Application Guidelines

Experience Postgrad Life Sciences Summer 2023 Internship Programme

10 July 2023 – 01 September 2023

Experience Postgrad Life Sciences offers a number of paid 8-week research internships to selected talented undergraduate students who are currently registered at universities in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Along with our partner [sponsors](#) for this programme the Postgraduate School of Life Sciences at the University of Cambridge is committed to widening participation in postgraduate studies in the Life Sciences. The University will be using positive action under the Equality Act 2010 to tackle the underrepresentation of and overcome the disadvantage experienced by certain groups.

This document provides information about the type of information which you will need to send to us, if you are asked to give evidence in support of any of the Widening Participation criteria that you have selected on the Application Form.

Please read these guidelines carefully before making your application.

1. **Application Method**

   You must apply to this programme via the link on the Experience Postgrad Life Sciences [website](#). We will not consider applications which are sent to us via other means.

2. **Assessment Criteria**

   Applicants will be assessed competitively, on the basis of both academic achievement and academic potential in the context of their education to date. In the circumstances where all other things are equal, priority will then be given to those who are from groups that are currently underrepresented in postgraduate study in the Life Sciences and/or who have experienced some form of educational disadvantage, using positive action under the Equality Act 2010 where appropriate¹.

   Please note that you **must** be on course for a 1st or a 2i in your undergraduate degree, as evidenced by your referee.

¹ The University will monitor the impact of any positive action taken and intends to use positive action only where appropriate.
The aim of the programme is to encourage and facilitate participation in postgraduate studies in the field of Life Sciences by talented students. We are looking for evidence of academic potential within the context of your education to date, and an indication that you could thrive in the intense teaching and learning environment of postgraduate study at Cambridge.

Evaluation of your application will therefore include consideration of all your responses on the application form.

3. COVID-19

The programme is designed as a residential event, but should Covid-19 government guidelines prevent this, we reserve the right to amend the programme to a blended or online programme instead. Details concerning how this will affect the programme will be added to the website. Regardless of format, participants on the internship programme will be paid.

4. Application Dates

- The application deadline: 30 January 2022
- Shortlisting: mid-February – mid-March
- Brief online conversation with selection panel: mid-late March
- Offers expected to be made: mid-April

The programme will operate a short waiting list, in case any selected candidates are unable to take up their place. We will inform you if you are on the waiting list.

5. Accommodation and pay (residential programme)

Participants on the programme will be paid the Real Living Wage, for a 35-hour week. The programme duration is 8 weeks of full-time work, and you must participate for the full 8 weeks.

Participants will be provided with free-of-charge single accommodation by Corpus Christi College, for the duration of the programme including weekends. Rooms will be allocated at random, unless a student has specific needs (which you are invited to set out in the Disability Section of the application form). You are expected to live in this accommodation for the duration of the programme, other than in exceptional circumstances agreed with the programme organisers, and will be subject to College regulations whilst you are resident at the College accommodation. Please note that postgraduate students are usually housed in accommodation based outside the College grounds. Accommodation within the College grounds, which is limited, is prioritised for undergraduate students and this programme aims to give you a ‘postgrad’ experience.

You will be expected to arrive the weekend before the programme begins. We will send further information to those offered a place on the programme.

The programme will also include a number of additional events (such as career talks, presentations, and social events) which will take place outside normal working hours. You are expected to attend these events, as part of your career - and cohort - development opportunity.
6. Essential conditions

- You must be able to evidence that you have been settled in the UK on 1 July 2023, with no restrictions on how long you can stay in the UK or be a national of the Republic of Ireland and you must have been ordinarily resident in the UK (but not mainly for full-time education) since 1 July 2020.

- You must be studying for an undergraduate bachelor degree in a Life Sciences discipline at a UK or Republic of Ireland higher education institution (this does not include integrated master degree courses);

- You should be on course for a 1st or a 2i, as evidenced by your academic transcript to date and/or your referee;

- You must be in the penultimate year of your bachelor's degree before participating in the programme

- You must be available to participate in all elements of the programme from 10 July 2023 to 1 September 2023 during normal working hours (9am to 5pm on weekdays);

- You must consent to abide by the terms and conditions of the offer, should you be made one, and commit to providing all requested feedback within one month of the close of the programme.

7. References

Your referee should be either a tutor or other academic at your current institution who knows you and your work well. This referee will be contacted automatically when you submit your application, and will be asked to fill in a form as a reference. As part of the form, your referee will be asked to comment on your Widening Participation Status for the purpose of the Experience Postgrad Life Sciences programme. We strongly advise, therefore, that you ensure that you make your referee aware of any relevant circumstances concerning the widening participation criteria you intend to select on the application form and check they are happy to provide a reference before you submit your application.

8. Research Experience / Area of Interest

We would like to know whether you have had experience of research during your undergraduate course, either at your current institution or through another organisation.

Please indicate on the Application Form if you have undertaken a placement or work experience in a research lab for a total duration equal to or exceeding 4 weeks, full-time. We particularly encourage applications from undergraduates currently studying at higher education institutions where research or lab experience may not be as readily available as in more research-intensive institutions.

Your answer to this question alongside the question concerning your area of research interest will help us to gauge which project you might potentially be most suited for.

Please note that we will not be able to change your research project in the circumstance where you have been offered one and you have accepted it.

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2 This does not include any non-UK national holding any type of time-limited UK visa, including international students on Tier 4/Student visas.
9. Widening Participation Criteria

We may contact you to request evidence to support the Widening Participation criteria you have selected in order to ensure transparency in our assessment processes and fairness for all.

Acceptable evidence is set out in the table below. If you are asked to provide evidence, you must do so within two weeks of the request; we advise that you ensure that you have the evidence in place before you submit your application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free School Meals</td>
<td>A letter or other notification from your school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From one of the most deprived areas of the country: check that your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study ranks within one of the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods (i.e. within deciles 1-5) on the relevant government Index of Multiple Deprivation: England (here), Scotland (here), Wales (here), and Northern Ireland (here).</td>
<td>Proof of your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From an area where it is unusual for people to go to university: your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study falls into Q1 or 2 of the government’s POLAR4 classification (check here: POLAR search tool)</td>
<td>Proof of your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered university from a Care background or as a Foyer resident</td>
<td>A letter from the Local Authority or Foyer confirming this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are in receipt of full state support for maintenance for this course of undergraduate study</td>
<td>Student Finance Notification of Award letter for the full amount of maintenance received</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Online conversation

We will invite shortlisted candidates for a ~15 minute long online conversation with a panel of academics in mid-late March (date to be confirmed). The aim of this discussion will be to finalise our short list of applicants, our wait-list, and to find the best match between applicant
and research group. The conversation will focus principally therefore on your motivations for undertaking the programme and your research interests.

Appendix

Questions and topics in the EPLS Application Form. Please review this before applying.

Section A - Essential Criteria

To qualify to be considered for a place on this programme, you must meet all the following criteria:

- You must be settled in the UK on 1 July 2023 and have been ordinarily resident in the UK since 1 July 2020, not mainly for the purpose of full-time education or be a national of the Republic of Ireland. Note: this does not include any non-UK national holding any type of time-limited UK visa, including international students on Tier 4/Student visas.

- You must be studying for an undergraduate degree in a Life Sciences discipline at a UK or Republic of Ireland higher education institution.

- You must be on course for a 1st or a 2i, as evidenced by your referee.

- You must be in the penultimate year of your undergraduate degree course.

- You must be available to participate in all elements of the programme throughout the 8 weeks during normal working hours (9am to 5pm on weekdays).

Data Protection

Information about how we will use the information you provide in the application form can be found here. Please note that all the data you provide on this form, including special category personal data, will be held together and used in this way.

Questions and topics in Section A (Essential Criteria)

- Personal details
- Contact details
- Nationality and visa information
- Secondary education (school, A-level or equivalent grades, any other qualifications)
- Undergraduate education (course, institution)
- Previous research experience details (if applicable)
- Referee details (name and email address)

Section B

In addition to the essential criteria in Section A, we would like to know if any of the following numbered statements applies to you.
1. You identify as belonging to one of the following ethnic groups that is currently underrepresented in the Postgraduate School of Life Sciences at the University of Cambridge:

- Black or Black British - African
- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Mixed Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Other Black or Black British ethnicity
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Refugee Status

2. You entered your current undergraduate course as a mature student (that is, aged 21 or over).

3. You are of any ethnicity, and received most of your secondary education in the UK, and any of the following apply to you:

- You were eligible for Free School Meals at secondary school.
- At the point that you applied for this undergraduate course, you were living in one of the most deprived areas of the country, as defined by the government’s IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) database, falling within Deciles 1 to 5

Look-up here:

- IMD England search tool
- IMD Scotland search tool
- IMD Wales search tool
- IMD Northern Ireland search tool

- At the point that you applied for this undergraduate course, you were living in an area where it is unusual for young people to go to university, as defined by the government classification POLAR4, falling into Quintile 1 or 2 (look-up here: POLAR search tool)
- You are in the first generation of your family to go to university.
- You entered university at undergraduate level from a Care background or as a Foyer resident.
- You are estranged from immediate family or designated care-givers, that is, you are studying for your undergraduate degree without the support and approval of a family network.
- You are a full-time undergraduate student and have caring responsibilities for an ill or disabled family member who could not manage without this help.
- You are a full-time undergraduate student and are, or have become during this course of study, a single parent, lone foster parent, or lone guardian of a young person who is aged under 18 and/or still in full-time education.
- You are in receipt of full state support for maintenance for this course of undergraduate study.
IMPORTANT: We may ask for evidence in support of these criteria. The Application Guidelines set out the type of evidence that is acceptable.

You will then be asked to submit:
Personal statement 1: explaining any circumstances that you feel have presented obstacles to your educational development and how you managed them. (max words 200)

Personal statement 2: (i) giving your reasons for applying for this internship; and (ii) explaining how you would benefit from this research experience. (max words 300)

Questions and topics in Section B
- Ethnicity
- Refugee status
- Secondary education location and type
- Points listed in Section B
  - (ethnicity, refugee status, mature student, free school meals eligibility, IMD decile & postcode, POLAR 4 Quintile & postcode, first generation to go to university, Care background or Foyer resident, estranged, caring responsibilities, single/lone parent or guardian, full state support for maintenance)
- Personal statements
- Disability information
- Research areas of interest