Undergraduate Research Bursaries

Guidance for Applicants

The following document provides guidance on the eligibility and process for the **15 January 2024 – 19 February 2024** application round of the Undergraduate Research Bursaries.

Please read these before making an application.

1. About the bursary

1.1 The bursary provides a contribution to the student's wages equivalent to 35 hours per week at the UK National Living Wage (£11.44 per hour from April 2024) for between 6 and 8 weeks to cover a defined research placement in chemistry-related research areas at a university, research institution or business located within the UK or Republic of Ireland.

1.2 Student applicants are not restricted to applying for a project at the university at which they study. They may instead apply with a supervisor at an alternative university, research institution or business in the UK or Republic of Ireland.

2. Duration and start of award

2.1 Funding is available for projects taking place between June and September 2024 for a period of between 6 and 8 weeks.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Student applicants must be RSC members at the time of the application deadline and for the duration of the bursary period. Student membership is free and it is very quick and easy to join. For more details, please see our membership page. This will be checked by RSC staff and the applicant's RSC membership must be confirmed at the bursary application deadline – it is not sufficient to have a membership application in process.

3.2 Students must be in the middle years of their first undergraduate degree at the time of application (i.e. year 2 of a 3 year course or years 2 or 3 of a 4 year course).

    3.2.1 Mature students are eligible to apply, but must not have a previous degree in any subject.

3.3 Students must be registered at a UK or Republic of Ireland Institution (whether full-time or part-time) for the majority of their undergraduate degree in the chemical sciences.

3.4 The student's supervisor must be conducting research in the chemical sciences at a university, research institution or business located within the UK or Republic of Ireland.

3.5 The project must not count towards the student's academic credits, be used for expeditions or be conducted overseas for more than 50% of the project time.

3.6 Students must not be in receipt of financial support from other sources for the project that is the subject of application.

3.7 Only one application may be submitted per student.

3.8   The applicants are responsible for ensuring they are not under any obligation which prevents them from applying for or receiving the funds, whether the obligations are imposed by their host institution or otherwise.

4.   Application timelines

Applications open: 15 January 2024

Application close: 19 February 2024 14:00 UK time (GMT)

Initial eligibility checks: Week commencing 4 March 2024

Funding decisions: Early May 2024

5.   Application requirements

5.1   Applications will be made through our online application system, SurveyMonkey Apply. Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements (see section 3).

5.2   The main applicant for the Undergraduate Research Bursary should be the student undertaking the project. The student will need to provide details of (1) the project supervisor who will complete the section on the proposed project (see section 5.4) and (2) the student's academic tutor who will provide a statement of support. The student is responsible for submitting the completed application.

5.3   Students are required to provide information on:

a. Their academic studies to date, including available grades from their degree course.

b. Their career aspirations.

c. Their motivations for applying for this bursary.

5.4   Supervisors are required to provide information on:

a. The proposed research project, including details of the role the student in the project (a document of maximum two sides of A4 at font size 10):

- *Description of the project to be carried out.* Please include:
  o title,
  o brief background,
  o the aims of the project,
  o details of the investigation to be carried out and the methods to be used.

  Please also include any details of funds available to support the research expenses for the project. Up to three literature references may be given.
- *Details of the role of the student in the project*, including:
  o what arrangements will be made to supervise the student,
  o the training provided to the student,
  o an approximate timetable for them, and
  o what objectives you hope to achieve in the period of the grant.

  Please ensure this contains a feasible timeline and details on what the student will be expected to complete. This will be assessed for its appropriateness for the student and whether it is reasonable in the timeframe.

b. Timings and length of the project.

    c. Details of any other funding applications for this project or student.

5.5   The application must also include a statement from the student's academic tutor. The statement should include:

- A brief description of their relationship with the student

- How they feel the student would benefit from receiving a bursary

- A comment on the student's academic performance to date (including practical skills where appropriate)

- The student's likely final degree result or rank order in course group or current overall mark.

5.6   All applications must be digitally confirmed by the supervisor's Head of Department. Heads of Department will be asked to confirm that they are aware of the application and approve it for submission.

6.   Inviting project supervisors, academic tutors and Heads of Department to contribute to the application.

6.1   Please note that you are required to complete all previous sections of the application form before you can request the Head of Department declaration. Please ensure you give the Heads of Department enough time before the application deadline to complete their task.

6.2   All applications must include contributions from the project supervisor, the student's academic tutor and the supervisor's Head of Department (as outlined in section 5). The project supervisor, academic tutor and Head of Department must be "invited" on the application system to complete their parts of the application process. ***Please make them aware of this before entering their details into the application system.***

6.3   Once students enter the details of their project supervisor, academic tutor and Head of Department, the SurveyMonkey Apply system will send them an email, which includes a link to the application. Clicking this link will allow them to login (or sign up) to complete their sections of the application form.

6.4   **The project supervisor, academic tutor and Head of Department's tasks need to be completed by the bursary application deadline.** You will not be able to submit your application form until the status shows 'complete' on all tasks.

7.   Assessment Criteria

7.1   The assessment criteria are:

a) Situation of the student

Reviewers will assess the student's aptitude and interest in practical work; their academic abilities; career ambitions and how much this project is likely to benefit them.

b) Suitability of the project

In addition to high-quality science achievable in the time available, the project must be suitable for the student's skill level, whilst providing an appropriate level of challenge. It should give the student experience in a range of techniques and concepts.

c) Supervisor support

The application should demonstrate how the student will be given the support they need to make the most of their time in the lab. The application should also take into account provision of adequate resources to train and supervise the student.

7.2 Strictly no more than four students from any one institution will be funded for projects at their home institution.

7.2.1 Applications from students applying to undertake research at an institution other than where they are studying do not count towards the allocation of either institution (the "home" or the "host").

8. Review process

8.1 All applications will undergo an initial check by RSC staff. Applications will not proceed to peer review if:

a) You do not meet our eligibility criteria (see section 3)

b) Your application is incomplete

c) Your application does not adhere to the length limits instructed in the application system

8.2 All remaining applications will undergo peer review by members of our Researcher Grants Peer Review Group and final funding decisions will then be overseen by:

Professor John Dean, Northumbria University
Dr Joëlle Prunet, University of Glasgow
Dr Jóhannes Reynisson, Keele University

8.3 If successful, the Bursary will be paid by BACS to the Supervisor's institution and not to the Applicant or Supervisor individually. The Bursary must only be used by the Applicant for work on the proposed project as detailed in the application and may not be used for any other purpose without the prior consent of the RSC.

9. Successful applications

9.1 Students, project supervisors and Heads of Departments will be notified by email of any funding decision.

9.2 The funding offer is conditional on RSC receiving, within fifty (50) working days from the date of the Award Letter, bank payment details and agreement to all of the conditions set out in the Standard Conditions of Grant.

9.3 The bursary will be paid in a single payment to the applicant's host organisation. No funds will be paid directly to individual applicants.

10. Contact information

If you have any questions about this bursary please contact funding@rsc.org. Before contacting us please check the Frequently Asked Questions document for the bursary in case this answers your question.