



Final Report of the PiCSU26 Event

Event: PiCSU2026 Symposium

Date: January 12-15, 2026

Location: Enrica Calabresi Building - Via Edoardo Detti, 3, Sesto Fiorentino (FI)

1. Executive Summary

This report describes the organization and implementation of the PiCSU26 event held at the Scientific Campus of Sesto Fiorentino from January 12 to 15, 2026. The event represented the 5th edition of PiCSU and is a scientific meeting that allows PhD students in Chemical Sciences at the University of Florence to share their knowledge and present the results of their research. The meeting included oral presentations and poster sessions presenting results obtained by PhD students during the development of their research projects. The 5th PiCSU PhD Symposium 2026 addressed a wide range of topics related to chemical sciences, including new materials, catalysis, organic synthesis, peptide and protein chemistry, computational methods, spectroscopic technologies, nuclear magnetic resonance, electrochemical techniques, new analytical methods, and many other interesting topics of discussion.

1.1. Organizing Committee:

- Samuele Bitossi (Ciclo XLI)
- Mattia Carbone (Ciclo XL)
- Claudia Giovani (Ciclo XL)
- Francesco Montanari (Ciclo XL)
- Sara Morozzi (Ciclo XL)
- Francesco Parmeggiani (Ciclo XLI)
- Davide Sestaioni (Ciclo XL)
- Simone Tamantini (Ciclo XLI)
- Niccolò Ulivieri (Ciclo XLI)



1.2. Events Participants

The event was aimed at PhD students in Chemical Sciences at the University of Florence, particularly those from Cycle XXXVIII to XLI.

A total of 91 participants attended the event, including:

- In person: 72
- Online: 19

XXXVIII Cycle

Chiara Baroni
Fabio Biffoli
Giulia Bonaccorso
Ilaria Chiarugi
Chiara Cianci
Benedetta Ciuffi
Laura Conti
Ilaria De Santis
Sofiane El Barkaoui
Neri Fuochi
Riccardo Gallorini
Pietro Gentilesca
Andrea Geri
Francesca Mancusi
Chiara Mangini
Elena Mariani
Margherita Marino
Francesca Milano
Giulio Pappaiani
Sara Pavone
Lorenzo Quadrini
Leonardo Querci
Mariano Riccardi
Prempakash Sahu
Laura Sforzi
Andrea Sodini
Leonardo Tacconi
Angela Sofia Tino
Pietro Tordi
Ilaria Antonia Vitale
Stefano Zineddu

XXXIX Cycle

Giulia Agnoloni
Marta Albanesi
Samuele Baldini
Alice Beni
Deborah Bonavolontà
Silvia Bracci
Francesco Brenzini Biagioni
Luca Campagiorni
Valentina Ceccherini
Lapo Gabellini
Thomas Lulli
Amina Mumtaz
Georgia Myrto Prifti
Matteo Orlandi
Valentina Pacciani
Matilde Rossi
Martina Tozzetti
Filippo Turchi
Simone Ventisette
Pedro Miguel Ascenso Vieira

XL Cycle

XLI Cycle



Celine Adamo	Leonardo Bellandi
Sali Alasmar	Samuele Bitossi
Chiara Baldi	Enrico Bolognesi
Emmanuel Baranger	Laura Cesati
Elisa Bianchi	Giulio Della Nave
Consuelo Bigelli	Mattia Fanelli
Debora Briganti	Carolina Gabellini
Sara Calozzo	Alessandro Galli
Mattia Carbone	Gabriele Laus
Quentin Chenin	Andrea Louise Matulac
Claudia Giovani	Francesco Parmeggiani
Mariasole Gobbo	Denez Mael Corentin Raimbault
Livia Guiggi	Sharareh Rezaei
Lorenzo Isidoro	Marco Salvigni
Irene Lunghi	Simone Tamantini
Naufia Mohame Dzakaria Shibina Sbarveen	Niccolò Olivieri
Francesco Montanari	
Alessio Morano	
Sara Morozzi	
Daniele Sartini	
Francesca Serventi	
Davide Sestaioni	
Shima Siadohoni	
Zhiyi Zhou	

It should be noted that Chiara Cianci did not present the oral contribution at the PiCSU26 venue due to health reasons.

1.3. Event Objectives

The PiCSU26 event pursued the following strategic objectives: First, to promote scientific discussion on topics of shared interest through thematic sessions and opportunities for dialogue between PhD students and faculty members. Second, to support the training of young researchers by offering them the opportunity to develop transferable skills in communication and event organization. The event also aimed to stimulate interdisciplinary collaborations and networking by connecting PhD students from different scientific disciplinary sectors. Finally, it sought to disseminate research results produced during the most recent doctoral cycles, highlighting the work of PhD students through oral and poster presentations.



1.4. Structure and Scientific Content

The scientific program was structured into four thematic sessions, including 74 oral contributions and 16 posters. A Book of Abstracts was also produced and made available in digital format at the following link: [Book of Abstract](#).

1.5. Funding and Financial Results

The event was made possible thanks to the contributions of the following institutions and research groups. The total budget amounted to approximately €2200, with costs mainly related to food supplies for 7 coffee breaks and the social event, as well as additional costs for out-of-hours classroom use, printing, and stationery supplies. The final balance is consistent with the planned budget.

Funding Institutions:

- Department of Chemistry "Ugo Schiff" (DICUS): €500 plus additional classroom occupation costs: approximately €600
- Italian Chemical Society (SCI): €300
- National Interuniversity Consortium of Materials Science and Technology (INSTM): €500
- Center for Colloid and Surface Science (CSGI): €500
- Laboratory of Applied Electrochemistry (LEA): €300

A. Entrate previste

Item	Quantity	Unit amount (€)	Total (€)
DICUS	1	500 + classroom occupation cost	~ 600
SCI	1	300	300
INSTM	1	500	500
CSGI	1	500	500
LEA	1	300	300
Total (€)			~ 2200

B. Actual costs



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Voce	Quantità	Importo unitario (€)	Totale (€)
Coffee Breaks: quotation provided by Centro Sesto COOP.FI			
Purchase of food items such as bakery products (pizza, schiacciata), packaged products (chips, biscuits, tarts, donuts, pandoro, panettone), beverages (fruit juices, coffee, tea and plant-based drinks), and disposable tableware (napkins, plates, cups, cutlery).			
Coffee breaks	7	€ 84,88 (VAT included)	€ 594,16 (VAT included)
Social Event: quotation provided by Carradori Ricevimenti			
Full menu and service	55 people	€ 23 p.p + 10%VAT	1391,50€ (VAT included)
		<i>Total</i>	1985,66 (VAT included)
Space usage costs			
Extension of classroom use	3.5 hours	€25/hour + 22%VAT	106,75 (VAT included)
Printing carried out by STUDIO M.C. Marusca Certini			
Poster and badge printing			54€
Card printing			28€
		<i>Total</i>	82€
Total Event Expenses			
		Total expenses (€)	2174,41

C. Financial Outcome

Total income:	€2200
Total costs:	€2174,41

1.6. Organizational Activities

The organization of the event required the integrated management of scientific, administrative, and logistical activities, structured across several operational areas. From a scientific perspective, a call for abstracts was prepared and distributed to collect original contributions from PhD students. At the same time, administrative and communication activities were carried out, including the management of registrations and communications with participants to provide logistical and organizational information clearly and promptly. From a logistical perspective, the organization included the management of spaces, technical equipment, and support services,

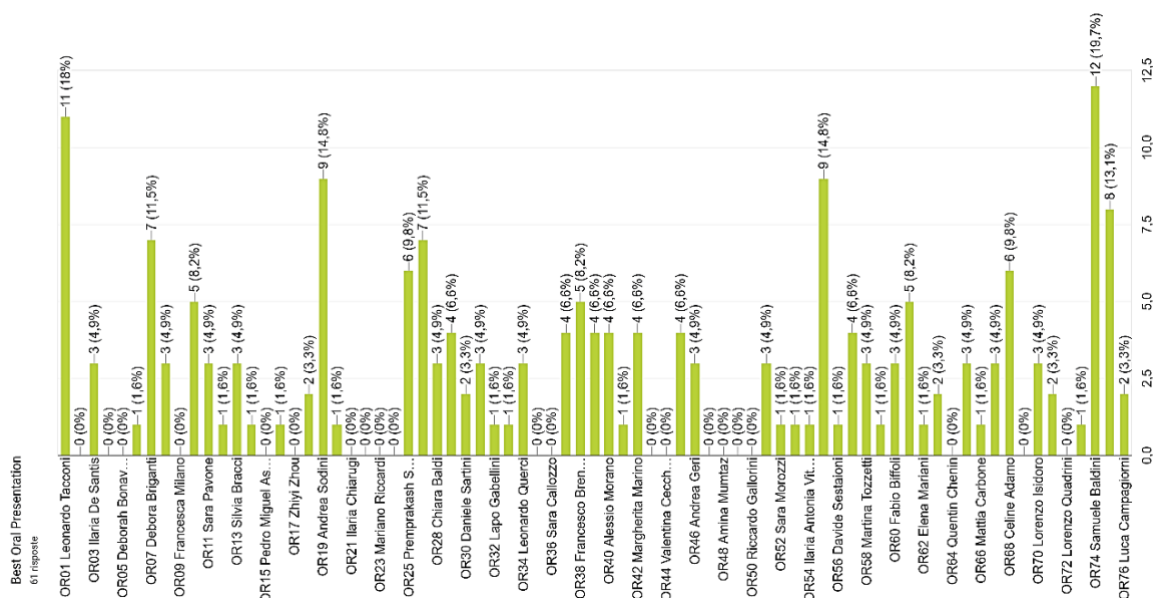


ensuring the smooth running of both in-person sessions and videoconference activities. Particular attention was devoted to the planning of coffee breaks, the social event, and related activities, which were considered key moments to encourage informal networking and strengthen cohesion among participants.

1.7. Awards

Four awards were assigned for the best scientific contributions following voting by the participants. The prizes were awarded as follows:

- Samuele Baldini (Cycle XXXIX): First place for the best oral contribution
- Leonardo Tacconi (Cycle XXXVIII): Second place for the best oral contribution
- Matteo Orlandi (Cycle XXXIX) and Andrea Sodini (Cycle XXXVIII): Joint third place for the best oral contribution



- Carolina Gabellini (Cycle XLI): Best Poster



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Best Poster Presentation

54 risposte



1.8. Evaluation and Impact

The feedback collected indicates a high level of participant satisfaction. The event contributed significantly to the dissemination of knowledge and the creation of new collaboration networks, laying the foundations for future initiatives.



2. Activities Carried Out for the Organization and Implementation of the Event

This chapter describes in detail all the activities carried out for the design, organization, implementation, and closure of the event, with particular attention to scientific, organizational, administrative, and logistical aspects. The activities required continuous coordination among the various actors involved and developed throughout the entire timeline of the event, from the initial conception phase to the final reporting stage.

2.1. Dissemination and Recruitment

Prior to organizing the event, the PhD student representatives met with the program coordinator to define the dates and format of the symposium. Maximum flexibility in scheduling discussion sessions was identified as a priority, particularly for candidates unable to attend in person. Participation via videoconference was reserved exclusively for PhD students based abroad during their research period; Candidates from Cycle XXXVIII already engaged in postdoctoral professional activities. Subsequently, the representatives organized a student assembly to present the symposium structure to all PhD students. Information about the event, timelines, and procedures was also communicated during the meeting with the Cycle XLI new PhD candidates, held on November 4, 2025. During these meetings, candidates were invited to join the organizing committee, which was established in the following days.

2.2. Planning and General Coordination

The organization of the event began with a preliminary planning phase, aimed at defining the scientific and educational objectives, the overall structure of the initiative, and the activity timeline. An operational plan was developed to coordinate the Scientific Committee, the Organizing Committee, and the Organizing Secretariat, ensuring integrated management of the various phases of the event. Throughout the preparation period, regular coordination meetings were held to monitor progress and resolve potential issues.



2.3. Scientific Activities

2.3.1. Definition of the Scientific Program

The Scientific Committee defined the scientific program by identifying the main thematic areas and structuring the sessions consistently with the event's objectives. Special attention was given to balancing theoretical and applied contributions, as well as promoting the work of young researchers. Experienced speakers were also identified and invited for the plenary sessions.

2.3.2. Call for Abstract and Evaluation Process

A call for abstracts was drafted and distributed through the official communication channels of the event. The submitted abstracts were evaluated by the Scientific Committee based on criteria such as: scientific quality; thematic relevance; originality.

2.3.3. Management of Oral Contributions and Posters

The accepted contributions were organized into thematic sessions, defining presentation times and discussion formats. Support was provided to speakers for the preparation of presentations and the management of technical aspects. The poster session was organized to encourage interaction between authors and participants.

2.4. Logistical and Technical Organization

2.4.1. Event Venue and Setup

The event venue was selected considering both scientific and logistical requirements. Room setup, signage preparation, and organization of common spaces were arranged to ensure the smooth running of activities and proper reception of participants.

2.4.2. Technical Services

Technical services necessary for the sessions were coordinated, including: audio-video support, presentation projection, in-room technical assistance. The constant presence of technical staff ensured continuity of the scientific activities.



2.5. Administrative and Financial Management

2.5.1. Funding Applications

Funding requests were prepared and submitted to the relevant institutions in compliance with required timelines and procedures. Activities included the collection of the necessary documentation and subsequent financial reporting.

2.5.2. Budget Management

The event budget was monitored throughout all organizational phases. Activities included managing relations with suppliers, contract arrangements, expense control, payment execution. This ensured compliance with the approved financial plan.

2.6. Communication, Promotion, and Dissemination

2.6.1. Pre-Event Communication

Communication and promotional activities were carried out to ensure adequate dissemination of the initiative, including the creation of the event website, preparation of informational materials, distribution of communications through mailing lists and institutional channels.

2.6.2. Communication During and After the Event

During the event, participant reception and information services were managed. After the event, scientific and informational materials were made available and distributed, contributing to the dissemination of results.

2.7. Organizing Secretariat and Participant Support

The Organizing Secretariat managed participant registration, support for participants and speakers, preparation and distribution of certificates of participation. A continuous assistance service was provided to address organizational and informational needs.

2.8. Social Event and Side Activities

A social event was organized to promote networking and informal discussion among participants. The activity represented an extremely valuable opportunity for integration among PhD students from different cycles and strengthened the sense of belonging to the doctoral community, contributing to the overall success of the initiative.



2.9. Awards and Recognitions

Awards were established for the best scientific contributions, with particular attention to promoting young researchers. The evaluation criteria were defined by the Scientific Committee, and the prizes were awarded at the end of the dedicated sessions.

2.10. Post-Event Activities

After the conclusion of the event, several activities were carried out, including collection of participant feedback, analysis of results, and preparation of the final documentation. These activities enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the initiative and the preparation of the present report.



3. Participant Feedback Analysis

The evaluation questionnaire was distributed to participants at the end of the conference in order to collect feedback on the overall quality of the event. Participants were asked to rate several aspects of the event's structure, organization, and usefulness on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = poor, 5 = excellent). A total of 31 responses were collected.

For each question, the analysis covered the mean score, standard deviation, and the percentage of responses rated 4 or 5, used as a summary indicator of overall satisfaction. The response distributions are shown in the histograms in the figures below.

The questionnaire items were grouped into the following areas:

- program structure and event format;
- organization and logistics;
- usefulness of the initiative for the doctoral program;

3.1 Program Structure and Event Format

This section of the questionnaire examined how well the conference was structured and how effective the chosen format was for presenting work (talks and posters) and for facilitating discussion. The results are shown in Figure 1.

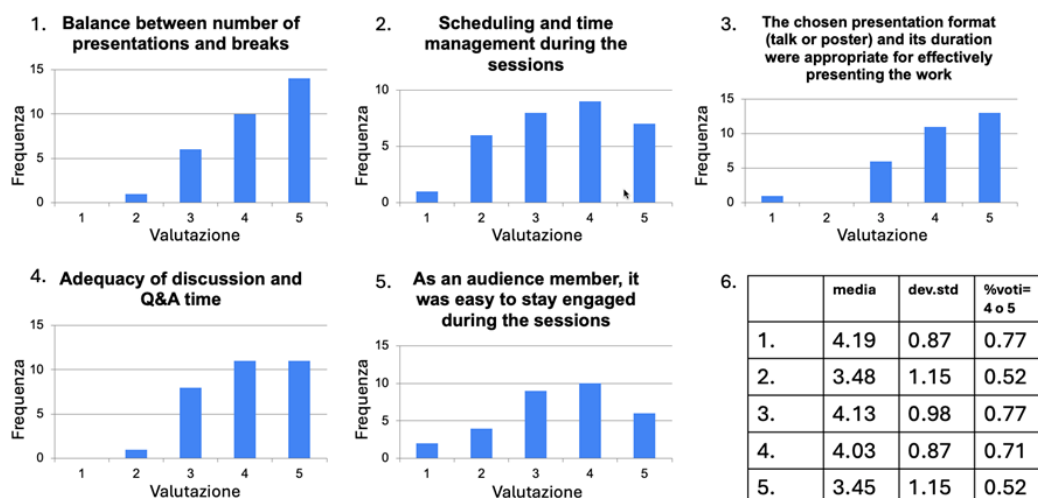


Figura 1: (1-5) Rating distribution histograms for each question; (6) summary statistics table (mean, standard deviation, and percentage of responses rated 4 or 5).

3.2 Organization and Logistics

This section covered the organizational aspects of the event, including pre-event communication, the suitability of the venues and technical infrastructure, the quality of the informal moments (coffee breaks and catering), and the overall efficiency of the organization. The results are shown in Figure 2.

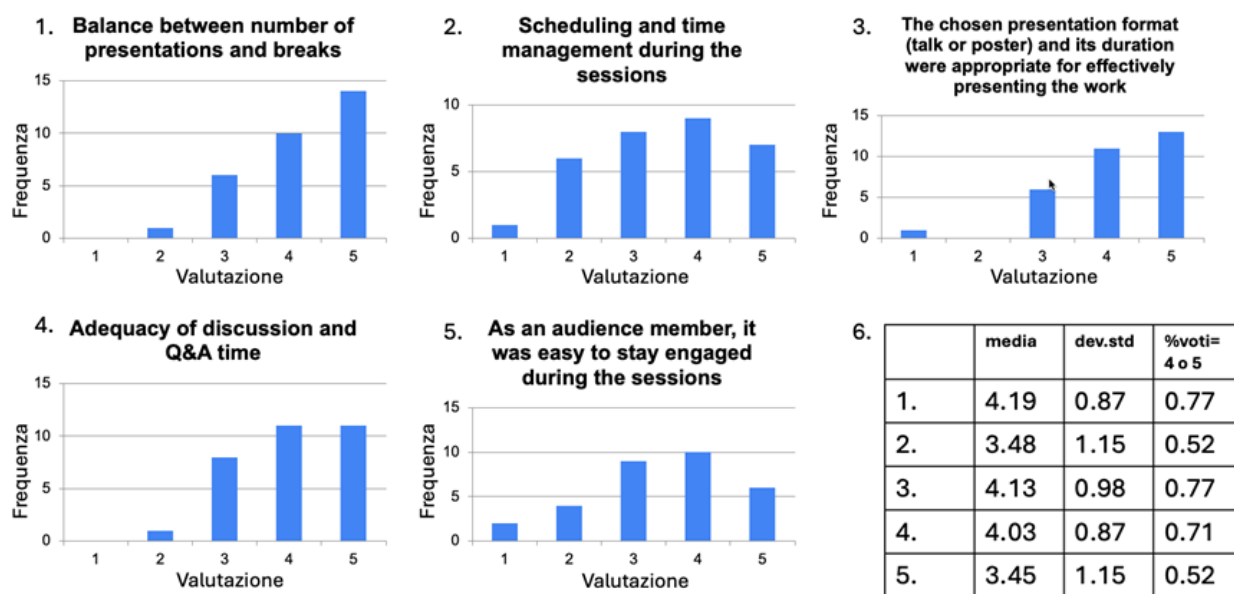


Figura 2: (1-5) Rating distribution histograms for each question; (6) summary statistics table (mean, standard deviation, and percentage of responses rated 4 or 5).

3.3 Usefulness for the Doctoral Program

The questions in this section assessed participants' perceived usefulness of the event for their doctoral training, with a particular focus on the development of scientific communication skills,



the opportunity to receive constructive feedback, and the chance to engage with other research projects.

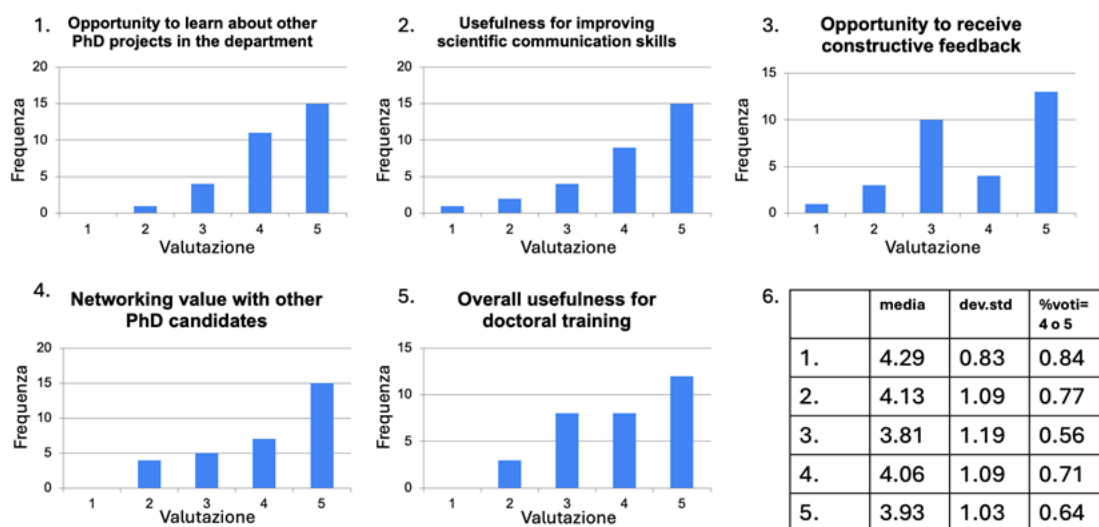


Figura 3: (1-5) Rating distribution histograms for each question; (6) summary statistics table (mean, standard deviation, and percentage of responses rated 4 or 5).

3.4 Qualitative Feedback

In addition to the numerical rating questions, the questionnaire included several open-ended questions aimed at gathering comments, suggestions, and observations from participants. The qualitative responses have been collected in full and are available in the attached Excel file.

Critical Analysis of Responses

Overall, participants appreciated the quality of the organizational structure and the format of the presentations (talks and posters), as well as the opportunity to expand their network and build new connections among fellow doctoral students. The coffee breaks and, above all, the social event were seen as occasions that were both important and effective for developing communication skills in the context of scientific research (and beyond). The main criticisms were directed at the poster session and the density of oral presentations. The poster session was



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generally perceived as little more than an extended coffee break, with low engagement from the audience and especially from professors. As a result, first-year doctoral students did not receive enough constructive feedback on their projects. The scheduling of oral presentations throughout the day was also viewed negatively, with too many talks per session and poor time management for speakers and Q&A. Low student participation during Q&A was also flagged as an issue.

Regarding the poster session, respondents suggest appointing a jury made up exclusively of faculty members to select the best poster, rather than leaving it to a public vote. The jury would evaluate each poster alongside a brief presentation by the student, providing observations and questions. This would also ensure that all first-year doctoral students receive adequate and thorough feedback on their work at this early stage. To reduce information overload during the talk sessions, it was proposed that presentations be spread over a longer timeframe, extending the overall duration of the symposium by at least one day. Speakers should also be encouraged to stick more closely to their allotted time, leaving more room for Q&A. As for the Q&A itself, introducing prizes tied to the number of questions asked could be a useful way to encourage more active participation from students.



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Luogo e data: Sesto Fiorentino (FI), /03/2026

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