



University
of Dundee



DCAT Vacation Studentship Summer 2021 Handbook

Introduction

The Vacation Studentship Scheme is designed to provide students at the University of Dundee with the opportunity to work in a research environment for 6-8 weeks during their summer vacation. It is an opportunity for students to gain hands on experience of research and provides a perspective on how biomedical problems can be addressed through different types of research.

A number of different studentships are available. They come from various funds held by the University, and from external bodies. For this reason, duration conditions and theme requirements can vary from project to project.

A studentship will last between 6 and 8 weeks depending on the requirements of the funding source. They may be held in research groups across the University of Dundee and are not restricted to laboratory work.

Upon completion of the project, students are expected to write up their work in the form of an abstract. This not only enhances a student portfolio, but frequently leads to students being invited to present their findings at research conferences or being asked to contribute to publications.

Aims

Vacation projects offer undergraduate students the opportunity to get hands on experience of research. Throughout the completion of a project, we anticipate that students will:

- Experience working as part of a team on a research project
- Learn research techniques and methodologies through participating in a current research project
- Increase their knowledge about a specific, specialist subject
- Develop critical appraisal skills, particularly the ability to appraise associated literature, test a hypothesis and analyse evidence
- Develop an appreciation about how biomedical problems can be addressed through different types of research

Projects

There are different projects available (subject to funding), which include laboratory research, clinical research and epidemiology. Students are also able to propose projects which they have already discussed with a supervisor with his/her agreement. Medical education projects are available through a separate scheme. Students can apply to the different schemes but may only accept one studentship for the summer.

The Vacation Studentship projects on offer are hosted by experienced supervisors, often with the day to day supervision of postdoctoral scientists. The selected projects are clearly delineated and the specified aims are achievable within the limited timeframe available.

Vacation Studentship Applications

How to Apply for a Vacation Studentship

Students interested in being considered for the scheme should submit the following to dcat@dundee.ac.uk by 12 noon on the given date:

- A brief CV (1-2 pages) which should include any previous work or research experience and complete academic performance to date.
- A personal statement detailing why the student would like to undertake a research studentship this summer. This should be no longer than 300 words.
- A completed application form (which can be found at <http://dcat.cmdn.dundee.ac.uk/medical-students/dcat-vacation-studentships/how-apply>). The form requires students to rank up to 5 projects in order of preference. Normally students will not be considered for projects that they have not ranked. Students should specify if they wished to be considered for a 6 week studentship, 8 week studentship, or if they are happy to be considered for either period of time. It is important to note that some projects are limited to 6 or 8 weeks, so careful consideration should be given as to availability over the summer.
- Students who have previously discussed a specific project with a supervisor (for example as part of a previous studentship, or as part of an SSC in Research Practice), should highlight this in the personal statement. Having an agreed project with a supervisor does not guarantee a vacation studentship.
- Students should indicate on the form whether or not they fulfil the eligibility criteria for a Carnegie Scholarship (<https://www.carnegie-trust.org/schemes/undergraduate-schemes/vacation-scholarships.html#student-eligibility>) as this might enable them to be recommended for one.

Student Selection and Allocation of Projects

This scheme aims to recruit academically orientated students who have a genuine interest in research. To get the most out of this scheme, students must be highly motivated and keen to learn.

The scheme is heavily oversubscribed so students need to be selected through a fair process. This is done on the basis of academic performance and on personal statements. It should be noted that a mix of students are selected for the scheme, with enormous variations in their research experience.

The number of students that are selected is determined by the number of studentships available. Students are asked to rank up to 5 projects from the list of projects provided

Once students have been selected, they are matched to individual supervisors/projects. They are matched according to how they have ranked specific projects, and also according to where they rank in the overall selection process. Ideally students will be allocated one of their top 3 project choices.

Students offered a studentship, should accept this within 48 hours. If they are not all accepted, a second round of studentships may become available.

Undertaking a Vacation Project

A vacation studentship is meant to be interesting, challenging and enjoyable!

Supervisor Guidance

Throughout the project, the student will benefit from the advice and support of a supervisor. Prior to the studentship, the supervisor and host laboratory will be informed of awarded studentships and provided with a CV of their allocated student. They will be advised as to whether the student undertaking a research project has background training in experimental work or not.

It is the student's responsibility to make contact with their allocated supervisor to arrange a preliminary appointment. It is during this meeting that dates of the project must be decided upon and any preparatory work should be discussed. It is strongly recommended that students arrange this meeting before the given date. The details of the project dates, including any splitting up of the research period, must be intimated to the DCAT Administrator (dcat@dundee.ac.uk) by this date.

Student Obligations

Students accepted onto the studentship scheme are expected to maximise the opportunity made available to them. In general, they are expected to work regular working hours which corresponds to approximately 35 hours per week; 9am until 5pm Monday - Friday, at the discretion of the supervisor. Any down time should be spent reading around the project subject and preparing the final report (more information can be found in the Assessments section below).

The project supervisor and DCAT (dcat@dundee.ac.uk) should be informed of sickness absence or other leave during the studentship.

Funding (Appendix 2)

In order to receive payment of the studentship, successful candidates will be required to complete a Casual Payment Request Form:

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/media/dundeewebsite/hr/documents/Casual%20Staff%20Payment%20Form.pdf>.

More information regarding this process will be sent to students when they are notified of their success.

Assessment

There is no formal assessment during the studentship, but upon completion of the project, students are asked to write a 500 word report of the research project undertaken during the vacation scholarship. The guidelines (see Appendix 1) relate to this internal report. This applies to students funded by ISSF, NHS Endowment studentships, and Muir Russell Trust.

The report should be written in the form of a scientific abstract, and should be about 500 words. It should describe what was done, why it was done, and what the outcome was. It should also include a short reflective component at the end about what you learnt or found challenging.

Students may ask their supervisors for advice in the writing of the report, but it should be the student's own work. It should be noted that the format of these reports is very similar to the format of abstracts for the Discovering Research events - enterprising students may consider submitting their abstract to one of these meetings the following year.

Students funded by other organisations should follow their guidelines; the same report should be submitted to both DCAT and the external funding body.

The report should be completed and submitted to DCAT (dcat@dundee.ac.uk) by the given date.

Presenting Project Work

Once the research project is finished, it is hoped that data will have been obtained that is worth sharing with others.

- Students are advised to look out for the Discovering Research symposia – these are run twice a year by the Dundee Research and Academic Medicine Society (DRAMS <http://dundeedrums.com/>), and students are encouraged to submit their work for presentation.
- Supervisors should be consulted about subject-specific opportunities, as many specialist societies specifically encourage students to present their work
- The National Student Association of Medical Research (NSAMR) is a new student-led organisation, which aims to inform students about the benefits of careers in clinical research and academic medicine. Supported by the Wellcome Trust, the association was launched in 2011 and will establish a collaborative network of societies throughout the country. This network will enable sharing of ideas and resources, as well as giving students a national voice on issues pertaining to research, academic training and careers. We strongly suggest that students keep an eye on the website <https://nsamr.ac.uk/> for opportunities to present work and find out more about research opportunities for students.

Feedback

Following the completion of a vacation studentship, both the student and the supervisor will be asked for feedback regarding the scheme. Forms will be provided to both the student and the supervisor to be completed and should be returned to DCAT (dcat@dundee.ac.uk) alongside the completed project report by the given date.

Feedback is very important for the continued success of the Vacation Studentship Scheme. The feedback from the 2020 scheme was extremely positive and indicated that participating students would recommend the scheme to friends and colleagues.

Other Useful Information

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

- All the projects are based in the University of Dundee.
- International students at the University of Dundee are eligible for the scheme.
- Having a summer studentship last year does not prevent you from applying for another one.
- Projects can be taken at any time during the summer – although this will depend on your supervisor and their team.
- Research studentships are definitely one of those things where the more you put in, the more you get out. This is not an easy option - you will be expected to work hard, usually following a 9-5 schedule.
- Many students have continued their projects after the summer – through the research SSC programme, BMScs, and 4th year projects.
- A number of students have gone on to present their projects both locally and nationally, and have also been co-authors on subsequent abstracts and publications.
- Allocation of specific studentships will depend on the individual project area and the academic merit of the student.
- Remember that the funding for bursaries is raised by charitable funds.

Contacts

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Vacation Studentship Administrator

DCAT Administrator

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Appendix 1: Vacation Studentship Report Guidelines 2021

Report guidelines

These are some suggestions for writing the Vacation Studentship Report – they do not need to be followed exactly but please remember to submit the report to dcat@dundee.ac.uk by the given date.

Title

Write a clear, informative title which describes key elements of your project. Very short or very long titles are not recommended. Using a title and a subtitle separated by a colon is a good way to describe the project in a short space. Do not worry if the title has changed since you started the project sometimes it is easier to choose a title after writing the abstract!

General format and style

Your abstract should be single-spaced in an easy-to-read 12pt font (like Times). Write in the 3rd person. Passive voice is best. Write complete but concise sentences using present tense for the existing body of facts and past tense for the completed research while defining specialised terminology and abbreviations.

Be extremely precise and detailed about your argument and analysis. Do not say "Results of the study will be discussed" or the equivalent but state what the results are and why they matter.

How to structure the abstract

Abstracts are quite concise in structure although there is a lot of variation. Each of the sections may include one or more paragraphs.

Section 1: Introduction

The main focus of the first paragraph should be a general statement about an issue in the field that your project contributes to. Do not describe your project yet but write a sentence which describes the topic of research. Then describe the problem to be solved and the hypothesis that was posed or the issue that you will be addressing (this will provide the opening to introduce your research as the solution to a problem or as a challenge to a claim made by another academic). Do not just say you are applying someone else's ideas; describe why this adds to knowledge.

Section 2: Methods and results

This should be the heart of the abstract, about what you did and how. Briefly give details about the study, where it was conducted and with whom (number and background of participants, sources of data), how long the study lasted and/ or how much data was collected (e.g. hours of recordings). Then summarise your research findings. You should include a detailed description of the results: specify your findings in detail.

Section 3: Discussion and conclusions

Write a discussion that gives the conclusion(s) of the research work and a statement of the direction for future research: How do these findings address the issue raised in Section 1? What does this imply for the field? This discussion need not be lengthy but it should convey that your research has significant implications.

References

You can cite a few references in the text (no more than 5 or so in a 500-word abstract) to show you know the field. Do not waste space with a long list; select the key references only (it is often best to cite at least one "classic" reference and one "cutting-edge" recent reference.) You should also cite anyone who centrally represents the issue you are discussing. Do not include a lengthy bibliography; save the space for describing your study.

Appendix 2: Funding for Vacation Component of the SSC in Research Practice (as at 23/12/2020)

This list of external funding bodies that fund vacation studentships has been prepared to provide a guide of some of the funding opportunities available to medical students and a summary of the eligibility criteria. This list is by no means exhaustive and does not list the full eligibility criteria. Once you have selected which funding bodies you would like to apply to, read the online application guidelines and eligibility criteria carefully to ensure you optimise your chances of being funded. **PLEASE BE AWARE THAT SOME WEBPAGES HAVE NOT YET BEEN UPDATED SO PLEASE KEEP CHECKING BACK.** (Some of the links in the table also need to be copied and pasted into the browser as they will not open by clicking on them)

Funder	Funding available	Eligibility criteria (more can be found on the websites)	Deadline	Further information
Alzheimer's Society	£200 per week for up to 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The host institution must be within the UK. All students must be registered at a UK institution for the majority of their undergraduate degree. Students must be in the middle years (i.e. 2/3, 2/4 or 3/4) of their degree when commencing the studentship. 	CURRENTLY PAUSED	https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/research/researchers/our-funding-schemes/undergraduate-research-bursaries
Anaesthetic Research Society		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications should be made by the proposed supervisor and not the student. It is not necessary for a student to have been identified to apply for funding. The award is open to ARS members in the UK only. 		https://www.ars.ac.uk/grants-and-awards
Association of Clinical Pathologists		<p>Laboratory medicine includes disciplines such as clinical chemistry, histopathology, haematology, immunology, microbiology, virology etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACP Student Research Fund is open to applications from undergraduate medical students (sponsored by ACP members if possible). 		https://bbsrc.ukri.org/skills/investing-doctoral-training/research-experience-placements/

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council		<p>Selected students must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the middle years of their first-degree studies • registered for a basic science (including mathematics and engineering) or veterinary degree at a UK university • expected to obtain a first or upper second-class UK honours degree 		https://bbsrc.ukri.org/skills/investing-doctoral-training/research-experience-placements/
Biochemical Society		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested students must pair up with a potential supervisor, develop a project together, and then apply for funding. • Supervisors must be members of the Biochemical Society for at least 12 months prior to the closing date of the grants. The student does not need to be a member of the Society, but when ranking proposals preference will be given to student members. 		https://www.biochemistry.org/grants-and-awards/grants-and-bursaries/summer-vacation-studentships/
BLF - Cystic Fibrosis Trust	<p>A stipend of £1,400 for living expenses, £100 for consumables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must be a medical student between the end of their second year and the end of their penultimate year. • The project supervisor must hold an established academic position within the university or research unit. 		https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/the-work-we-do/research/research-we-are-funding/apply-for-funding/summer-studentships
British Pharmacological Society	<p>£1850 for up to 10 weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects will be considered in areas including exploratory or applied pharmacology and experimental/translational medicine and clinical research • Applicants must be supervised by a Society member of at least three years (who must be an Early Career Member, Full Member or Fellow) 	<p>Opens in Jan 2021, closes 28 Feb 2021</p>	https://www.bps.ac.uk/membership-awards/prizes,-awards-and-grants/our-prizes/vacation-studentships

<p>British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy</p>	<p>£270 per week for up to 10 weeks and £500 consumables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates should be in the middle years of a full-time first degree course in the sciences, medicine, veterinary medicine or dentistry. Only undergraduates are considered for these scholarships. • Projects designed to be presented as undergraduate or postgraduate laboratory practical assignments will not be considered. • Only one application per department is allowed. • Studentships will only be awarded for students who have yet to complete their first degree, usually prior to their final year of studies. Students that are undertaking an integrated Masters Degree are eligible to apply. 		<p>http://www.bsac.org.uk/funding/vacation-scholarship/</p>
<p>British Society for Cell Biology</p>	<p>£250 per week for up to 8 weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BSCB Summer Vacation Studentships offer financial support for high calibre undergraduate students, who wish to gain research experience in cell biology during their summer vacation. • The application must be made by the prospective supervisor. 		<p>http://bscb.org/competitions-awardsgrants/studentships/</p>
<p>British Society for Developmental Biology</p>	<p>£200 per week for up to 8 weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications must be made by the undergraduate student and contain the information and support letters specified in the application form. The project proposal and application form should be written by the undergraduate student, with guidance from the host supervisor. • The proposed project supervisor must be a BSDB member. • The project must be on a topic in the broad area of Developmental Biology. Note, that projects will be assessed according to their aims, achievability and opportunity to the student. 		<p>http://bsdb.org/awards/gurdon-studentships-for-summer-vacation-work/</p>
<p>British Society for Neuroendocrinology</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The host supervisor should apply on behalf of a selected named student that they consider suitable for a project in 		<p>https://www.neuroendo.org.uk/page.php?item_name=Grants+Panel</p>

		<p>their lab.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate students or students immediately after graduation or prior to starting MSc or PhD studies are eligible. • The host supervisor must have been a member of the BSN for at least 6 months. 		
Carnegie Trust	<p>Stipend at the equivalent of the current Scottish Living Wage rate, per week for 2 – 12 weeks</p>	<p>You are eligible to apply for this Scholarship scheme if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are an undergraduate student at one of the following institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ universities: Aberdeen, Abertay, Dundee, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Heriot-Watt, Highlands and Islands, Queen Margaret, Robert Gordon, St Andrews, Stirling, Strathclyde, West of Scotland; ○ Glasgow School of Art ○ Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; • are enrolled at that institution for the full length of your degree, or transferred to that HEI after an HNC/HND from a Scottish college; • In the 3rd year of a 4 year degree, OR in the 3rd or 4th year of a 5 year degree (part-time students must be at an equivalent stage), OR in the 2nd year of a 3 year degree (for example Nursing, BA Acting/Ballet etc.) • are entitled to live and work in the UK. Students with Limited Leave to Remain, Pre-settled or Settled Status, or students on a Tier 4 Visa, must be able to prove that they are eligible to work full-time in the UK in the period between May and August 2021. • on track to achieve a 2:1 or higher; • have never held a Carnegie Vacation Scholarship. 	<p>Open Dec 2020, close 31 Jan 2021</p>	<p>https://www.carnegie-trust.org/award-schemes/vacation-scholarships/</p>
Experimental Psychology Society	<p>£200 per week for up to 10 weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These bursaries enable undergraduates who are considering a postgraduate research career in Experimental Psychology 		<p>https://eps.ac.uk/undergraduate-research-bursary/</p>

		to work in a research laboratory under the supervision of an EPS member during the summer vacation prior to their final year.		
Genetics Society	Up to £750 to cover justifiable expenses incurred by the host laboratory. A stipend to cover 8 weeks subsistence during the studentship will be paid directly to the student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project should be realistic and achievable by a student within an eight-week time frame for completion prior to the last week in August. • Applications must be made by Principal Investigators (PI) at Universities or Research Institutes, NOT by the named student. • Both the PI and the named student must be members of the Genetics Society. 	Closes 1 March 2021	http://www.genetics.org.uk/grants/summer-studentships/
Medical Research Scotland	£270 per week for 6 – 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships are not available for the completion of projects that are part of the student's normal degree course. • Only one application is permitted per student in any one academic year. Students who have previously had a Medical Research Scotland Vacation Scholarship are not eligible. • We welcome applications from students studying any subject, provided the proposed project addresses a question relevant to human health or disease 		https://medicalresearchscotland.org.uk/undergraduate-vacation-scholarship/
Microbiology Society		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants will act as the project supervisor and should be PhD qualified or hold a senior research or academic position. • A minimum membership period of one year (two consecutive subscription payments) applies. • Applications must be made on behalf of a named student. 	Open now, closes 17 Feb 2021	https://microbiologysociety.org/grants/travel-research/harry-smith-vacation-studentships.html

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be undertaking an undergraduate degree in any area of biosciences or medical, dental or veterinary science. 		
Pathological Society	£200 per week for up to 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate Society members who are students of medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry or biomedical science based in UK and/or Ireland Funding to support research projects in pathology or gain experience in diagnostic departments during elective or vacation periods 		https://www.pathsoc.org/index.php/grants-lectures-awards/education-grants/undergraduate-bursary
The Physiological Society		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate Members can apply International students are also eligible to apply The supervisor must be a Full Member or Affiliate Member (with support from a Full Member) 	Open now, closes 28 Feb 2021	https://www.physoc.org/supporting-you/grants/summer-studentships/
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for work on research projects in any branch of surgery are eligible for consideration. Preference will be given to applications sponsored by a Member/Fellow of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, but quality of project and applicant shall be the over-riding consideration. 	Closes 28 April 2021	https://www.rcsed.ac.uk/professional-support-development-resources/grants-jobs-and-placements/research-travel-and-award-opportunities/student-bursaries
Society for Endocrinology	£185 per week for up to 10 weeks plus up to £1,000 for consumables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A student receiving funding will normally be an undergraduate, following a course in endocrinology or a related life science subject. Host supervisors are required to be members of the Society for Endocrinology. Full Members must hold at least one year's membership; Early Career Members must hold at least six months' membership at the deadline for applications. 	Closes 17 March 2021	https://www.endocrinology.org/grants-and-awards/grants/summer-studentships/
Society for Reproduction and Fertility	£250 per week for up to 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should normally be in the second (if on a three year 		http://srf-reproduction.org/grants-

	weeks £1000 for consumables	<p>course) or second/third (if on a four year course) year of their undergraduate degree studies and may be considering research as a career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally, projects should be undertaken in the summer vacation prior to the student entering their final year. 		awards/grants/vacation-scholarships/
Wellcome Trust	Salary at the Real Living Wage for 6 – 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can apply for a Biomedical Vacation Scholarship if you're studying for an undergraduate degree in a relevant subject and you want to find out more about research in the biomedical sciences. • You're eligible to apply in the middle year(s) of your degree, when you have not yet undertaken a substantial period of research. 		https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/schemes/biomedical-vacation-scholarships