



## Afton Summer Internship Scheme

### Information and Frequently Asked Questions (revised 2021)

#### What Is This Scheme?

The Afton Summer Internship Scheme is a great opportunity to get experience of research in academia by working on a project in a group based in the School of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh.

You will get a taste of working within an academic group on a research project guided by your supervisor and any PhD/Post-Doctoral researcher mentor(s). You will work at the cutting edge of research, expanding your problem solving skills as well as collating your results to present in a report and at a mini conference held in late summer/early autumn.

By the end of your summer placement, you will have had a great introduction to how your final year projects (if conducted in academia) will be and what life as a PhD student is like.

#### Why Apply?

Being an Afton Summer Intern means you will engage in real academic research during a key stage of your undergraduate degree. This exciting opportunity will prepare you for undertaking your final year project and allow you to grow in confidence, helping you to navigate the research environment. Not only this, but being an Afton Summer Intern will set you apart from other applicants during your post-graduation job search as you will be able to add this experience to your CV and discuss it at future interviews.

Previous Afton Summer Internship holders have noted that taking part in this internship scheme has given them greater confidence in their research-based skills and they felt more prepared for their final year projects and future career plans. Have a look at some key quotes from previous awardees on how being an Afton Summer Intern has shaped their skillset and career trajectory:

“ It's a great opportunity to experience research, to strengthen your employability, and **to contribute to inspiring science.** ”

*Finlay Clark, 2019 Afton Summer Internship Awardee*

“ This opportunity has given me valuable insight into the day to day of a research lab and what a PhD and a career in chemistry could be like. **I feel much more ready for my placement and my future career having undertaken this placement.** ”

*Juliet Barclay, 2019 Afton Summer Internship Awardee*



## Internship Scheme Details

### DEADLINES GIVEN VIA EMAIL IN FEB OF EACH YEAR

- **Who is eligible?**

Any **full-time undergraduate student** in the School of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh and currently in their **third year**.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate the following **essential skills and attributes**:

- Great communication skills
- Self-motivation; and ability to work well with minimal supervision.
- A commitment to professional standards of conduct and safe working practices.
- Resourcefulness and the ability to think on one's feet.
- Ability to work independently and as part of team.
- Proficiency in planning, organization, problem solving and multi-tasking skills to complete the project in a timely and efficient manner.
- An ability to conduct independent research and show an innovative approach to a research problem.
- Available to work full time or part time (must be prior agreed with the project supervisor) for the duration of your placement.
- We strongly encourage applications from students who are typically underrepresented in higher education (those from lower income families, students with disabilities, ethnic minorities, care-experienced and young adult carer students, and students who have come to study Chemistry *via* a college route).

*In the event of two applicants having the same experience and performance at the interview we will give priority to people who have no previous experience in working in laboratory settings other than teaching labs.*

- **How many internships are awarded?**

Past years have been able to award **four** fully funded internships awarded, sponsored by Afton Chemical.

**Please check the application guidance sent *via* email in February of the year you wish to apply for the number of internships available.**

- **How long is the internship and when does it happen?**

Projects will run in the **summer** for **8 weeks**, with specific dates being arranged between supervisor and student.



- **How many hours do I work?**

You are expected to fulfil **35 hours per week** during the 8 week project.

- **What funding comes with this internship?**

Each student will be paid in excess of £2,500 and will bring up to £150 in lab consumable money.

- **What type of project can I do?**

This will change year on year so please check the application guidance sent *via* email in February of the year you wish to apply for information on this.

- **What happens at the end of the summer internship?**

As part of this internship, you will be required to:

- **Submit a project report** to your supervisor and Dr Burns with a bespoke deadline set based upon the specific dates of your internship.
- **Present a short talk** at a mini virtual conference held in late summer/early autumn of the year you conduct your summer internship. A date will be announced at a later date *via* email. All summer students, academic staff, post-doctoral researchers and PhD students will be invited.
- **Write a short personal summary** of your internship experience to be showcased on the School website.

*Note: Guidance on the report, presentation and personal summary will be given to successful applicants following their appointment as an Afton Summer Intern.*

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These activities will give you a real taste of what to expect during your final year project and what a PhD is like.

**You will not be assessed** on these activities as your internship is about gaining experience of the academic research environment and presenting your work by both written and verbal methods. Nevertheless, it is in your best interest to produce the best work you can as you will get the most out of this fantastic opportunity by doing so.



## How to Apply

The specific application procedure for the Afton Summer Internship will vary year on year. Therefore, please check the application guidance sent *via* email in February of the year you wish to apply for information on how to apply.

**Regardless of the specific application procedure the following documents will be required every year:**

1. your CV (2 pages)
2. a personal statement (300 words max) detailing:
  - a. your eligibility according to the **essential skills and attributes** listed on page 2 of this document
  - b. why you are interested in this internship scheme
  - c. what you hope to achieve personally



## **What Happens After I Apply?**

- Students are shortlisted for interview based on their application documentation and will interview with a panel shortly after the closing date for applications.
- Following these interviews, a certain number of students (based on the specifics for a given year) will be selected to be a part of the Afton Summer Internship scheme.
- Successful applicants and their supervisors will be informed *via* email.
- Successful applicants should liaise with their supervisor regarding the specific dates of their internship and inform Dr Burns.

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**If you have any questions or want any more information, don't hesitate to contact Dr Burns *via* email ([rebecca.burns@ed.ac.uk](mailto:rebecca.burns@ed.ac.uk)).**



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Is there any guidance on CV writing?

**A:** Guidance on [CV writing](#) is given on Dr Deborah Fowlis' blog:

[www.chemicalcareersedinburgh.blogspot.com](http://www.chemicalcareersedinburgh.blogspot.com)

**Q:** If I am interested in medicinal chemistry, which is not an Afton Chemical interest area, can I still apply?

**A:** The internships are not limited to a particular research area or theme. Afton Summer Internships are allocated to students who fulfil the criterion of this scheme to conduct a summer research project in their chosen field.

**Q:** Can I get any support on writing my CV and/or personal statement or on interviews?

**A:** Yes, you can make an appointment with Dr Deborah Fowlis on [MyCareerHub](#) (EASE login required and also accessible *via* the Career tab of MyEd) to discuss your CV and/or personal statement.

Dr Fowlis is a career consultant for the University of Edinburgh who specialises in chemistry.

The careers service can also offer mock interviews, booked *via* [MyCareerHub](#) (EASE login required).