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STUDENT BURSARIES PACK



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Student Bursaries 2011

The Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences at the University of Surrey is again running a bursary scheme to allow 10 postgraduate research students to attend the Cheltenham Science Festival in June. A bursary of £600 is proposed for each student, which includes a voucher for £180 to cover festival tickets, and the remainder to pay for accommodation, travel and subsistence.

Although preference is given to students in FEPS, the scheme is also open to students in FHMS.

These bursaries will provide students with a fantastic opportunity to visit the festival, and gives them:

- experience of science communication at its best
- a chance to see real scientists and engineers interacting with the public
- the opportunity to debate and discuss a broad range of scientific ideas
- an understanding of the impact of their work, and science generally, on the public and policy decisions
- the chance to network with other students, festival speakers and organisers

Approving Funding

Applications for Funding will be dealt with by the FEPS Graduate School; the Graduate School steering committee with input from Prof Jim Al-Khalili will look at the applications and decide who should be funded.

Application Process

To apply, you need to write no more than 250 words on what you think about public engagement in science and whether it is important, and what you might personally hope to get out of attendance at the Festival. Applications must be sent to Alexia Smith (a.m.smith@surrey.ac.uk) in the PGR Office by 21st April, and award recipients will be announced by 3rd May.'

Administration of the bursary

The contact details of the ten awardees will be collated by the Graduate School and sent to the Cheltenham Science Festival. The Festival Team then take over the administration and put together a pack of information including:

- A welcome letter
- A voucher for £180 to be spent on festival tickets (bookable through the festival box office)
- Details of how to book
- Information about local accommodation and transport

This will be sent by the Festival organisers to the students. The organisers will then invoice the University to cover the vouchers issued. They will also be holding rooms at a Hotel in Cheltenham for the bursary recipients and accommodation will be paid directly by the University.

The costs of travel and subsistence (up to a value of £420 less the accommodation cost) will then be claimed by the students directly from FEPS with receipts.

Attending the Festival

All students will be welcomed to the festival on the first day by Dr Mark Lythgoe (Festival co-director, with Professor Kathy Sykes).

The students are encouraged to socialise with each other and with other bursary awardees from other universities (UCL and KCL).

To make the most of their opportunity, most of the bursary students from all three universities have stayed in the same hotel, forming a close-knit group that can remain in touch after the Festival.

After the festival

As a condition of their award, all students will be asked to submit a 1000 word report to the Graduate School (a copy of which will be sent to the Cheltenham Science Festival, giving details of their experience of the Festival including any constructive feedback.

Feedback from bursary recipients

I attended over 20 events during the five-day festival and came away with a very positive view of the experience. What struck me most was how friendly and helpful everyone was. There was a real sense of being a part of something quite unique and special. It was very refreshing to be presented aspects of the bigger picture in such a clear and entertaining way.

Physics Student

My experience at the Cheltenham Science Festival was an overwhelmingly positive one and I believe it offers an excellent opportunity for PhD students like myself to get involved in science communication. As a researcher who spends most of my time studying a very narrow and specific area of science, the sheer diversity of topics covered by the festival was very refreshing.

Microbiology Student

The standard of speakers ranged from excellent to astonishing, and their enthusiasm and consideration for the wider ramifications of their work was evident. My thanks to the FEPS Graduate School for the funding. I cannot more highly recommend the festival.

Computer Science Student

I am deeply grateful towards the UCL Graduate School for having offered me a bursary to attend the Cheltenham Science Festival. I found the festival extremely engaging, thought-provoking and entertaining... Attending this festival has not only opened my mind to opinions and ideas that I have never seriously thought about but also to be inspired by such role models in the public engagement of science.

Neurology Student

Overall, this was a very special event and a real honour to be able to attend. I would highly recommend it to students of the future.

Electronic Engineering Student

The opportunity to attend this year's Cheltenham Festival was a unique one, and one I believe can only benefit graduate students in science. The broad scope of current issues relevant to the public led me to think about the role of science in general and place my own work in a wider context.

Physiology Student

Overall the Cheltenham Science Festival has inspired me to become more active in science communication on a small scale (I hope to become involved at Surrey in the future), but more importantly, the communicators at the festival have helped increase my desire to be a researcher and do the science that they were discussing.

Physics Student

Thank you so much for the chance to witness this celebration of science – showing me a new way of combining my passion for science with education and public engagement.

Maths Student