The Division of Immunology and Inflammation Away Day took place at the Huxley Building, South Kensington Campus, on the 4th July 2016. The main aim of the Away Day is to bring all staff together to enhance networking within the Division, update on research going on within the Division, introduce relevant work elsewhere in the College and build opportunities for future collaborations. Therefore, junior academics, MSc and PhD students and post-docs, from within the Division were invited to attend along with more senior academics.

The Away Day consisted of four sessions led by senior academics on current studies being conducted in the Division, with the themes for the sessions being metabolism, infection, signalling and cancer. Speakers ranged from senior academics, to post docs, as well as a talk by a PhD student, Iris Scherwitzl, on the work conducted during her studies. Presentations were limited to 15 minutes to maximise time for discussion, with the discussion following Iris Scherwitzl’s talk focusing on suggestions for future research possibilities for her study. The session leaders mediated the discussion and encouraged questions from more junior members, such as PhD students and post-docs, as well as senior academics, to ensure that the entire division engaged.

A new feature for this year’s Away Day was the PhD student poster presentation, which took place during the day’s lunch break. PhD students were invited to submit abstracts for consideration earlier in the year, with the Division’s Head of Section Committee tasked with choosing which abstracts were to be produced as posters. Students were encouraged to discuss what to propose for the subject of their poster with their academic supervisor.

During the lunch break, attendees were given the opportunity to view and discuss the posters with their authors. This was a great opportunity for the students to present and discuss their work with colleagues outside their laboratories that they do not usually interact with. As well as the experience of producing an abstract, students were able to enhance their presentation skills and ability to convey the aims of their research to a range of audiences, some who may be familiar with the research techniques and others who are not.

Initial feedback from the Away Day has been positive, and it is hoped that the event succeeded in encouraging networking between all academics in the Division as well as helping to provide experience for younger academics of the types of presentations experienced at academic congresses.