



Biomedical Vacation Scholarships – Additional Guidance

The Application Process

1) Check that you're eligible

Please read through the guidance on our website under 'who can apply' and 'when can you apply' to determine whether you are eligible. We've provided some examples below.

My degree is a...

Example 1: 3-year BSc in Biomedical Science

You should apply in your second year

Example 2: 4-year BSc in Biomedical Science with a 1-year research placement in year 3

You should apply in your second year.

Example 3: 4-year BSc in Biomedical Science in Scotland, no sandwich year

You should apply in your second or third year.

Example 4: 4-year MRes course with research project in third and fourth years

You should apply in your second year.

Example 5: 4-year MRes course with a research project in the fourth year only. No third year research project.

You should apply in your second or third year

Example 6: 5-year medical degree

You should apply in your second or third year.

Example 7: 6-year medical degree with intercalated BSc in year 3

You should apply in your second year.

Example 8: 6-year medical degree with foundation year and no intercalated year

You should apply in your second, third or fourth years.

FAQ:

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 our 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 biological sciences students (including biology, sports science and pharmacy), medics, vets, dentists, optometrists and psychologists. 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. See our website at <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/science-remit> for our Science remit.

I have previously been awarded a Vacation Scholarship from Wellcome 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.

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.

2) Identify a researcher who's willing to become your supervisor

To do this, you could:

1. approach a researcher you're interested in working with.

An academic within your current institution or one at another university who you would like to undertake a scholarship period with.

2. contact your tutor, who may be able to tell you about scholarships at your university, or help you find a suitable supervisor

You could perhaps ask your tutor if they know of the local procedure for scholarships

3. contact a university scholarship coordinator, who may be able to identify a suitable supervisor.

Some universities have scholarship coordinators who can assist you in identifying a researcher in the area that interests you, however this kind of assistance does vary by university.

FAQ:

Where can the scholarship be based?

Your proposed scholarship can take place at the university you're studying at or another university or research institute in the UK or Republic of Ireland.

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

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

Are Vacation Scholarships carried out at Wellcome headquarters at Euston Road, London?

No. Wellcome 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.

Does Wellcome help students organise placements?

We don't 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.

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

No. The project supervisor must hold an academic or research position (eg a lecturer or group leader) within the university or research unit. Your supervisor should check their eligibility against the website.

3) Establish your project

Once you have identified a supervisor you can liaise with them to set up a suitable project.

We expect you to be involved in the design and planning of your project. You may have your own ideas on what you wish to investigate and achieve during a scholarship period and a supervisor can assist you in developing your ideas, alternatively some academics will have projects in mind that you may wish to work with them on.

The project should be 6-8 weeks in duration and a self-contained piece of research. This small project can be part of a larger body of work that is ongoing within the host laboratory and from which publications may arise.

What is a 'self-contained piece of research'?

The statement 'self-contained research' simply means that you should have your own project, that can be completed in 6-8 weeks, rather than being an extra pair of hands in the laboratory.

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.

Can I apply for a Vacation Scholarship for more than 8 weeks?

No. Applications for projects longer than 8 weeks will not be considered.

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

No. Projects that support clinical trial data collection or auditing are not appropriate for the scheme. Self-contained lab-based, clinical, computational and field projects are suitable for Vacation Scholarships

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. We expect all research costs to be provided by the supervisor.

Does the project need to be biomedical?

The project should fall within Wellcome's Science remit <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/science-remit>.

4) Complete the application form on Wellcome Grant Tracker

Who completes the application form?

You (the student) complete the application form. Your supervisor should offer advice where needed.

FAQ

Form Section: 'Application Summary'

Who is the Lead Applicant?

As the student applying for a scholarship grant, you are the lead applicant.

What is the 'Lead applicant's address at the administering organisation'?

This is the organisation at which you will be based for the scholarship.

What is an ORCID ID?

As the lead applicant, you will need to enter an ORCID ID, which is a unique identifier for researchers. You should register for an ORCID ID please visit: <http://orcid.org>.

Form Section: 'Delegation and approval'

If you would like to give your supervisor access to all sections of the form, you can add them as a 'delegate' on the 'Delegation and approval' tab.

Select 'add delegate' and add your supervisor.

What is an authorised organisational approver?

Any application submitted to Wellcome is automatically routed to the institute's research office for approval ('the organisational approver'), before going on to us.

You do not need to take any action to ensure that this occurs. Notes within the application form are for information purposes only.

As your research office will likely have a long list of applications to approve, we recommend submitting your application a few days in advance of the deadline.

Form Section: 'Participants - Student'

You will need to enter your current address and education/training via the 'manage my details' link. Please ensure you update these details so we can assess your eligibility.

Click on 'update via Manage My Details', and select the 'update CV' tab. Enter your education/training, including your current degree course.

Does Wellcome 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.

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 Wellcome to assess the potential of the candidate and any experience they already have.

Form Section: 'Supervisors'

You should add your supervisor to this section. They will be invited to the form to confirm their employment details.

Form Section: 'Details of proposal'

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.

Form Section: 'Licenses and approvals'

Your supervisor should help you complete this section.

Form Section: 'Additional information'

Your supervisor should help you complete this section.

5) Submit your application

FAQ

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 Grant Tracker.

Are applications assessed by an external committee or peer reviewed?

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

How are applications assessed?

We take into account your results to date, whether they have any previous research experience, your personal statement, your desire to undertake a research project, the reference from their personal tutor, the quality of the project and training opportunities.

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

Please inform us immediately if you have been offered support from elsewhere so we can redistribute the funds. Email us on yacschol@wellcome.ac.uk.

When will I find out whether I have been successful?

We aim to release decisions on all applications by the mid-May.

How will I find out the outcome?

An email will be sent to you and your supervisor with the outcome of your application.

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.

Information for Successful applicants

FAQ

When will I receive an award letter?

An award letter will be issued to your Vice Chancellor and your research office who will arrange your stipend payment.

Since submitting my proposal the project has changed - do I need to inform Wellcome?

There is no need to inform us.

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

Yes. The start date is notional. Students can undertake their scholarship at any time during the summer vacation period.

Do I need to submit an end of grant report?

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

Information for Supervisors

Supervisors are expected to provide the student with:

- the necessary scientific guidance to ensure that they gain the most from the scholarship experience.
- space and resources over the scholarship period
- guidance where necessary on completing the application form, for example for sections on licenses and approvals.

FAQ

I am a postdoctoral researcher, PhD student or technician, can I act as a supervisor?

No. The project supervisor must hold an academic or research position (eg a group leader) 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.

Can I apply for multiple awards with different students?

No. Supervisors can support one applicant a year for a Biomedical Vacation Scholarship. Multiple applications will be rejected.

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 Wellcome immediately if this is the case on vacschol@wellcome.ac.uk.

Is the student required to submit a report to the Wellcome?

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

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 student should not be an extra pair of hands in the laboratory.

Information for the host organisation

FAQ

How are Vacation Scholarship awards issued by Wellcome?

A single grant is awarded to each organisation with successful applicants. An award letter, listing all successful students, is issued to the Vice Chancellor (or equivalent) cc'ing the relevant administrative contact.

How does the institute receive funds from the Wellcome?

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 the End of Grant Spend Report. Detailed instructions will be contained within the award letter.

Do students receive funds directly from the Wellcome?

No. It is an expectation of Wellcome 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.

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

Details will be provided in the Award Letter.

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

Please inform us immediately on vacschol@wellcome.ac.uk and liaise with your finance team (where appropriate) to ensure that no claims are made on the End of Grant Spend Report for the student.

Further information

If you have an enquiry that is not addressed by our website or guidance document, please email vacschol@wellcome.ac.uk for support.