# Student as Researchers Scheme

# Guidelines for Prospective Project Leads 2020

Call for project proposals

The Students as Researchers Scheme (SARs) provides opportunities for undergraduate students to work as paid research assistants on a variety of discipline and pedagogic research projects across all Schools and Departments.

**Discipline research projects**: It is important, when considering student involvement in discipline-specific research that steps are taken to ensure that the nature and focus of prospective student work is aligned closely to that of their courses, and that it is positioned at an appropriate level of challenge for students.

**Pedagogic research projects**: pedagogic research projects should focus on local, course/school-level, enhancement work. It is encouraged that prospective project work be explicitly mapped to identified strategic priorities at course/school level – i.e. student continuation and attainment, assessment feedback, inclusive practice. This should be clearly outlined in the project application when identifying the project as either ‘Discipline’ or ‘Pedagogic’ research.

**Please note, projects are limited to one project per member of staff.**

**In light of current COVID-19 campus restrictions, projects should not require students to be on campus in addition to their timetabled learning and teaching activities.**

**The deadline for staff proposals is** **Friday 25th September 2020 at 4pm. Please send completed application forms to** SRS@tees.ac.uk**. Application forms and further information are attached below.**

**If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact: Gemma Reed, Learning and Teaching Project Officer, via the SRS email address** SRS@tees.ac.uk**.**

**General Information**

Start and finish dates

Subject to production of contracts, we expect Student Researchers to be available to work from week commencing 18th January 2021 (which is when the Introductory Induction workshop is being held). Their official end date will be July 1st 2021. All student contracts will specify this. Please note that the funding for this scheme is only available until the 1st July. If all hours allocated to a project have not been used the hours will be lost; no hours can be claimed for work after this date. The final date for students to complete work should be 1st June 2021.

The final time sheet must be submitted before 1st July 2021.

Contract arrangements

HR will create contracts for the Student Researchers and any queries should be directed via **HR@tees.ac.uk** but please copy **SRS@tees.ac.uk** into any emails about the contracts so we can ensure that we pick up on any issues.

Students will be contracted to a maximum of 65 hours for a project. Please note that these hours are inclusive of 5 hours for students to complete induction and mandatory training activities. This leaves a maximum of 60 hours for project-related activities per student placement.

Ideally, all hours need to be completed before the start of July as the funding will not be available after this date; this makes available a potential project term of 6 months (January - June). Within this, it is up to you and the Student Researcher to negotiate the best use of the maximum hours agreed for your project in whatever way best suits the project and works around the researcher’s other study commitments. We do not have funding to cover more than the maximum hours originally agreed.

Where possible we strongly recommend that you agree the split of the hours and expected outcomes at the beginning of the project. Previous projects have had some time difficulties because they did not set up a structure for this. If you have any difficulties with the negotiation please contact Academic Registry.

Managing payments for the researcher

The timesheet can be completed and sent via email to **SRS@tees.ac.uk**. The timesheet must be agreed and signed and then sent by the Project Lead. Academic Registry will send an electronic version of the timesheet to all Project Leads.

Student Researchers are issued with a U number once their contracts are signed and returned to HR. U numbers must be issued before any pay requests can be submitted. Academic Registry will inform both the student and the Project Lead of student U number and pay procedures as soon as possible after the start date. Academic Registry will make sure that all students and Project Leads have an up to date copy of the timesheet with detailed instructions once the student has been appointed.

Student Researchers are paid monthly, and Project Leads must submit electronic timesheets weekly for the hours the student has worked. Timesheets must be submitted to Academic Registry. All Student Researchers are currently paid £10.72 per hour. Students are paid on the 26th of each month (providing timesheets are submitted on time). Payment will cover roughly three weeks of the previous month and the first week of the current month. Any pay claims must be submitted in accordance with Academic Registry’s monthly deadlines (to be provided in advance) to be included in the pay due on the 26th of the month.

**Helping the researcher manage their time**

We would strongly recommend using your first meeting with the Student Researcher to set up working processes and to timetable in regular meetings. It is an incredibly challenging time for students who will be trying to manage their study time and assessments alongside their work as a researcher and you may wish to help them plan out their activities over the agreed term of their contract. It is up to you and the Student Researcher to negotiate the hours within this timeframe, if you have any difficulties please let us know.

**Flexible working arrangements**: It is important to bear in mind that given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is the possibility the University will be required to pivot all student learning and support fully online in the case of heightened local restrictions or lockdowns. It is vital that your project planning take into consideration the need for flexible working arrangements for students. Remember to keep things accessible. In some cases, students may be utilising lower-specification devices (slow, low power/resolution). It is important to ensure that flexible working arrangements are realistic, manageable and ‘work’ across a spectrum of device specifications whilst still enabling student researchers to meet project outcomes.

Experience from previous iterations of the scheme have highlighted two key issues that could be avoided with a good plan and effective timetabling. 1) Students often underestimate how much time their assessment will take them and you may wish to factor in some flexibility to allow for unexpected delays or issues. This scheme is designed to enhance the students learning and provide them with experience relevant to further study and employment, but it is also important that the work for the scheme does not affect their grades and assessment deadlines. 2) In some cases, Student Researchers take longer than estimated to complete tasks within the project and this delays some activities, which can then lead to having too much to do at the end of the project. We would recommend identifying specific times for the Student Researcher to work on the project, for example one day a fortnight, or half a day a week. Block activity is fine as long as it is planned in and works for the student and their other study commitments.

It is also important to emphasise to students that they have a professional relationship working for you as the Project Lead and should be encouraged to act accordingly (i.e. punctuality for agreed meetings or project activities; working to set standards and guidelines; effective and transparent communication) - we will be exploring this with them at the induction session.

We will do some work with the Student Researchers on their time management at the induction session (see below for more info on this session), but this can be reinforced in your initial meeting.

**The Student Researcher Key Activities**

The Induction Session

We will be running a 1-hour induction session for the Student Researchers **week commencing 18th January 2021**. In this session we will focus on professional behaviour, time management, managing processes, and the student researcher report (see below). We will send you a copy of the slides discussed at this session. The session itself will be facilitated via a designated Microsoft Teams site.

The Project Based Activities

The intention of this scheme is to develop learners as co-creators, rather than consumers of knowledge; enhance research skills and to encourage students to consider the option of postgraduate study. Given these aims, we would encourage you to think about what opportunities you might be able to create for the Student Researcher in terms of presenting and writing, and in terms of being part of a research community, as well as providing them with training in and experience of different research activities. If you would like to discuss any ideas or possibilities, please feel free to get in touch with us.

The Student Researcher Report

Student Researchers are expected to produce a short report of 500-1000 words, at the end of the scheme, in which they will briefly summarise the project they worked on and identify what they have learned during the post. There were some discussions around this at the induction session and we will be reminding students of this towards the project completion date. We would appreciate your support in reinforcing the importance of this activity, providing students with support where appropriate.

**Students-as-Researchers: Key Activities and Dates**

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| Activity | Date |
| Deadline for project proposals from staff | Friday 25th September 2020 at 4pm. |
| Successful project leads notified.  | By end of week commencing 12th October 2020.  |
| Call opens for student applications and application form to be published  | Monday 19th October 2020. |
| Closing date for student applications  | Wednesday 4th November 2020.  |
| Shortlisting of student applications takes place  | Week commencing 9th November 2020.  |
| Conduct interviews and Communicate decisions | Between 23rd November and 4th December 2020.  |
| Successful appointments communicated and feedback given to unsuccessful candidate’s | Week commencing 7th December 2020. |
| Successful candidates to be undertake pre employment checks | Between 10th December and 18th December 2020. |
| Contracts issued to students | No later than week commencing 11th January 2021 |
| Selected students to commence projects.  | Week commencing 18th January 2021 |
| Student Induction and Mandatory Training completed.  | Week commencing 18th January 2021.  |
| All projects to be completed.  | 1st June 2021.  |
| Final student reflective report deadline | 1st June 2021.  |
| Final Time sheets to be received  | 1st July 2021. |
| Official end date of project | 1st July 2021.  |

**Payroll Deadlines**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Month of work undertaken | LTE Timesheet Deadline | Payroll Deadline | Pay Date |
| January | 5th February | 12th February | 26th February |
| February | 5th March | 12th March | 26th March |
| March | 6th April | 10th April | 24th April |
| April | 5th May | 12th May | 26th May |
| May | 5th June | 12th June | 26th June  |

**Contacts:**

*Main Contact:* LTE Team, Academic Registry *-* *SRS@tees.ac.uk*

*Payment Queries:* Payroll.services@tees.ac.uk

*Contract Queries*: HR@tees.ac.uk