

# CALL FOR PAPERS: How Sciences End

Dates: 11–13 July 2025

Location: University of Oxford, UK

Submission deadline: 31 January 2025

## Conference Theme and Goals

Historians have studied extensively how sciences begin—but how do they end? This is a crucial question for understanding how the labour of knowledge-making evolves. Previous attention to the founding, disciplining, and professionalisation of individual sciences has provided robust frameworks for thinking through the birth and growth of knowledge-making communities. Far less attention has been directed toward how those same communities decay, dissipate, or evolve beyond the contemporary boundaries of science. This conference seeks to cultivate case studies of the ends of sciences, and thereby to motivate a new approach to thinking about the developmental trajectories of scientific disciplines, communities, institutions, and the ordering of expert knowledge. A further aim is to strengthen the community of scholars with a shared interest in studying the ends of sciences.

## Scope and Eligibility

The conference will seek to examine the variety of ways that sciences come to an end. Thus, it will explore not just how some sciences came to be dismissed as pseudosciences, but also to understand those knowledge-making communities which chose to classify themselves as non-scientific, that dissipated while their practitioners and resources migrated into other sciences, or that were otherwise unmade. We also encourage reflection on the hidden continuities which might be masked by narratives of disciplinary demise. Both ‘science’ and ‘ends’ can thus be understood broadly, and eligibility is not restricted by time period or regions. A non-exhaustive list of possible case studies could include: alchemy; anthropology; Aristotelianism; astrology; chronology; cybernetics; divination; eugenics; history; medicine; mesmerism; natural history; natural philosophy; natural theology; phrenology; and psychical research. Students and early career scholars are especially encouraged to submit.

## Submission Process

Submissions should be sent to [howsciencesend@gmail.com](mailto:howsciencesend@gmail.com). Please title the email “SciEnds Abstract Submission” and include the following information in the body:

- Full name as you would like it to appear on the programme
- Email address
- Affiliation, or how you would like to be identified on the programme
- Presentation title
- An abstract of no more than 250 words describing your proposed talk and how it fits the conference theme and goals.
- An indication of whether you would like to be considered for travel support. (Limited funds are available to defray travel costs, with priority given to early career and insecurely employed scholars.)

The submission deadline is 31 January 2025. We plan to circulate a draft program by the end of February 2025.

## Programme Committee

Michelle Aroney (Oxford), Alex Aylward (Oxford), Joseph D. Martin (Durham)

