academics. These conversations were encouraging and insightful. Overall, the meeting was an enriching experience. It not only helped me develop as a presenter but also allowed me to deepen my understanding of the field, connect with others in the community, and feel more confident about the direction of my own research. | | | |
| REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant.* For public engagement/outreach awards what did your audience gain and how did you evaluate success?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | |
| One of the most important skills I developed through attending the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting was the ability to present my research confidently to a large and knowledgeable audience. Preparing for and delivering the Dr. Sophie Miller Memorial Prize Lecture gave me the chance to really think about how to communicate my work clearly, keep the audience engaged, and present my findings in a way that highlighted their clinical relevance. This was quite different from smaller lab meetings or poster sessions, and I felt I gained a lot of valuable experience in oral scientific communication.  Another key skill was learning how to handle questions and feedback in a professional and constructive way. During my lecture, I received a range of questions, which challenged me to understand how my methodologies and interpretations are viewed from a wider perspective, which can be easy to lose when you are so immersed in a specific topic. Responding in the moment helped me build confidence in defending my work while also recognising where I could adapt or strengthen my approach.  Further to this, this meeting did have the theme of “Human Cerebral Cortex Development III”, which is very closely aligned with my PhD topic, however, I knew there would be a range of researchers from different areas. In this, I anticipated the need to tailor my lecture to a wider audience, which is not something that I often have to do. Usually, oral presentations occur at more specific conferences or group meetings, in which some base knowledge can be assumed. Again, this helped develop my scientific communication skills but from a new perspective. It allowed me to develop an understanding of whether I could explain my research process without using jargon. This is an important skill to develop for future oral presentations and relevant to my upcoming viva presentation. | | | |
| REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? For public engagement/outreach awards how with the materials/knowledge generated by this activity be used in the future?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | |
| I think the experience of presenting at the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting will have a lasting impact on how I approach my PhD and my future career. The feedback I received during my oral presentation has already given me new ideas for refining my analyses and thinking about how I frame my findings. I plan to integrate these suggestions into the next stages of my project, which I believe will strengthen the quality and impact of my work.  On a professional level, the experience of giving a prize lecture has increased my confidence in oral communication, which I know will help in future. I now feel more comfortable presenting to large audiences and responding to questions on the spot. These are skills I will actively carry with me into future academic settings and career opportunities. Further to this, presenting at the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting 2025, also allowed me to develop my oral presentation skills with regards to presenting to a wider audience. That being understanding what kind of knowledge can be assumed and what cannot. This will allow me to improve my presentation skills and permit me to present well to a wider range of audiences. This will be particularly useful for my viva, where examiners may be experts in specific parts of the PhD but not every aspect. | | | |
| Data Protection/GDPR: I consent to the data included in this submission being collected, processed and stored by the Anatomical Society. Answer YES or NO in the Box below | | | |
| Yes | | | |
| Graphical Images: If you include graphical images you must obtain consent from people appearing in any photos and confirm that you have consent. A consent statement from you must accompany each report if relevant. A short narrative should accompany the image. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | |
| N/A | | | |
| Copyright: If you submit images you must either own the copyright to the image or have gained the explicit permission of the copyright holder for the image to be submitted as part of the report for upload to the Society’s website, Newsletter, social media and so forth. A copyright statement must accompany each report if relevant. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | |
| N/A | | | |
| SIGNATURE | Orla Mitchell | DATE | 18/08/2025 |

*If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature*

*File: AS-Award-Report-Form-171023 – International Conference*