

BLACK LEADERS IN DIABETES PHD STUDENTSHIP JOB PACK

WINDSOR FELLOWSHIP

Enriching education, employment and citizenship

DiABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	2
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.....	2
FINANCIAL AND MENTORSHIP SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS	2
FUNDING PROCESS	3
FUNDING DECISIONS	3
PHD STUDENTSHIP PROJECT	4
Professor Kathleen Gillespie, University of Bristol.....	4
CODE OF CONDUCT	5
FAQS	6

BACKGROUND

A [research workshop](#) on diabetes health inequalities, organised by [Diabetes UK's Diabetes Research Steering Groups \(DRSGs\)](#), found that UK research communities lack representation from Black ethnic groups, disadvantaging certain populations. To improve diversity and outcomes, a new funding scheme has been launched to support postgraduate students from Black backgrounds, aiming to build a more inclusive academic pipeline and foster future Black leaders in diabetes research.

The [Black Leaders in Diabetes PhD Studentship Scheme](#) is designed to support science graduates from Black backgrounds to undertake a PhD within the field of diabetes in the UK and to encourage them to consider a career in scientific research.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Students must have UK nationality and have 'Home' tuition fee status.
- Students must be UK domiciled and self-identify as being from a Black background, including a mixed background, for example: Black British, Black Welsh, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other and Mixed Black background.
- Applicants must meet the academic qualifications required by the host institution.

FINANCIAL AND MENTORSHIP SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

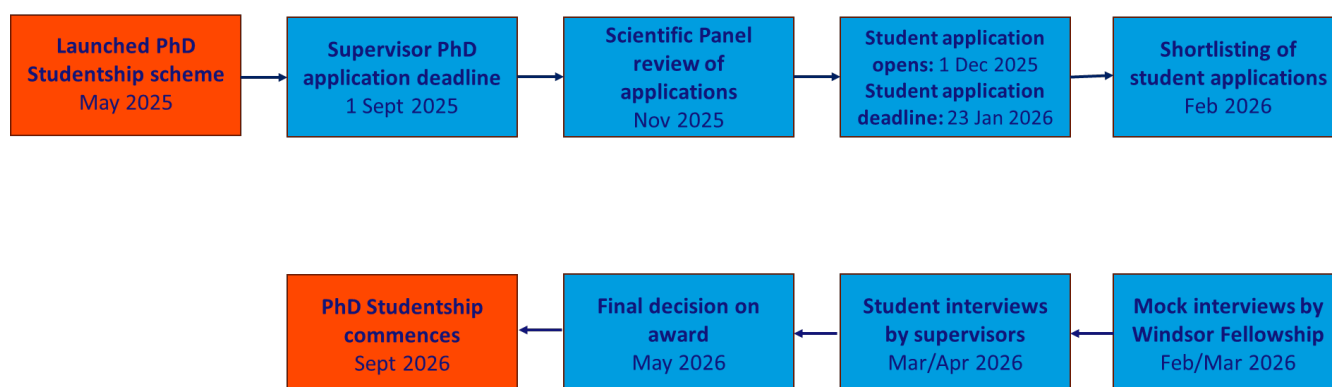
Each studentship offers a comprehensive funding and support package designed to enable students to succeed in their PhD programme and advance their career, including:

- Student stipend for three years.
- Student tuition fees at standard home student rate.
- Conference attendance for the student for up to £2,500.
- Student training costs of up to £1,500 relevant to the project.
- Students will have access to a mentorship programme provided by Windsor Fellowship and will have an opportunity to networking with other Diabetes UK funded students.
- A research allowance of £10,000 per year to cover all materials, consumables, equipment, any other relevant resources and animal costs.

The stipend offered for studentships is currently:

	Stipend – In London	Stipend – Outside London
Year 1	£20,900	£18,700
Year 2	£21,450	£19,250
Year 3	£22,000	£19,800

FUNDING PROCESS



FUNDING DECISIONS

Student applications will be shortlisted for interviews by the supervisor and will be based on the strength of the student's application. Final funding decision on which student should be offered the PhD will also be made by the supervisor and will be based on the shortlisted student's interview performance.

PHD STUDENTSHIP BEING OFFERED

Professor Kathleen Gillespie, University of Bristol

Innovative strategies to predict progression rate to Stage 3 type 1 diabetes in adults and children

The aim of this PhD scholarship is to provide a broad training in laboratory-based basic and clinical science focused on a current critical gap in type 1 diabetes research - our inability to predict progression rate in those with pre-symptomatic autoimmune diabetes. The separate aims are focused on separate research questions.

In Aim 1, the project will build on previous published work showing that immune cells from individuals progressing slowly to type 1 diabetes have different B and regulatory T cell expression patterns. In Aim 2, the role of anti-interferon alpha autoantibodies in slowing progression rates will be examined. If detected more often in those progressing slowly, the function of the autoantibodies will be tested in in vitro beta cell assays. In Aim 3, the role of the exocrine pancreas as a measure of progression rate will be explored in three ways, first by genotyping a known genetic determinant of type 1 diabetes in CTRB1/2 and examining effects on Chymotrypsinogen and Trypsinogen levels; secondly by developing novel exocrine targets to examine whether cell-free DNA may offer additional insight to progression rate.

Finally, in collaboration with experts at the University of Exeter, pancreas histology will be examined.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Students are expected to abide by the host organisation's employee manual, code of conduct, or similar standards (including dress code, where applicable) that apply to students and/or employees at the site.
2. Students must act in a professional and ethical manner including being punctual, dressing appropriately, fulfilling commitments, meeting deadlines, and maintaining a cooperative attitude.
3. Students must maintain confidentiality of any information gained regarding the host organisation's clients, projects, work, and personnel. Additionally, students will respect copyright laws and intellectual property rights.
4. Students understand that information about the host organisation should not be broadcast in public spaces, including online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, websites, or message boards without expressed written authorisation of the supervisor.
5. Students will seek feedback from supervisors, accept suggestions and constructive criticism, and strive to improve performance.
6. Students must immediately report to the host organisation or Diabetes UK with any concerns about a studentship, including requests to engage in unethical or illegal activities, exposure to sexual harassment, discrimination or unsafe situations, or any other circumstances that create an uncomfortable environment for the intern,

Students recognise that the host institution and/or employer have the right to terminate the studentship at any time if it is deemed by Diabetes UK or the host organisation that the student has violated the code of conduct or otherwise negatively compromised the PhD Studentship programme and/or host organisation.

FAQS

- **Can I apply if I am from an EU country?**
Applicants with UK nationality who qualify for home fees status can apply.
- **Can I apply if I am an international student?**
Unfortunately, you cannot apply as this scheme is only open for permanent UK residents.
- **Can I defer my studentship?**
Deferrals are not possible unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- **Can the studentship be taken on a part-time basis?**
Studentships can be held on a full-time or a part-time basis (part-time awards will be discussed with the supervisor). Students on this scheme are expected to register on campus-based PhD programmes (i.e. distance learning is not supported)
- **Can I apply to more than one internship/studentship scheme at the same time?**
Applicants (students and supervisors) can apply for other internship/studentship schemes whilst applying for this scheme however you would have to inform the outcome from the other schemes to the Diabetes UK research team and choose only one scheme if you are successful in both schemes.
- **Do I need to contact the supervisor of my preferred projects?**
You can approach the supervisor if you wish to learn more about the project or training opportunities provided at the University.
- **What will the interview involve?**
Shortlisted applicants who are invited for interview will receive information on the interview structure and format. There will be a mock interview and tips/advice will be given before being interviewed. For Studentship applications, successful applicants will then be invited to visit the University and meet their supervisor.
- **When will I know that I am successful?**
We will invite shortlisted candidates for interview in March/April 2026 and notify outcomes in May 2026.
- **Will this PhD cost me money?**
No, tuition fees are fully covered and you will get a stipend that is enough to live on for the duration of the PhD.

- **Can I apply as a mature student or taken a gap year out or have an intercalated undergraduate degree?**

Yes, you can as long as you have a life science degree.

- **Can I also apply to your standard PhD studentship scheme?**

The standard PhD scheme is for only supervisors to apply. Supervisors who get the funding will then recruit the students. However, if a student is interested in applying for a specific research project or their choice of University then we would encourage the student to contact the supervisor. Supervisors can apply to both the Black Leaders in Diabetes Studentship scheme and the standard PhD studentship scheme.

- **Do I need to contact the supervisors of my preferred projects?**

You can approach the supervisor if you wish to learn more about the project or training opportunities provided at the University