



Guide for student applicants

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What is a Nuffield Research Placement?

When?

Summer holidays after Year 12 (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or S5 (in Scotland).

How long?

Four to six weeks.

What?

A well-supervised but independent research project relating to an area of science, quantitative social science, computing, technology, engineering or maths (or a combination!).

Where?

Placements are in a variety of locations, including offices, museums, research centres, laboratories or fieldwork settings.

Costs?

Students can take part in a placement at no cost: travel costs are reimbursed and students may be eligible to receive a £100 bursary each week.

Before applying, please read the eligibility criteria carefully:

To be eligible, students must:

- Be over 16 years old and in Year 12 or S5.
- Be in full-time state-funded education in the UK.
- Have at least 5 GCSEs at Level 6 or above OR Scottish Nationals at Level B or above, including maths, a science subject and English (or another humanities subject).
- Be studying one or more A-levels or Scottish Highers (or equivalent) in science, technology, engineering, economics, geography, psychology, computing, statistics or maths.
- Be available for four to six weeks of their summer holiday.

Students must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Be living, or have lived, in local authority care.
- Come from a family with a combined household income of below £30,000 a year, or be entitled to free school meals, either now or at any time in the last six years.
- Be the first in their immediate family to participate in higher education (not including any older siblings). This means that neither of their parents/carers have participated in higher education, either in the UK or another country. If their siblings have attended higher education, but their parents/carers have not, they are still eligible.

If you have any questions about eligibility, please contact your Regional Coordinator for more information.

Application and programme timetable

From September

- **Check your eligibility online**
Use our handy tool to check if you're eligible to apply.
- **Check at home.**
Talk to your parents/guardians about your interest in a Nuffield Research Placement and check you have four to six consecutive weeks free in July and August for a placement.
- **Talk to your teacher.**
Tell your teacher you are interested in applying and ask if they can write a reference for you.
- **Contact your Nuffield Regional Coordinator**
They can confirm your eligibility and explain the application process as well as the types of placements you can expect.

October to March/April

- **Read our Guide for Applicants**
This includes tips on how to write a good application.
- **Check the application deadline for your region**
- **Complete your application online in time for your regional deadline**
Contact your regional coordinator if you are worried about missing your deadline.

May to July

- **Successful applicants**
Your regional coordinator will be in touch to talk about your placement and invite you to an induction event. Read our Guide for Participants.
- **Unsuccessful applicants**
Your regional coordinator will be in touch to let you know if your application is successful. If it is not, there are plenty of other STEM opportunities you can get involved in.

July to October

- Enjoy participating in your Nuffield Research Placement!
- Complete your post-placement report and poster.
- Receive your completion certificate and present your work alongside other NRP students at your regional celebration event.

Application process

The online application form requires students to provide the following:

- Personal information (contact details, special requirements etc.).
- Educational information (school, qualifications achieved and qualifications currently studying, preferred subject area for placement).
- A personal statement outlining your interest in completing a Nuffield Research Placement.
- Details about any other outside interests.
- A full bursary application (if applicable).
- Nomination of a teacher to provide a reference.
- Consent form from your parent/guardian(s).

Students can start the application process and come back to it at any time.

Application hints and tips

We often get asked what makes a good application. Below are some hints and tips, together with a short activity to get you thinking about how to prepare an application for a Nuffield Research Placement.

When applying for a job or a place on a course, writing about your experiences and interests on the application form is the first opportunity you have to introduce yourself to the recruiter or admissions tutor. Remember, the person reading the form doesn't know you, so it's important to explain your interests and ideas clearly and concisely. You don't want them to become bored reading through a long-winded life history but, equally, your statement shouldn't be so brief that the reader feels that you haven't been bothered enough to give sufficient detail.

If you're applying for a Nuffield Research Placement, it doesn't matter if you don't have any experience; that's what the Nuffield project is for! At this stage, all you need is enthusiasm for your subject.

Key points to consider

The local Nuffield Coordinator is responsible for selecting students for placements in their region. Remember that, unlike your tutors, they have no knowledge about your potential for the programme other than what you include in your application. The personal statement is your opportunity to showcase yourself and demonstrate your suitability for a placement.

Generally speaking, there are three main areas that the coordinators are looking for in a 'good' application:

1. A convincing account of why you want to undertake a placement and what you hope to gain from the Nuffield experience.
2. Information about the subjects that interest you and why you enjoy them.
3. A description of the qualities and skills you can bring to a placement that will help you to be successful.

Hints and tips

- Use full English and check your spelling and grammar; remember, this is your first chance to impress the Nuffield Coordinator.
- Try to be concise in your personal statement. We recommend keeping the statement to within 500 words.
- Think about what you want to say before you fill in the form; don't just put down the first think that comes into your head. If it helps, you can write down notes or ideas on a draft version first.
- Make the most of your interests and experiences. If you did really well in a school competition, say so! If you've done something science-y (like visited a museum or read an article) in your spare time, put it in.
- Before submitting your application, check it carefully for any mistakes; it's always a good idea to ask a friend, family member or teacher to proof-read what you've written.

Personal statement activity

Look at the applications below and think about three positive and three negative things about each form.

Explain below why you think you would benefit from a Nuffield Research Placement. You might mention, for example, whether there are any particular areas of science that interest you, what your career plans are and any previous experience you've had that might be relevant.

Example One

I like science and want to find out more about doing science at university. At school I like learning about genetics in biology so I want to see what it's like to work in this area. At school I find experiments really interesting, and so I would like to see what it's like to do research for real. After school I want to get a job in science if I like what I do at uni.

Example Two

I think that I'm interested in Chemistry and might like to do it at university, but I probably want a career in Finance in the end. Maybe the placement will help me decide what I want to do. At school, I go to the science club and I like that, which is why I have applied for this placement.

Application One

Positive points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Negative points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Application Two

Positive points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Negative points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Supplementary questions

- Who is going to read your application; how might this affect your choice of language?
- What style of writing is appropriate for this task?
- What words or phrases could you use to demonstrate your enthusiasm?
- How would you make your application different from the two examples provided?

Having answered these questions, have a go at writing your own personal statement:

- Compare your work to the two examples and think about the following:
- Which do you prefer and why?
- Are there any sections of your statement that stand out better than others?
- Is there anything that needs to be removed from or added to your statement?

Advice for unsuccessful or ineligible applicants

Nuffield Research Placements are highly competitive and inevitably many applicants will either be unsuccessful or fail to meet the [eligibility criteria](#). If this is the case, don't panic; there are still plenty of other STEM-related enrichment opportunities you can get involved in:

- [National Careers Service](#); A great starting point for information about careers, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities.
- [Student Ladder](#); Providing useful advice and links to UK-based organisations offering summer placements.
- [STEM Ambassador](#); Ask your teacher about arranging a visit to your school from an ambassador with a science, technology, engineering or maths background.
- [British Science Association](#); Find out about CREST Awards, which can be used towards UCAS personal statements and Duke of Edinburgh programmes.
- [Leaders Award for STEM](#); An excellent way of finding out more about scientific and technical careers. Leaders Awards for STEM can link up with CREST Awards.
- [Teens in AI](#); Explore Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning and data science, and check out the [Teens in AI Accelerator](#) programme.
- [Young Scientists Journal](#) / [Journal of Young Investigators](#); There are lots of different ways to get involved with these online publications, written by and for young scientists.
- [IRIS](#); Ask your school to sign up (for free!), so that you can take part in one of the many science research projects.
- [nQuire-it](#); Carry out investigations into the physical world using the Sense-it app, which can be downloaded to any smart device.
- [Future Morph](#); Check out the Science Council's website for information about careers in STEM.