



Application Guidelines

Experience Postgrad *Life Sciences* Summer 2025 Internship Programme

14 July – 05 September 2025

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.

Please read these guidelines carefully before making your application.

Application Method

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

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.

Application Dates

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Application deadline | 16 January 2025 |
| Shortlisting | until mid-February |
| Brief conversation with selection panel | early-mid March |
| Offers expected to be made | late March |

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 this list.

Accommodation and pay

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 the accommodation is part of the college's postgraduate housing and is based outside of the college grounds.

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.

Essential conditions

Applicants must:

- be undergraduate students enrolled in a UK or Republic of Ireland college or university studying for a degree in a life sciences discipline
 - applicants from Ireland must not need a visa to work in the UK (i.e., only ROI nationals should apply)
- be in the penultimate year of their bachelor's degree, at the time of application
- be on course for a 1st or a 2i, as evidenced by your referee
- be able to demonstrate a strong record of academic performance
- have an interest in undertaking a research postgraduate degree (MPhil or PhD)
- be available to participate in all elements of the programme from 14 July – 05 September 2025 during normal working hours (9am to 5pm on weekdays)
- 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.

Notes for medical students:

Medical students in their second year until their penultimate year of studies would be considered but will need to state clearly in their personal statement how this internship will be important for their future career in research.

Medical students will only be eligible for consideration on the programme **once**, so we advise you consult with your tutor, or similar, for advice on when is best for you to apply.

Applicants must not:

- have previous significant research experience
- be currently studying for an integrated master's degree

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 to 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.

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 areas 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.

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.

| Criteria | Evidence |
|--|---|
| Free School Meals | A letter or other notification from your school |
| 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). | Proof of your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study |
| 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 | Proof of your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study |

| | |
|--|--|
| POLAR4 classification (check here: POLAR search tool) | |
| Entered university from a Care background or as a Foyer resident. | A letter from the Local Authority or Foyer confirming this |
| You are in receipt of full state support for maintenance for this course of undergraduate study. | Student Finance Notification of Award letter for the full amount of maintenance received |
| International students – you are in receipt of a full scholarship for your study in the UK. | Award letter from funding body |

Online conversation

We will invite shortlisted candidates for a ~15-minute online conversation with a panel of academics in early March (date to be confirmed). The aim of this discussion will be to finalise our shortlist of applicants, our waitlist, 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:

Applicants must:

- be undergraduate students enrolled in a UK or Republic of Ireland college or university studying for a bachelor's degree in a life sciences discipline
 - applicants from the Republic or Ireland must not need a visa to work in the UK (i.e., only ROI nationals should apply)
- be in the penultimate year of their bachelor's degree, at the time of application
- be on course for a 1st or a 2i, as evidenced by their referee
- be able to demonstrate a strong record of academic performance
- have an interest in undertaking a research postgraduate degree (MPhil or PhD)
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Notes for medical students:

Medical students in their second year until their penultimate year of studies would be considered but will need to state clearly in their personal statement how this internship will be important for their future career in research. Medical students will only be eligible for consideration on the programme **once**, so we advise you consult with your tutor, or similar, for advice on when is best for you to apply.

Applicants must not:

- have previous significant research experience
- be currently studying for an integrated master's degree

Please refer to the Application Guidelines (on the Experience Postgrad *Life Sciences* website) for support with filling in this form, particularly for questions in **Section B**.

Data Protection Information about how we will use the information you provide in this 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/immigration/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 \(i\) any personal circumstances that you feel have presented obstacles to your educational development and \(ii\) 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 and departments of interest
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