



PTAS Project Report (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title: Student-led neuroscience outreach to widen participation in different school communities

Principal Investigator: Dr Dorothy Tse
School / Department: School of Biomedical science

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Grant recipients are expected to submit a brief report at the conclusion of their project which outlines briefly the following: nature of work completed; outcomes; benefits to student learning/student experience; dissemination activity (where relevant – actual and planned) and how the activity could inform future work or be transferred to other subject areas in the University. The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

Brief Report (maximum 500 words)

What did you do?

The aim of this project is to broaden experience and learning of a group of College of medicine and veterinary medicine school students (undergraduates and postgraduates) through organising an Edinburgh Brain Bee competition. Brain bee is an organisation that runs neuroscience competitions for secondary school pupils. We recruited pupils from all Scotland schools (including schools from disadvantaged backgrounds), which aligns with the University's Widening Participation higher education strategic priority.

We recruited 20 university students to participate in this student-led Edinburgh Brain Bee competition. Through organising this competition for high school pupils, university students used their scientific knowledge to set and assessed the competition. In addition, university students had lots of opportunities to interact with high school pupils and share their university life with the pupils. This provide pupils insight for future university applications. This also enhance the relationship between the University of Edinburgh and the local school community.

What did you find out?

The Edinburgh Brain Bee championship promotes brain science to secondary school pupils with the aim of motivating pupils to pursue careers in neuroscience. This half day competition was open to all secondary school students in United Kingdom in an attempt to widen participations. Pupils from around 15 different schools participated, not only in Scotland (Edinburgh, East Lothian, Perth, Bannockburn and Inverness etc) but also throughout the United Kingdom (Newcastle and Manchester). The event was very well received and the participants provided positive feedback.

How did you disseminate your findings?

I presented this project at the University of Edinburgh teaching and learning forum in 2020.



Also, we released press release to different university websites (e.g. Edinburgh Neuroscience) to promote this event.

<https://www.edinburghneuroscience.ed.ac.uk/news/2020-edinburgh-brain-bee-promotes-brain-science-high-school-pupils>

<http://brainbee-uk.com/?p=2831>

What have been the benefits to student learning?

All these activities required excellent communication and organisational skills. By doing this, it increased university students' experience and employability. The University students enjoyed organising this and they volunteered to organise another Edinburgh Brain Bee online event this year (2021). This shows a continuation of the event.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/discovery-brain-sciences/news-events/latest-news/debut-online-edinburgh-brain-bee-competition>

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

As mentioned in the University of Edinburgh teaching and learning forum, organising these events increased university students' experience and especially strengthen their communication and organisation skills.

Who can be contacted for further details?

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Financial statement

This project has utilised the funding awarded to it by the PTAS adjudication committee and the Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.