



Natural
Environment
Research Council

NERC Funded Research Experience Placements (REPs)

FAQs

What is a NERC science subject?

NERC is the Natural Environment Research Council and as such the NERC subjects are the environmental sciences such as biology, biological sciences, ecology, marine biology, soil science, geography and geology, archaeology, atmospheric and polar sciences. For the full description please visit the [NERC website](#).

Which disciplines are eligible?

Undergraduate students from **any science discipline** will be eligible to apply, however, applicants who identify with one or more of the following groups will be prioritised:

- Black UK/Home candidates, first-generation students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds and disabled students;
- Candidates studying a quantitative subject; including but not limited to: mathematics, statistics, computing, engineering, physics and chemistry.

Can I apply for multiple projects?

Please apply for a maximum of **one** project. Multiple applications will not be considered.

Do I have to be a registered student at a QUADRAT partner institution?

Yes, you must currently be studying for a non-NERC science undergraduate degree at either the University of Aberdeen or at Queen's University Belfast. You must be a registered student at the time of the placement taking place and therefore final year undergraduates, recent graduates and alumni are not eligible to apply.

Are REPs projects paid placements?

A salary is paid at the National Living Wage (this rate increases annually). The successful candidates will be set up as employees and paid a salary at the university's current living wage. The salary will be paid monthly in arrears following submission of a monthly timesheet. A further £500 will be available for project research and training expenses, the costs of which must be itemised and justified in the final report.

Are placements full time or part-time? Is there flexibility in the working pattern?

Placements will be on a part-time basis, likely 2-3 days per week (max. 189 working hours over the duration of the project). This equates to approximately 18 hours per week for 10 weeks. You will need to agree a suitable working pattern with the project supervisor – hours can vary from week to week but must not exceed 189 hours in total. REPs placements must be 6-10 weeks long, therefore you cannot complete all 189 hours in fewer than 6 weeks. Monthly timesheets will be required.

What happens if I work more than 189 hours?

It is a stipulation of the employment contract that you cannot work more than 189 hours on this project. You will not be paid for any hours accrued over 189 hours, so you must keep a detailed record of the time you have worked.

I am a final year undergraduate student and I will have finished my course before the placement starts. Can I still apply?

No, unfortunately final year students are not eligible to apply because they will no longer be a registered student with the institution at the time the placement takes place. Only 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students are eligible, and 4th year students in the case of a 5 year programme such as an Meng or an MSci.

Does a REPs project count towards my Honours project?

Unfortunately, the answer is no. If you are completing your honours project and will graduate this year then you are not eligible to apply.

Can I earn credits towards my degree by completing a REPs placement?

No, the REPs placement is extra-curricular and does not contribute towards your degree but is a valuable experience and opportunity to develop new skills.

My school/department is a combination of NERC and non-NERC disciplines. Am I eligible to apply?

In this case (amalgamated schools such as SNBE at QUB), students within the non-NERC disciplines are eligible to apply both to the projects within their school/department (but outwith their discipline) and to projects in other schools. For example, an engineering student based in SNBE could apply for a project within the discipline of Geography, but a Geography student could not.

Do I need to have experience in environmental sciences?

No prior knowledge or education in the environmental sciences is required. Projects do not assume knowledge in these areas but instead put value on the quantitative skills you can bring to the environmental sciences. Training will be provided where necessary.

Do I need a specific skill set?

This depends on the project and the work that is required. Some projects require a candidate with a specific background (such as a computer science student) or a specific skill set (such as coding), but others are more general. You are asked to demonstrate how you meet the needs of the project in the application form. Supervisors will select candidates with the most appropriate skills for the project.

Will I get training on the job?

Some projects will require you to already have specific skill sets such as coding (specified in project description), however additional training will be provided in the areas required for you to complete the project. Training will vary from project to project – some details are given in the project overview, but supervisors can provide more information if required.

Will I need specialist software or equipment?

It is expected that applicants will have the capacity and computing infrastructure (internet connection and laptop / desktop computer) to work from home/campus, however some supervisors may be able to loan out a laptop (please see project descriptions / contact the project supervisor). It may also be possible to borrow a laptop from the central university. Please speak to the supervisor in the first instance. Supervisors will provide access to any specialist software.

Should I contact the supervisor before I apply?

You are not required to contact the supervisor before applying, but you may do so if you have questions about the project content or skills required.

What is the selection process? Will there be an interview?

After the deadline has passed, supervisors will assess the applications they have received and identify the most suitable candidate. One candidate for each project will be asked to attend a brief interview (15-20 minutes) via Microsoft Teams. Once the interviews have been completed, the top 5 candidates will be awarded the project and funding.

How can I evidence my expected grade?

Please submit a record card or provisional transcript with your application.

- University of Aberdeen students can request record cards from studentrecords@abdn.ac.uk or infohub@abdn.ac.uk, or you can download this from the student portal
- Queen's University Belfast students can request provisional transcripts from the school administrator or you can download this from the student portal

Do I need to complete any paperwork to confirm the placement?

If successful, you will be required to complete a contract of temporary employment and a right to work check prior to starting your placement. Instructions will be provided to successful applicants. It is important that you do not start work on your project until your contract has been finalised and HR have confirmed you can start work.

Do I need to provide proof of my nationality?

A right to work / passport check will be undertaken to confirm successful candidates' eligibility to work in UK. This process will be handled by the University of Aberdeen. If you have pre/settled status in the UK, you will be asked for your date of birth and share code so this check can be completed.

What happens at the end of the placement?

It is a NERC requirement that the candidate must complete a brief final report form upon completion of the placement. A link to this online form will be provided as your placement nears its end. We also ask that you write a short blog post and testimonial about your placement experience. This will go on our website as a useful resource for future applicants.