

Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships 2018

Guidelines

Applications are invited for nine undergraduate studentships in Plant Health to be carried out over the summer of 2018. Successful projects will address Defra's R&D priorities in Plant Health. Funding is provided by [Defra](#) (4 studentships); [BSPP](#) (3 studentships) and [N8 AgriFood](#) (2 studentships).

Researchers, with the backing of their institution, who can offer research expertise and a high quality research experience for the student, may apply.

The proposed research project must address at least one of the following themes:

- Detection or Control
- Data & Modelling
- Trade
- Host plants / earth observations
- High-risk pests or pathogens
- Knowledge Exchange
- Oak Health
- Social research – biosecurity behaviours (details below).

Applicants are encouraged to look at the risk register of current pests and pathogens at:
<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/phiw/riskRegister/>.

Applicants will be asked to indicate the level of supervision the undergraduate can expect to receive during the placement.

These guidelines describe the **Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships** scheme for the 2018 intake. Please read the website and/or the guidelines below before making an enquiry or completing an application form.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 10:00 26th March 2018

There are 9 awards available and we expect a significant number of applications; receipt of completed application before the deadline is essential.

This information can be downloaded from www.rsb.org.uk/plant-studentships

Purpose

The Plant Health Undergraduate Summer Studentships aim to:

- Address skills and capacity challenges in plant health science by providing attractive opportunities for research experience to suitable undergraduates, offering them the opportunity to undertake supervised research with leading research groups and encourage research proposals in eight areas relevant to Defra's plant health priorities.
- Facilitate training of undergraduates in research practice.
- Encourage research proposals in eight areas relevant to Defra's plant health priorities.
- Generate research outcomes relevant to Defra's priorities.
- Build networks of research groups and emerging scientists with a focus on plant health.
- Evaluate the potential of the scheme to add benefit if run in future years.

The awards provide support for the student at a rate of £200 per week, for a studentship period of 8-10 weeks. The bursaries produce no National Insurance contribution liability; £500 is available for costs to run the research. An additional £500 per studentship is available for enabling expenses, to support the student with the costs of travel, accommodation or conference attendance.

On completion of their project, students will be required to submit a scientific poster describing their research, a selection of which will be included in relevant RSB, UKPSF and member organisation publications.

Themes

1: Detection or Control

Research exploring the development of new techniques for the detection and control of pests and pathogens (including the monitoring of healthy plants) or the deployment or application of existing methodology.

2: Data & Modelling

Research applying data science and modelling approaches to risk assessment, spread of disease, pests and pathogens, surveillance or other aspects relating to plant health including the development of indicators to determine the effectiveness/value for money of plant health activities.

3: Trade

Research addressing the impact of international trade on plant health (e.g. internet trade) or developing approaches for risk-based inspections and surveillance.

4: Host plants / earth observations

Research addressing evidence gaps around the distribution and susceptibility of host plants in the wider environment. Research topics could focus on the development of approaches to map host species at risk. Alternatively, some hosts (e.g. *Vaccinium*) are susceptible to a range of pests - research could address how we can best assess the cumulative risks to these hosts from a range of pests.

5: High-risk pests or pathogens

Research focusing on high-risk pests or pathogens on the risk register that address the readiness of the UK plant health services to deal with them. To find the current list of pests in the risk register, you can download the register [here](#).

6: Knowledge Exchange

Research focusing on how the UK Plant Health Services can engage most effectively with stakeholders (e.g. trade, NGOs, general public) to achieve better outcomes (e.g. fewer pest introductions, more effective response mechanisms, etc.)

7. Oak Health

Research to complement the work being carried out under Action Oak to investigate the many threats to oak trees including pests, diseases and climate change as well as identifying possible solutions.

8. Social research – biosecurity behaviours

Research to better understand biosecurity behaviours and how these influence practices aimed at preventing the introduction, spread and establishment of pests and diseases.

Eligibility

- Researchers at universities and research institutions within the UK are eligible to apply to host an undergraduate studentship. If successful, supervisors will be required to advertise their studentship nationally to eligible students* in collaboration with RSB.
- Supervisor applicants are encouraged to apply for [RSB membership](#).
- Studentships funded by the BSPP are available only to BSPP members; those funded by N8 AgriFood must have a supervisor or co-supervisor at the Universities of York or Durham.
- Only one application should be submitted per supervisor.

* **Eligible undergraduates who will apply directly to successful supervisors in April 2018**

- *Students will normally take up the award during the summer vacation in the middle years (i.e. 2/3, 2/4 or 3/4) of their degree but final year undergraduates intending to continue to Masters or PhD may also be considered.*
- *Mature students are eligible to apply.*
- *Students must be registered at a UK institution for the majority of their undergraduate science degree.*
- *Bursaries will not be awarded for projects that take place overseas for more than 50% of the project time.*
- *The Royal Society of Biology will offer all successful students 1 year's free student membership.*

Adjudication

Adjudication will be by the Panel appointed for this purpose. The scheme is competitive and applications will be judged primarily on the scientific merit and relevance to research themes of the studentship offered, and the research experience the student can expect to receive.

How to apply

The application must be made by **the person who will supervise the research** and not by the student.

Awards are not offered directly to individual researchers but to the institutions to which they belong. By signing the application form, the Head of Department signifies their willingness for the award to be administered by their department, and agrees to the Conditions of Award and reporting requirements of the Royal Society of Biology. Awards are made formally to the institution on the understanding that the investigation complies with the safety and ethical regulations of the institution and that the institution will ensure that the requirements of all relevant regulatory authorities will be met before the work commences.

Research expenses are not offered under this scheme.

The closing date for applications is **10:00 on 26th March 2018**.

All applications will be acknowledged by e-mail to Supervisors by 17:00 on 28th March 2018. If you have not received an acknowledgement by this date, please contact the RSB as soon as possible on: ukpsf@rsb.org.uk.

Decisions will be communicated to Supervisors by 17:00 on 9th April 2018.
Contracts with successful institutions will be completed by 30th April 2018.
The deadline for receipt of studentship reports is 17:00 on 30th September 2018.

If you need to withdraw your application, you must let us know as soon as possible at ukpsf@rsb.org.uk. Please bear in mind that we are a small central team and that processing each application takes time. If you receive alternative funding for your project, please let us know immediately so that, if necessary, we can re-allocate our funds accordingly. We will receive many more good applications than we can fund, so please help us to use our resources in the most effective way.

To apply to host a Plant Health Undergraduate Studentship, please complete the application form, [available here](#), outlining your proposal.

For queries, please contact us at ukpsf@rsb.org.uk, Tel: 020 7685 2400, or write to The Royal Society of Biology (REF: PHUGS), Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU.