

### Postgraduate Course in Polymer Science

For more than a decade, the IUPAC Polymer Division has supported a program that enables young university graduates and Ph.D.s from countries with limited research facilities to acquire knowledge about recent advances in polymer science and the professional skills needed for promotion of polymer science in their home countries. The 16th and 17th runs of the course will be held in the academic years 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 at the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, in Prague. The courses are also sponsored by UNESCO with financial assistance from the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The institute, which has more than 100 scientists and more than 50 years of experience in postgraduate education, offers up-to-date facilities for

postgraduate training in polymer science.

The number of participants in each of the 15 runs of the program usually has been between 5 and 13, depending on the funds available. The course lasts 10 months and comprises about 50 hours of lectures in modern polymer science, experimental work on research projects under the supervision of senior scientists of the institute, and participation in all educational activities within the institute. The results of the research are published in international technical journals and presented at meetings.

The UNESCO/IUPAC Course 2011–2012 began 1 October 2011. The deadline for applications for the coming year is 25 February 2012.

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 [www.imc.cas.cz/unesco](http://www.imc.cas.cz/unesco)

## Stamps International

See also [www.iupac.org/publications/ci/indexes/stamps.html](http://www.iupac.org/publications/ci/indexes/stamps.html)

### Russia's Leonardo

Mikhail Vasil'evich Lomonosov (1711–1765), much like Leonardo da Vinci in Italy some 250 years earlier, was a man of many talents and is often regarded as a polymath (i.e., an individual with a restless curiosity, an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and the rare ability to excel in a variety of subjects or fields). Although Lomonosov may not have a *Mona Lisa* in his curriculum vitae, he was a prolific writer, with major contributions to grammar, rhetoric, poetry, and history, and he is considered one of the key players in the development of the modern Russian language. His long list of accomplishments in multiple areas of scientific



endeavor, including chemistry, physics, mathematics, mineralogy, geology, and astronomy, is also undeniable. For example, he established at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences the first chemistry laboratory in Russia (1748), which was one of the first in the world in which university students could carry out experiments by themselves. He opposed the theory of phlogiston

prevalent at the time, regarded heat as a form of motion, and proposed pioneering ideas towards the establishment of the law of conservation of matter. He measured the solubilities of various salts at different temperatures, conducted experiments on atmospheric electricity, built a mosaic glass factory, and demonstrated the organic origin of coal, petroleum, and amber. He explained the formation of icebergs and predicted the existence of Antarctica, recorded for the first time the freezing point of mercury, and cataloged more than 3000 different minerals. It is therefore not surprising that Lomonosov's multifarious contributions to society have been widely recognized in his native Russia, including the official name of its largest university (Moscow State University).

The stamp illustrated in this note was issued in 1986 to celebrate the 275th anniversary of Lomonosov's birth and it features the best-known portrait of the renowned scientist. The same image has also been used in several other stamps from Russia as well as Cuba, Romania, and, more recently, Guinea, Togo, and Vietnam. Perhaps, Lomonosov is finally becoming better recognized outside Russia. So, we ought to remember that the International Year of Chemistry 2011 was also the tricentennial of his birth. Happy birthday Misha!

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