

2018/19 Taster Programme Student Guide



National Student Association for Medical Research (NSAMR) Taster Programme Student Guide

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Foreword

For the majority of clinicians, providing excellent medical care and promoting health are the principal aims of a medical career. Yet, with the ever changing and highly dynamic nature of medicine, research plays a crucial role in advancing our knowledge in pathophysiology of disease and improving treatments and health care delivery.

Alongside their clinical duties, clinical academics wear a double hat by combining working as a doctor with research and teaching responsibilities. Bringing information and ideas from the clinical world into research serves an important role in translational medicine. This also makes for a very exciting, yet challenging and fulfilling career.

NSAMR Medical Research Taster Programme provides an excellent opportunity for you to get a taste of what research is all about and how research findings and processes translate into medicine. In the past few months, our research team has worked hard in recruiting a diverse and wide-range of research groups spanning from primary care to surgery across multiple universities and institutes in UK. You will get a chance to shadow some of the pioneer clinical academics and scientists in the field, to observe clinical problems leading to research questions, and to evaluate research findings feeding back to clinical applications.

We hope that you find this Student Taster Guide useful. This booklet contains all participating research group's research interest and activities. We also highlight some of the departmental events in November, in which all medical students from across UK are welcome to participate. So if you are even slightly curious and intrigued about what research and academic medicine entail, wait no further and apply now to this exciting national scheme!



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Acknowledgement

NSAMR Research Team would like to express our special thanks of gratitude to all participating research groups for generously contributing their time in hosting students and making contributions in fostering the next generation of clinical academics.

We would also like to thank all our student representatives for working alongside us to bring you this national taster scheme.



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Introduction

What is NSAMR?

The National Student Association for Medical Research (NSAMR) is a student-led, non-profit research organization. NSAMR is supported and funded by the Wellcome Trust, and its main objective is to provide local and national research opportunities to medical students in the UK. Through our collaboration with affiliated research societies at medical schools, we aim to foster interdisciplinary medical research through a range of exciting formats and create opportunities for medical students to support their pursuit in academic medicine.

NSAMR activities are organized by teams covering research, journal, mentoring, outreach, IT, events and conferences. Visit our [website](#) and learn more about the different opportunities!

What is National Medical Research Taster Programme?

National Medical Research Taster Month is a single or multiple days event held during January – March 2019, where students visit a research group to see what it is like to work in academia. The event is targeted for Year 1 and Year 2 medical students with little to no previous experience in research. Students interested in this national scheme can apply for taster session, stating their specialty interests and which research group they would like to join. With over 40 research groups taking part in this scheme, these personalized and focused taster sessions will provide you will a flavor of what a career in academic and research is like.

Why National Medical Research Taster Programme?

Following changes to the Foundation Programme Application, it has become increasingly important for medical students to be involved in research. Academic Foundation Posts (AFPs) are becoming increasingly competitive, students need to show interest in research from an early stage during their medical studies. However, research opportunities can be hard to come by, particularly for younger students with little prior experience in research. Through the National Medical Research Taster Programme, NSAMR hopes to break down the barrier of access to researchers and knowledge of opportunities. We hope that the relationships formed during the scheme will lead to other research opportunities, such as funded vacation or summer studentships, intercalated degree projects and beyond. The research groups as part of the scheme have been carefully selected to provide you with an opportunity to observe cutting edge translational research that may, one day, shape clinical practice.

Application Procedure

Who can apply?

The National Medical Research Taster Programme is open for all medical students studying in the UK. Preference will be given to Year 1 and 2 medical students with little to no prior experience in research.

Application Process and Details

1. Application form and deadline

If you wish to apply for a taster session then you will need to complete an application form online. This will be available on our website from the **3rd of December**. The closing date for application is at **5pm on Friday 21st December**.

2. Selecting your choices and dates

Based on the information that we will release on the **3rd of December** provided by research groups, students can select up to **5 research groups**. Each research group is assigned a **Selection Code**. Choices should be ranked from 1 (most interested) to 5 (least interested). Enter the **Selection Code** carefully and indicate the appropriate date of choice if the group provides more than 1 option. For example:

Research Group Hosting Dates

1) January 9th, 16th, **or** February 7th, 2 students on each day

This research group is offering 3 one-day visits, students will enter the **Selection Code** and indicate **one date** on the application.

2) February 9th **and** 10th, 2 students

This research group is hosting 2 students for a 2-day visit. You will only be required to enter the **Selection Code** in the application.

3) Flexible, 2 students

This research group has no particular visiting date, and successful applicants will be able to organize their visits directly with the group. You will only be required to enter the **Selection Code** in the application.

3. Travel Bursary and external visit

There is no restriction to where and which research group you wish to visit, however you are solely responsible for all travel and schedule arrangements. A total of 5 travel bursaries (up to £50 each) will be awarded to selected students. You will need to complete a separate application form which is also available on our website for travel bursary.

Post Application

Confirming Acceptance

Successful applicants will be notified of allocated taster sessions by the end of December. You will have **48 hours** to confirm your spot. If not, the spot will be re-allocated to another student.

Notifications will be sent out through email, so please make sure that your inbox can receive emails from nsamr.ac.uk

Once you have confirmed your acceptance, NSAMR will introduce allocated students to the relevant research group through email. It is then your responsibility to contact the research group to schedule and confirm the time and location to start your taster visit.

Like any professional placement, you **MUST** notify the research group and NSAMR if you cannot make it to the taster sessions anymore.

Travel Bursaries Recipients

Students who are awarded travel bursaries will be notified at the same time through email. Please collect and keep your travel receipts, as NSAMR will reimburse you up to £50 of your travel cost.

Student Attendance Certificate

After completing your visit, please visit our website to complete the **Student Feedback Form**. Upon completion of the form, each student will receive a participation certificate.

Advice & Tips

Preparation prior to visit

You are not expected to have any research experience prior to your visit, but preparing yourself and anticipating your visit will most definitely impress the research group. Prior to your visit, read up on relevant material relating to the research of the group or the research field. You can search for biomedical and clinical literature on search engine such as PubMed or MEDLINE, which cover millions of journal articles from different specialties and research fields. These literature databases will allow you to search for publications produced by a particular research group as well.

During your visit

Treat your taster sessions like any other professional placement. Some of the visits will include placements in hospitals or clinics, so make sure your outfit is appropriate.

Students are not expected to learn any hands-on or practical techniques during these sessions, but more on understanding the purpose of doing research in medicine and what an academic career could entail. Do not hesitate to ask your hosts questions on research techniques, their daily activities or difficulties they face as an academic. Taster days are designed for you to discover the realm of academic medicine in a **focused and personalized visit**, so treasure this learning opportunity and be proactive!

Future opportunities

If your visit has sparked an interest in you to participate in research projects, great! Follow up with the project supervisor and do not hesitate to express your interest. Typically, most summer vacationship application deadlines are between end of January to early March each year. You may work with your potential supervisor to complete the application and draft up a research proposal together.

FAQ

What happens on taster day?

You will have a chance to shadow academic clinicians or scientists and their research groups for the day. Potentially, you will shadow in a clinic to observe clinical problem leading to research conducting in the group; participate in a research meeting to understand research reasoning and discussion or shadow a post-graduate student / academic performing experimental techniques and manipulation or analyzing data.

Am I allowed to apply to research group outside of my university?

Yes. For the 5 choices you can make, there is no restriction on location. Keep in mind that most of these taster sessions last for a day or two, and it is your decision and responsibility in arranging travel and organizing your own schedule.

What types of research groups are hosting?

NSAMR Research team has worked hard to recruit a diverse selection of research groups for taster month. Research groups include fields from clinical epidemiology and public health research, all the way to basic science research involving the understanding of pathophysiology and mechanism of disease. We have recruited over 40 research groups for this national scheme, which will create opportunities for more than 180 students.

What if the taster sessions clash with my class schedule?

Most research groups have indicated specific hosting dates, so you could anticipate and arrange for your own schedule. If the research group has put down “flexible”, you should contact the research group directly to arrange for an appropriate time and date. If the taster sessions coincide with lectures or clinical teachings, it is your own responsibility to make appropriate arrangements.

For any other enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact our research team at research@nsamr.ac.uk