

Eligibility - students

1. I am a student who is enrolled on a course outside of the UK or the Republic of Ireland - can I apply for a Vacation Scholarship?

No. Applicants must be registered as a student at a university in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, the research project must be undertaken in a UK or Republic of Ireland laboratory.

2. I am a student in my first year of university - why can't I apply for a Vacation Scholarship?

We base our assessments of the applications on the input a student has had into the design of the project. In the Trust's experience, if a first-year student were to apply they would have completed approximately four months of study by the time the full application is submitted in February. This may not be sufficient time for students to identify an area of science that interests them, make contact with a potential supervisor and develop a novel project.

3. I am a medical student who has previously undertaken an intercalated year - am I eligible for a Vacation Scholarship?

No. Students who have completed the BSc period of their course are not eligible to apply, as they should have already had the opportunity to undertake a period of research.

4. I am a graduate-entry medical student who has completed a degree in a science-related topic - am I eligible for a Vacation Scholarship?

No, as you will have been eligible during your undergraduate years.

5. I am a student based at a University in Scotland in the third year of my four year undergraduate course – am I eligible?

Yes. As long as you are not in your first or final year you can apply.

6. I am currently undertaking a degree that is not a 'traditional' biological science course - can I apply?

Yes. Scholarship holders in the past have included students of biological sciences (including biology, sports science and pharmacy) and medics, vets, dentists and optometrists. In addition, students focusing on natural sciences or undertaking computing degrees are welcome to use this scheme as a taster for research in the biomedical sciences; however, a suitably focused biomedical research project would be required.

7. I have previously been awarded a Vacation Scholarship from the Wellcome Trust or another funding body, or have had significant previous research experience (such as an industrial placement) - am I eligible for a Vacation Scholarship?

No. These awards are intended to provide students with new experiences with the aim of encouraging them to consider a career in research, and we therefore give preference to undergraduates with no previous research experience.

8. Can my supervisor be a postdoctoral researcher, PhD student or technician?

No. The project supervisor must hold an established academic position within the university or research unit. They must be able to guarantee that the student can have space in their laboratory and fulfil any necessary legal requirements that the student's presence requires. Postdoctoral researchers, PhD students and technicians are unable to make the above guarantees; however, they can provide day-to-day supervision of the student and be named on the application form.

9. Can I apply to more than one funder for a Vacation Scholarship?

Yes. Owing to the highly competitive nature of the scheme, we encourage all students to apply to multiple funding bodies to maximise their chances of success. However, we ask you to inform us immediately should you accept another offer.

Eligibility - supervisors

10. Can I apply for multiple awards with different students?

No. These awards are personal awards for the student. Supervisors are expected to provide the student with the necessary scientific guidance to ensure that they gain the most from the scholarship experience.

11. We have been awarded a Vacation Scholarship but the student has had to withdraw - can I offer it to a different student?

No. These awards are personal awards for the student. Please inform the Trust immediately if this is the case.

Application process - identifying a project

12. Are Vacation Scholarships carried out at the Wellcome Trust headquarters at Euston Road, London?

No. The Wellcome Trust does not offer Vacation Scholarship placements at its headquarters. It provides financial support for students wishing to gain research experience in a UK or Republic of Ireland laboratory.

13. Does the Wellcome Trust help students organise placements?

The Trust does not assist in the organisation of project placements. Students are expected to identify a project supervisor and liaise with them to set up a suitable project. Preference will be given to students who have clearly been involved in the design and planning of the project.

14. Can a Vacation Scholarship be used to support a student who wants to be assimilated into a laboratory for the duration of the summer?

No. The Vacation Scholarship should be used to support a self-contained piece of research; the student should not be an extra pair of hands in the laboratory.

15. Can I apply for a Vacation Scholarship for less than six weeks?

No. The application should be for a project which can be realistically undertaken within a timeframe of six to eight weeks.

16. Can I undertake the Vacation Scholarship at an institution where I am not enrolled on my degree?

Yes. Students are encouraged to arrange their scholarship away from their usual place of study, to broaden their experience.

17. Can you recommend someone who can help me organise a project?

Some universities have scholarship coordinators who can assist applicants in identifying a researcher in the area that interests them; however, this kind of assistance varies by university. Your tutor may know the local procedure for scholarships, or - if you wish to take a scholarship away from your current university - you could discuss your ideas with them and see whether they can assist you in identifying a suitable academic in that area.

18. Can I use the Vacation Scholarship to support a clinical audit or trial?

Projects that support clinical trial data collection or auditing are not appropriate for the scheme. Self-contained clinical, lab-based, computational and field projects are suitable for Vacation Scholarships

19. Am I expected to give the supervisor money for consumables?

No. The stipend is solely for personal support of the student throughout the scholarship period. The Trust expects all research costs to be provided by the supervisor.

Application process - other questions on the form

20. Does the Wellcome Trust only support students who have obtained a minimum score in their courses or modules to date?

No. There is no specific requirement for a particular level of achievement to apply for a scholarship.

21. Why do you require a letter of support from the student's current tutor?

This section acts like a reference for the student and is used as part of the assessment of an application. It helps enable the Trust to assess the potential of the candidate and any experience they already have.

22. Does the 700 word limit in the application form include figure legends and references?

The word limit does not include references or figure legends. However, the number of references used should be kept to a minimum.

Submitting an application

23. Where do I send my application?

Please complete your application via the Wellcome Trust Grant Tracker online system.

24. Will you accept applications received after the deadline?

No. Owing to the extremely competitive nature of this award, we do not accept any late applications.

25. Do I need to submit a hard copy?

No. A hard copy is not required.

26. Can different parts of the application form be submitted separately?

No. Owing to the large number of applications we receive, only complete applications will be considered.

27. Will you send me an email to confirm you have received my application?

Yes. An automatic acknowledgement will be sent once the application form has been received by the Wellcome Trust Grant Tracker.

Assessment

28. Are applications assessed by an external committee or peer reviewed?

No. All applications are considered by scientifically qualified members of Wellcome Trust staff.

29. Do you provide feedback on individual applications?

No. Owing to the number of applications we receive, we are unable to provide feedback under any circumstances.

30. How are applications assessed?

We take into account the applicant's results to date, whether they have any previous research experience, their personal statement and desire to undertake a research project, and the reference from their personal tutor.

31. I have yet to find out the result from the Trust but have been offered funding from another source, what should I do?

Please inform the Trust immediately if you have been offered support from elsewhere so we can redistribute the funds.

32. When will I find out whether I have been successful?

We aim to release decisions on all applications by the start of May 2016.

33. How will I find out the outcome?

An email, with an attached letter, will be sent to the supervisor and student with the outcome of their application.

Successful applicants - before the award is activated

34. When will I receive an award letter?

Award letters are issued to the Vice Chancellor (or equivalent) of each successful institute and list all students who received awards from that institute. These letters will be cc'd to the named administrator of the award.

35. What is required of the institute after they have received the award letter?

Details will be provided in the Award Letter.

36. Since submitting my proposal the project has changed - do I need to inform the Trust?

There is no need to inform us.

37. If a student has withdrawn, what should the institute do?

Please inform the Trust immediately and liaise with your named administrator or finance team (where appropriate) to ensure that no claims are made on the End of Grant Spend Report for the student.

38. I want to start my award later than the date requested on the application - is this possible?

Yes. The start date on the award letter is notional. After the grant start certificate is submitted, students can undertake their scholarship at any time during the summer vacation period.

Successful applicants - during the scholarship period

39. Do students receive funds directly from the Wellcome Trust?

No. It is an expectation of the Wellcome Trust that students receive their stipend from the institute at regular intervals during their scholarship period and not as a lump sum at the end. We expect that students are paid promptly for the duration of their studentship to provide personal support for the students over the summer period.

Successful applicants – post-scholarship period

40. Is the student required to submit a report to the Trust?

We no longer require an end of grant report to be submitted. However, we encourage students to write up their projects.

41. How does the institute receive funds from the Wellcome Trust?

Reimbursement of the awards is made as a single payment after all students at each institute have completed their studentships. This is done by completing a Vacation Scholarship-specific End of Grant Spend Report. Detailed instructions will be contained within the award letter.