FINDING INTERNSHIPS IN LIFE SCIENCES

N.B. many schemes are aimed at 2nd Year / penultimate year students. You are strongly advised to check details online for all schemes to get most up to date information!

Thanks are given to the University of Manchester Careers Service for permission in either copying or adapting information contained in their handout ‘Getting Work Experience in Life Sciences’ http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/media/services/careersandemployabilitydivision/careersservice/crcpublications/startingpointseriesofhandouts/a5/Getting-Work-Experience-in-Life-Science.pdf

DECIDING WHICH INDUSTRY SECTOR TO UNDERTAKE YOUR INTERNSHIP

Research the different areas that your Life Sciences degree could lead to before beginning your search for an internship. This research will mean that you can choose to do an internship in the industry in which you would like to develop your future career. The Careers Advisory Service website (www.imperial.ac.uk/careers) has lots of information on career planning and useful links. Visit our Careers Information Room, level 5 Sherfield Building and browse the “options with your degree in “Life Sciences” folder. You can book an appointment with a careers consultant or internship & placement officer if needed.

ADVERTISED VACANCIES

VACATION STUDENTSHIPS & GRANTS

If you are considering a career in research or a PhD, you should apply to Imperial’s Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) - www.imperial.ac.uk/urop.

In addition, a number of organisations offer bursaries to enable undergraduates to work in a research laboratory during the long summer vacation. The bursaries provide student support (called a stipend) normally for a period between 6 and 10 weeks, plus sometimes a sum for research expenses. In some cases it’s the member of staff (academic / project supervisor) who would apply for this bursary. In other cases, you can apply yourself direct. There are also some organisations who offer awards to fund course related projects or fieldwork, typically ecology or wildlife related.

Many bursaries are aimed specifically at undergraduate students in their penultimate year of study but others have broader criteria and are open to postgraduates.

28 studentships listed on the Society of Biology studentship page - http://tiny.cc/sobss

35 (some of the same) also listed on the UK centre for Bioscience webpage - http://tiny.cc/biosss

Guardian article on pre-PHD lab experience- http://bit.ly/Oum8Qp

Further studentships not on the above links:

Child Health Research Appeal Trust – Deadline last year was 2 March 2012 www.ucl.ac.uk/ich/education-ich/vacation_studentships

Deafness Research UK Vacation Scholarship – Applications open early 2013, postgraduate deadline 12 October 2012
www.deafnessresearch.org.uk/Vacation20Scholarships+3015.twl

http://sv.epfl.ch/summer-research

Infectious Disease Research Network http://idrn.org/placements/

Institute of Food Research Summer Vacation Bursaries – based in one of the IFR laboratories www.ifr.ac.uk/students/undergrad_bursaries.html

John Innes Centre, International Undergraduate Studentship Programme http://opportunities.jic.ac.uk/summerprogramme/

University of Lausanne Summer Undergraduate Research Programme – based in Switzerland, application available from November 2012
http://www.unil.ch/ecoledebiologie/page79946_en.html

OXION Vacation Studentship – Applications open Spring 2013 http://oxion.dpag.ox.ac.uk/vacation_studentship

People’s Trust for Endangered Species Internship Award – Deadline for both Mammals and invertebrates 3 May 2013. Up to £4k to fund a discrete 6 months full-time or 18 months part-time project carried out with a conservation organisation or a university research group
www.ptes.org/index.php?cat=90

Rank Prize Funds studentships related to nutrition (human and animal) and crop husbandry, closing date 14 February 2013 - http://www.rankprize.org/news1.htm (scroll to the bottom of the page)

SmaRT Summer Student Program at University of Milano-Bicocca. Open to students enrolled as a full-time postgraduate student – Deadline was 3 February in 2012 http://www.unimib.it/go/45783/Home/English/MENU-DX/International-Programs/SmaRT-Program

Vienna Biocenter Summer School – Deadline last year was 17 February 2012
http://www.vbcsummerschool.at/home/index.html

The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute offers vacation placements for undergraduate and masters level students. Applications open 28 November and close 28 February annually, if shortlisted you will need a letter of recommendation from your Tutor
www.sanger.ac.uk/workstudy/placements

Wiezmann Institute of Science Summer Students – Deadline last year was 31 December 2011 www.fgs.org.il/en/article.php?id=221

Zurich Biology Undergraduate Summer School – Deadline last year was 1 March 2012 http://www.biologie.uzh.ch/Studium/Studiengang/UndergraduateSummerSchool.html
What you need to do:

- Use the lists to identify awards relevant to you.
- For many awards, you need to find yourself a potential supervisor for the summer. Usually, the supervisor must be in a university or research institute laboratory (not usually an industrial laboratory but there are exceptions).
- You could start by talking to your tutor or to a member of academic staff whose research you find of interest. **Tip:** some of these institutions list who received an award last year - some name the student but some name the academic supervisor.
- **Be aware that in most cases, the application is made by your potential supervisor and not by you, the student!**
- To apply, you and your potential supervisor need to devise a project which falls within the remit of the funder and that is achievable within the given timeframe.
- Consider approaching research staff at other universities, away from Imperial, perhaps near to your home address. Many of the bursaries are offered to encourage students to undertake a PhD after their undergraduate degree, and it can be viewed as positive in order to widen your research experience. Indeed, each year Imperial also hosts students from other universities to undertake research studentships.
- When approaching potential supervisors, be aware that researchers working in popular areas (e.g. cancer research) may be inundated with requests. Consider some less obvious areas of research as it might improve your chances.
- Remember that academic research staff are busy people. You may need to be politely persistent – so don’t give up if your first email is ignored – but try not to be a pest either! It is important to consider it from their perspective. They are looking out for people who they believe are capable of undertaking a PhD project in the future, someone who would be useful to have around the laboratory, who is easy to manage and who won’t need constant supervision. Do your research before you talk to them, have ideas for project areas and actively demonstrate your motivation. Remember, although academic staff have supervised summer students in the past, they are under no obligation to do so.
- Do be aware that academics at Imperial may have access to your academic results. In the absence of any other information about your capabilities, these could affect any decision they make. If you need to submit a CV, you can get some feedback from the Departmental Careers Adviser, your Personal Tutor, the Careers Advisory Service and your academic advisor to ensure you are presenting yourself effectively.
- As well as life / medical science, you could consider undertaking a studentship in a different discipline area, working on an interdisciplinary project e.g. engineering, chemistry and materials science. This could be at Imperial or at a different institution.
- The Institute for Food Research and the John Innes Centre both welcome students to apply to researchers at their laboratories to act as supervisors for bursaries offered by organisations like the BBSRC.
- **REMEMBER:** These awards are competitive and you are advised to start early.
PLANT SCIENCE / BOTANY

Gatsby Plants Summer School for 1st Year undergraduates – information here
http://www.gatsbyplants.leeds.ac.uk/SS/index.html

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS & SCIENCE POLICY

BBSRC Policy placements for PhD students http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/business/people-information/policy-placements.aspx

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), the centre of scientific excellence for the Ministry of Defence, offer a summer vacation scheme as well as industrial placements.
www.dstl.gov.uk/careers

The Civil Service Summer Diversity Internships http://faststream.civilservice.gov.uk/Summer-Diversity-Internships/Programmes-and-Schemes/Summer-Development-Programme/

Go Science offer PhD students internships http://www.bis.gov.uk/go-science

Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology (POST) offer PhD internships
http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/post/fellowships/

Wellcome Trust offer a range of summer internships in science communication, policy and funding http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Work-placements-and-internships/index.htm

FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS (FMCG)

Commercial organisations might employ lab based vacation students in the life sciences e.g. food (Kerry Group, Northern Foods), brewing (Marston’s), utilities (Severn Trent) and personal care (Boots, Unilever, Procter and Gamble etc).

This website from Lancaster Management School lists the companies and those that have internship schemes:
http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/careers/companylinks/FMCG/

PHARMACEUTICALS

GSK offer summer internships in marketing and purchasing. Deadline Monday 19th November 2012 but they recruit on an on-going basis so early application recommended
http://www.gsk.com/careers/uk-undergraduate-plac.htm

Jane Pooler & Amy Townsend, updated September 2012
Sources: University of Manchester Careers Service, University of Kent Careers Service, Sarah Blackford, (Society of Experimental Biology) & Gemma Garrett (Biochemical Society)
Industrial Placements:

- Pfzier offer industrial placements and applications open on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 2012 - [http://industrialtrainee.pfizercareersuk.com/](http://industrialtrainee.pfizercareersuk.com/)
- Novartis, assessment centre week commencing 5\textsuperscript{th} Nov, upload a CV & covering letter to [www.nibrcareers.com/opportunities.asp](http://www.nibrcareers.com/opportunities.asp)
- Janssen, go to “Careers” - “Student Placements”, opens October [www.janssen.co.uk](http://www.janssen.co.uk)
- GSK, deadline Monday 19th November 2012 at 5pm. “As we recruit on an on-going basis, we would recommend that you submit an application to us sooner rather than later.” Tip – to get to the “apply now” section click on summer placements. Not all vacancies are appearing under industrial placements! GMS = Global Manufacturing & Supply. Application form available at - [http://www.gsk.com/careers/uk-stud-industrial-plac.htm](http://www.gsk.com/careers/uk-stud-industrial-plac.htm)

OTHER RESOURCES FOR ADVERTISED VACANCIES

- **JobsLive** – [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/jobslive](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/jobslive) this is the Careers Advisory Service vacancy database. Set your profile so you receive email alerts with details of new internships. Start your research early as deadlines can range from October to January. It is best to apply as soon as applications open as sometimes organisations will close application windows before the deadline if they receive enough interest.

- **Company websites** – many organisations will have a careers page that lists details of their internship schemes and how to apply. You may find out about these companies through careers fairs (Science Forum 1 November 2012, Science Fair, 31 January 2013 and Internship Fair, 21\textsuperscript{st} February 2013), graduate employer directories which are available in the Careers Information Room, level 5 Sherfield Building and the destinations of previous Life Science students available on the Careers Advisory Service website. Don’t forget to sign up for email alerts or subscribe to RSS feeds so you don’t have to keep re-visiting the company websites to check for new vacancies.

- **Step** [http://www.step.org.uk](http://www.step.org.uk) provides paid summer internship and industrial placement opportunities for penultimate year students in the summer vacation, with a focus on science and technology.

- **Social Media** can be useful when job hunting – companies are now using Facebook, Twitter (through [www.twitjobsearch.com](http://www.twitjobsearch.com)) and LinkedIn to post vacancies. It is important to maintain a professional image when communicating with companies. Ensure that your comments are well written and portray you in a professional light.
SPECULATIVE APPLICATIONS

If a company is not advertising internships it may still be worth getting in touch with them to find out if they can offer an internship. Follow these five steps:

1. Find a company
   - Use your own network of contacts – e.g. friends, family, alumni, tutors
   - Try an organisation search on JobsLive. You can filter by the business area Scientific Research & Development or search by keyword in the quick search box.
   - LinkedIn - using the companies tab search by keyword. Then filter by location and industry sector. You can also do an advanced search for people (e.g. put R&D in the job title and search for graduates from Imperial) to find out what companies they work for now and have done previously. If you are new to LinkedIn there are videos available at [http://learn.linkedin.com/students/step-1/](http://learn.linkedin.com/students/step-1/) to help you understand how it works!
   - Exhibition or trade show catalogues can also be helpful to look for companies. There are some listed at [http://www.biztradeshows.com/](http://www.biztradeshows.com/). The Society of Biology holds an annual Life Science Careers Conference (LSCC) in November providing an opportunity to meet some employers in life sciences. This year it is being held at Birmingham on 14th Nov and Leeds on 5th December. – [www.societyofbiology.org/education/careers/lsc](http://www.societyofbiology.org/education/careers/lsc). Nature Jobs also holds a large annual careers fair (20 September 2012) called Nature Jobs Career Expo - [http://www.nature.com/natureconferences/njce2012/index.html](http://www.nature.com/natureconferences/njce2012/index.html)
   - The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) has a list of Pharmaceutical companies you could contact - [http://careers.abpi.org.uk/getting-into-the-industry/pharmaceutical-recruiters/Pages/default.aspx](http://careers.abpi.org.uk/getting-into-the-industry/pharmaceutical-recruiters/Pages/default.aspx)
   - You can also search Biotech firms at [http://onenucleus.com/member-database](http://onenucleus.com/member-database)
   - Business directories such as [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com) or [www.applegate.co.uk](http://www.applegate.co.uk) are helpful.
   - Science parks can help to find smaller companies - [http://www.ukspa.org.uk/science_parks/](http://www.ukspa.org.uk/science_parks/)
   - The resources mentioned in the ‘company websites’ section above may also be of use.
   - Recruitment agencies - [http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sitephar.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sitephar.htm)

2. Research the company to prepare your application
   - Visit their website (go beyond the careers pages)
   - Read the company annual report
   - Search them on Google news to find out any recent updates
   - Find a contact name (perhaps a previous intern) on LinkedIn to gently approach and ask them about the company. They may give advice on what the company is looking for.
   - There is further information on the Careers website regarding how to research companies [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/ug/research](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/ug/research)

3. Find a contact name
   - Some company websites list staff members. Look for the name of someone in Human Resources (HR) or the manager of the team you are keen to work in.
   - Try an advanced search for people on LinkedIn by putting HR or recruitment in the title and look for someone currently at that company.

Jane Pooler & Amy Townsend, updated September 2012
Sources: University of Manchester Careers Service, University of Kent Careers Service, Sarah Blackford, (Society of Experimental Biology) & Gemma Garrett (Biochemical Society)
• If you are unable to find a name send it to the generic recruitment email address or company postal address and use “Dear Sir/Madam”.

4. **Prepare a targeted CV and covering letter**
   • Specify the department you would like to work and what you would like to gain.
   • State the time you are available for the internship and show how you can be of benefit.
   • Demonstrate evidence in your CV of the transferable skills that you think the company is looking for. This evidence may be from part-time work, previous internships, volunteering, societies, sports or your degree.
   • There is advice on writing CVs and covering letters on [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/ug/applicationandselection](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/ug/applicationandselection).
   • Don’t forget to get it checked by a member of the Careers team.

5. **Send your speculative application**
   • Keep records of the companies you have written to.

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**STUDENTSHIPS / SUMMER SCHOOLS / WORKSHOPS ABROAD**

A good starting point is by looking at the relevant overseas professional body or international learned society. Examples include:

- American Physiological Society
- American Society of Plant Biologists
- FEBS – Biochemists
- Ecological Society of America

In addition Going Global [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/goingglobal](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/goingglobal) and [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/countries](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/countries) give further useful web links to explore employment or further study in many different countries throughout the world.

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**AIMING FOR MEDICINE?**

If you intend to apply for medicine, you probably know that admissions tutors look for practical evidence of a commitment to caring. Candidates must be able to actively demonstrate concern for the welfare of others and their understanding that patient care is the first duty of a doctor. E.g. homecare support work, nursing homes and hospices, auxiliary work in hospitals.

For more information on Graduate Entry to Medicine, including advice on work experience download the University of Manchester handout from: [http://tiny.cc/mancgem](http://tiny.cc/mancgem)

Also see - [http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/considering_medicine/work_experience.aspx](http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/considering_medicine/work_experience.aspx) & [http://bma.org.uk/developing-your-career/becoming-a-doctor/entry-to-medical-school](http://bma.org.uk/developing-your-career/becoming-a-doctor/entry-to-medical-school)