Applicant Guidelines

NanoFutures Undergraduate Research Scholars 2022

4th July 2022 – 25th August 2022

This document provides details on how to apply to the NanoDTC NanoFutures Undergraduate Research Scholars (NanoFutures Scholars) programme. Please read these guidelines carefully before making your application.

1. Application Method

You must apply to this programme via the online form linked to from the NanoFutures Scholars webpage and by emailing a completed application form and recent transcript to team@nanodtc.cam.ac.uk. You can find the online form here and the separate application form here. We will not consider applications which are submitted to us via other means.

Only the application form which you email will be seen by the assessors; with the exception of whether or not you have selected any widening participation criteria, the information you input directly into the online form will only be seen by the programme organisers and will not form part of the selection process.

2. Eligibility

You are eligible to apply if you satisfy the following essential conditions:

- You must be studying for an undergraduate degree—a bachelors or integrated masters—at a UK higher education institution which could plausibly lead to postgraduate studies in chemistry, physics, materials, engineering, or a related subject. Those studying a life sciences degree are not eligible but are encouraged to consider the Experience Postgrad Life Sciences programme;
- You must have at least one year left of your undergraduate degree, i.e. still be studying your undergraduate degree in academic year 2022-23;
• You have, or expect to have before 4 July 2022, the right to live and work in the UK, with no restrictions on how long you can stay;

• You are available to participate in all elements of the programme from Monday 4th July 2022 to Friday 24th Aug 2022 during normal working hours (usually 9am to 5pm but these may vary according to research group). There may be some limited flexibility in the dates of participation for successful candidates agreed on a case-by-case basis with the programme organisers;

• You consent to abide by the terms and conditions of the offer, should you be made one, and commit to providing all requested feedback within one month of the close of the programme.

3. Selection Criteria

The aim of the NanoDTC’s new NanoFutures Scholars programme is to find and support those undergraduate students who have the potential to become the future of nanoscience and nanotechnology research—a future which we are striving to make more diverse and inclusive.

Eligible applicants will be selected according to the following four criteria:

• **Opportunity:** This refers to the extent to which applicants will benefit from the programme, given their previous educational experiences. Preference will be given to students who have not already had the opportunity to undertake research in relevant areas (see Research Experience section below). All else being equal, preference will be given to those entering the final year of their degree.

• **Interest:** The enthusiasm with which candidates explain their interest in their education in general and physical science research—including nanoscience and nanotechnology research, such as will be encountered in the internship project—in particular. Candidates can explore NanoDTC-related research here: [https://www.nanodtc.cam.ac.uk/research/](https://www.nanodtc.cam.ac.uk/research/)

• **Academic Achievement and Potential:** This will be evaluated through the candidates’ application form, transcript, a reference (if the candidate chooses to provide it in addition to the transcript), and the interview. Applicants would ideally be on track to achieve a final undergraduate degree grade of a strong 2:1 or first class degree (e.g. if your transcript shows year on year grade progression towards the upper range of a 2:1 or above). Preference will be given to students who have performed well academically within the context of their education to date. Candidates should be aware that the University of Cambridge, along with most other research-intensive UK
universities, normally expects a minimum of a good 2:1 as an entry requirement for postgraduate study. The NanoDTC PhD programme, as a highly competitive programme, normally expects a first-class degree from those studying a four-year undergraduate course.

- **Match:** Preference will be given to students whose interests align with research currently being undertaken within the NanoDTC network. Candidates should be aware that the NanoDTC PhD programme welcomes applicants from across the physical sciences including chemistry, physics, materials, engineering and any other subject that gives applicants a good background to undertake a PhD in nanoscience and nanotechnology.

In order to widen participation in the physical sciences at Cambridge, we **particularly encourage applications** from students who satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- have received free school meals;
- at the time of applying for their undergraduate course, were living in one of the most deprived areas of the country;
- at the time of applying for their undergraduate course, were living in an area where it is unusual for young people to go to university;
- were the first generation of their family to go to university;
- entered university at undergraduate level from a Care background or a Foyer resident;
- estranged from their family;
- have caring responsibilities for an ill or disabled family member who could not manage without this help;
- have been a single parent, or lone guardian of a young person who is aged under 18 and/or still in full-time education during their undergraduate degree course;
- received full state support for maintenance for their course of undergraduate study.

For more information on the above criteria and whether or not you may satisfy them, see the *Widening Participation Criteria* section below.

4. **COVID-19**

The programme is designed as a residential event, but should COVID-19 government guidelines prevent this, we reserve the right to amend the programme to a blended or online programme instead. Details concerning how this will affect the programme will be added to the website. Regardless of format, participants on the internship programme will be paid.
5. Application Dates

- The application deadline: **28th January 2022**
- Virtual open day and interviews: **week commencing 21st February 2022 (TBC)**

The programme will operate a short waiting list in case any selected candidates are unable to take up their place. We will inform you if you are on the waiting list.

6. Accommodation and Pay

Participants on the programme will be paid the Cambridge Living Wage (currently £10 per hour), for a 37.5-hour week. The programme duration is 8 weeks of full-time work, and you must participate for the full 8 weeks.

Participants will be provided with subsidised single College accommodation for the duration of the programme including weekends. Rooms will be allocated at random unless a student has specific needs (which you are invited to set out in the Disability section of the online form). You are expected to live in this accommodation for the duration of the programme, other than in exceptional circumstances agreed with your NanoFutures Programme tutor, and are expected to comply with College regulations whilst you are resident at the College.

The programme will also include a number of additional events (such as career talks, presentations, and social events) which will take place outside normal working hours. You are strongly encouraged to attend them as part of your career- and cohort-development opportunity.

7. Reference

If you choose to additionally evidence your academic achievement and potential through a referee, you should select a referee who is either a tutor or other academic at your current institution who knows you and your work well. This referee will be contacted after you submit your application and will be asked to fill in a form as a reference. We strongly advise that you ensure your referee is happy to provide a reference **before** you submit your application.
8. Research Experience

Please indicate if you have undertaken a research placement, work experience in a research laboratory, either at your current institution (whether as part of, or outside of, your course) or through another organisation, or research project of any other kind for a total duration of 2 weeks or more.

9. Widening Participation Criteria

Please indicate whether you satisfy any of the widening participation criteria (listed above) by selecting the appropriate criteria on the online form. The corresponding question on the online form, as well as further details, where applicable, can be found in the table below.

If you are shortlisted, we may contact you to request evidence to support the widening participation criteria you have selected. This ensures transparency in our assessment processes and fairness for all. Acceptable evidence is set out in the table below. We recommend that you prepare your evidence in advance of applying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Question, Further Details and Evidence</th>
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</table>
| Free School Meals         | *Question:* Were you eligible for Free School Meals at secondary school?  
                           |   *Evidence:* Letter or other notification from your school confirming this. |
| Where You Lived           | *Questions:* When you applied for your undergraduate course, were you living in one of the most deprived areas of the country?  
                           |   …and…  
                           | When you applied for your undergraduate course, were you living in an area where it is unusual for young people to go to university?  
                           |   *Further Details:* For the first question, you can check that your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study ranks within one of the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods (i.e. within deciles 1-5) on the relevant government Index of Multiple Deprivation: England (here), Scotland (here), Wales (here), and Northern Ireland (here). |
For the second question, you can check whether your postcode at point of entry to undergraduate study falls into Quintile 1 or Quintile 2 of the government’s POLAR4 classification. Please search [here](#) for the postcode of your home address in the final year of your secondary education (usually in the final year of your Sixth Form/FE college at age 18).

*Evidence*: Evidence of your postcode at point of entry.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Generation Applicant</th>
<th>Question: Are you in the first generation of your family to go to university?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence: Name, title, and contact details of a non-academic referee who can speak to your situation.*</td>
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<tr>
<th>Care or Foyer Background</th>
<th>Question: Did you enter university at undergraduate level from a Care background or as a Foyer resident?</th>
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<td>Evidence: A letter from the Local Authority or Foyer confirming this.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Estranged from Family</th>
<th>Question: Are you estranged from your family?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence: Name, title, and contact details of a non-academic referee who can speak to your situation.*</td>
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<tr>
<th>Caring Responsibilities</th>
<th>Question: Do you have caring responsibilities for an ill or disabled family member who could not manage without this help?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence: Name, title, and contact details of a non-academic referee who can speak to your situation.*</td>
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<tr>
<th>Single Parent or Guardian</th>
<th>Question: Have you been a single parent, lone foster parent, or lone guardian of a young person who is aged under 18 and/or still in full-time education during your undergraduate degree course?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence: Name, title, and contact details of a non-academic referee who can speak to your situation.*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>State Support</th>
<th>Question: Are you in receipt of full state support for maintenance for your course of undergraduate study?</th>
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Evidence: Scanned copy of the Student Finance (or Student Awards Agency Scotland) Notification of Award letter for the full amount of maintenance received; this should detail any loan/grant in addition to the standard government loan that all UK resident students are eligible for; any screenshot must include: your name; the name of the issuing authority (i.e. Student Finance England); and the amount of funding received and confirmation of this.

*We will offer instructions to referees if and when we contact them. Requested references will be short and will simply confirm the widening participation criterion in question. Referees could be a teacher, neighbour, family friend, social worker, doctor, or suchlike depending on your circumstances; the choice of appropriate referee is yours but should ideally not be a partner or immediate family member.*

10. Virtual Open Day and Interviews

We will invite shortlisted candidates to a virtual open day during the week commencing the 21st Feb 2022 (date to be confirmed). Candidates will have the opportunity to meet one another as well as current postgraduate students at the NanoDTC, and will be offered virtual tours of Cambridge laboratories and facilities. On the same day, shortlisted candidates will be invited to two short (c. 10-15 minute) interviews with a small panel of assessors. The interviews will take the form of a conversation, will further explore what you wrote in your application, and will focus on the selection criteria outlined above (i.e. opportunity, interest, academic achievement and potential, and match). Your satisfaction of the eligibility criteria (e.g. the widening participation criteria) will not be discussed. More details regarding the virtual open day and interviews will be provided to shortlisted candidates in due course.