

1. Breadth of Chemistry

Chemistry is changing. In particular it is expanding into new areas and much of today's exciting developments take place at the borders of and in combination with other disciplines, such as biology and medicine, materials sciences and physics. This development leads to new research areas which, however, frequently do not identify themselves anymore with the underlying science, i.e., chemistry. Typical examples are biochemistry and molecular biology or the currently blossoming nanosciences. As a consequence, also in the general public "chemistry" is usually interpreted as being traditional and old-fashioned (in other words: dull and not exciting), just as the chemical industry is often seen as a mature branch with no or only little potential for innovation. Obviously, this is a dangerous trend which in the long run could be detrimental to the chemical enterprise at large. GDCh is addressing this issue with high priority, both in our work towards the general public as well as within the community, where we usually complement the term chemistry with molecular science to indicate that the field of our activity and expertise embraces traditional chemistry as well as the new interdisciplinary fields at the frontiers. In addition to this scientific diversity we see a second important change in chemistry, which we must address to meet our members' needs. And that is that also the employment market for chemists has undergone significant alterations. While for many years the German chemical industry was the main employer for chemists, the dramatic changes in this sector due to globalization has led to a different situation. Today and even more so in the future chemists will increasingly find jobs in other sectors such as consulting, finance and insurance which in many cases will have an only limited connection to chemistry. Nevertheless, we still want these chemists as our members and that they continue to consider the GDCh as their professional home. To do so we need to identify the needs of our members which extend beyond the traditional activities of a learned society such as scientific publications and conferences. An indication of these new activities is, e.g., the recent creation of a new Division of "Chemistry and Economy" which deals with the interface between chemistry and economics and whose members are chemists mainly employed in the modern finance and consulting sectors. Electronic networks specifically designed for certain interest and usage profiles are also among the new services we currently develop.