

## Guide for student applicants

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### Introduction

Placements are engaging, real-life workplace experiences, where talented year 12 (or equivalent) students are placed at the heart of a UK host organisation.

They are a fantastic opportunity for students to apply skills and knowledge learned at school while providing a meaningful contribution to the work of researchers and industry professionals.

These placements are powered by STEM Learning as part of Destination STEM.



## Brief overview of the placements

### What placements do we offer?

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

	<b>Research Placement</b>	<b>Experience Placement</b>
<b>Overview</b>	Collaboration with a STEM-related knowledge expert on a live research question or area of development.	Exploration with industry experts to identify the STEM and essential skills needed for employment in STEM sectors.
<b>Aim</b>	Develop young people's STEM skills through focused research activities. Provide them with a valuable insight into working in professional environments. Ensure their outputs provide a meaningful contribution to host organisation's current work.	Increase young people's career-related knowledge through a range of careers-focused activities. Develop their skills for sustainable employment within STEM sectors. Provide a valuable insight into working in professional environments.
<b>Length</b>	2+ weeks	5 days
<b>Support</b>	All students will be supported with a placement payment of £135 per week to cover costs such as travel expenses.	
<b>Outputs</b>	Poster and scientific/technical report or presentation	Poster and reflective workbook
<b>What is required</b>	<b>Young people</b> should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiastic and curious.</li> <li>• Ready to challenge and stretch themselves.</li> <li>• Committed to travelling to their host organisation for at least 5 days.</li> <li>• Excited to develop new skills &amp; increase their understanding of different careers.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reasons for taking part</b>	For <b>young people</b> , participation means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ A meaningful and rewarding experience that will challenge and develop their critical thinking, planning, time management and communication skills.</li> <li>□ Valuable opportunities to work with sector experts and a chance to find out more about different career pathways.</li> <li>□ Increased confidence when working in novel, professional environments and situations.</li> <li>□ Unique examples to use in Higher Education and employment applications.</li> <li>□ Identification of the skills needed to gain sustainable employment within a STEM sector.</li> <li>□ Insights into STEM industries and the diverse opportunities that are available.</li> </ul>	

### When?

Summer holidays after Year 12 (England & Wales), Year 13 (Northern Ireland) or S5 (Scotland).



## 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 and they will receive a placement payment of £135 per week of the placement to contribute towards costs such as travel expenses(see Appendix 1).

## A bit more information on the “What?”

Within the placement programme, students will be guided through the following: -

- an independent study support package consisting of online module assignments designed to develop your essential professional, research, data and numeracy skills
- a timetable of optional supplementary workshops and webinars that are geared towards careers guidance and training on key topics e.g., Python programming language.
- one or more weeks on the placement itself, experiencing a real work-place and/or research environment.
- production of an academic style poster and report/presentation or workbook (dependent on placement type).

## Why should I do it?

By taking part, you will complete a meaningful and rewarding experience that will develop your research, critical thinking, planning, time management and communication skills. You should be enthusiastic and ready to challenge and stretch yourself in order to fully develop these transferable skills that will prove valuable in whatever career path you choose.

Participation will also provide you with constructive supervision from knowledge experts thereby allowing additional scope for you to become more confident working on novel situations. In many cases, the collaboration on a research question will allow you to make a notable contribution to the work of your Placement Provider and include this experience within your applications to Higher Education. Some past students have even been co-authors of scientific or technical publications!

## Eligibility criteria

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 5 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 1-2 consecutive weeks over July and/or August to collaborate with your Placement Provider.



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

- Be living, or have lived, in local authority care.
- Be a carer.
- Come from a family with a combined household income of below £40,000 a year (pre-tax)
- Be entitled to free school meals, either now or at any time in the last six years.
- In receipt of, or entitled to, discretionary payments at school/college (e.g., EMA, 16-19 Bursary Fund)
- Be the first in your immediate family to participate in higher education (not including any older siblings).
  - This means that neither of your parents/carers have participated in higher education, either in the UK or another country.
  - If your siblings have attended higher education, but your parents/carers have not, you are still eligible.

If you have any questions about your eligibility or about the placement programme in general, please contact your Placement Coordinator or email [students@stem.org.uk](mailto:students@stem.org.uk) for more information.

## Application process

The application process and the information supplied during it enable the placement team to consider your application to the placement programme; to manage your placement if you are successful and to monitor and evaluate the programme.

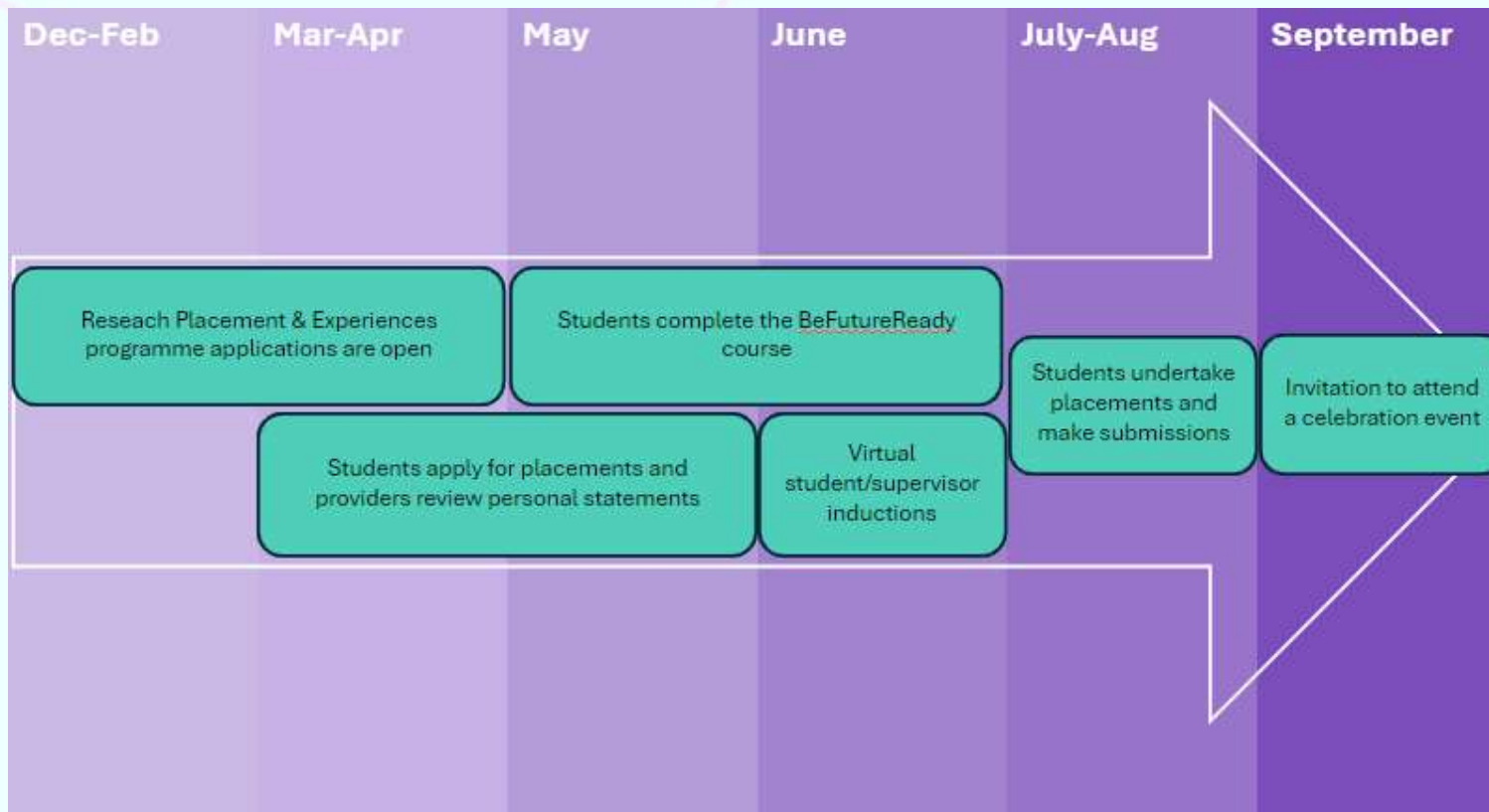
The application form requires you to provide the following:

- Personal information such as your home and contact details
- Educational information such as your school, the qualifications you have already achieved and the qualifications you are currently studying
- Placement information such as your preferred placement subject area and any dietary, adjustments or access requirements that you think it would be helpful for us to know
- A personal statement, mirroring the requirements for university applications from 2026
- Parent/guardian/carer(s) details so we can ask them to confirm your eligibility

You can start the application process and come back to it at any time by saving your progress as you add information into each section.



## Programme timetable



## **Advice for unsuccessful or ineligible applicants**

Placements are highly competitive and inevitably many applicants will either be unsuccessful or won't 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. Completing a Research or Experience Placement is just one example of a project that can gain you a CREST Award.
- [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.
- [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.



## **Appendix 1: Placement payment information**

By taking part in the Research Placements & Experiences programme, we want to make sure that all students and their families are not out of pocket. This means that all students receive a placement payment, proportionate to the length of their placement.

Placement payments **relate only to the placement collaboration portion of the placement**; the pre-project independent study support package does not qualify for any reimbursement. If the placement has some elements that are completed virtually, this does not affect the payment and students will still be entitled to receive the full amount.

Students will receive a payment of £135 per week of their placement. They will receive 50% of the payment prior to the start of their placement and the remaining 50% of their payment following the placement on successful completion of the required submissions (poster & report/presentation or workbook).

