



PTAS Small Grant Application Proposal Cover Page

Names and titles of all team members:

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Project Title: Student-led neuroscience outreach to widen participation in different school communities (wide range of diverse backgrounds)

Abstract (up to 250 words):

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 aim to select from all Edinburgh schools and are hoping to recruit from disadvantaged backgrounds, which aligns with the University's Widening Participation higher education strategic priority whilst also strengthening the University's bonds with local school communities. The proposed programme will be a compliment to the university existing widening participation projects such as 'Science insights', 'Access to professions'.

This first step is to recruit 15-20 university students to participate in this student-led Edinburgh Brain Bee competition. As the project overseer and having organised Brain Bee competition before, I will provide information for students required to organise the competition. However, students will take the lead in all tasks, including contacting different secondary schools in Edinburgh and giving set materials for the pupils to study for the competition.

Through organising this competition for high school pupils, university students will have to use scientific knowledge to set and assess the competition. In addition, university students will have lots of opportunities to interact with high school pupils and share their university life with the



pupils. This will provide pupils insight for future university applications. All these activities will require excellent communication and organisational skills and will increase students' experience and employability.

Budget planner:

£400 (£20 x 20) book vouchers for university volunteers

£450 Travel expenses of guest speakers and participants from 'hard-to-reach' areas

£100 Printing of advertising material, posters, tests

£450 Prizes for Top 5 winners, 3 public prizes

£100 refreshment

Total amount: £1500

Please indicate the **total grant amount** requested: £1500

Proposal: (up to 750 words)

Background:

The aim of this project is to broaden the 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 competitions are a great opportunity to generate interest and engagement in neuroscience amongst secondary school pupils. In these competitions, pupils compete against their peers in a test of neuroscience knowledge, based on specific set materials. One of the University's priorities is to attract students from different backgrounds. To select school pupils, we will enquire at all Edinburgh schools and hope to recruit some secondary school pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As the project overseer and having organised Brain Bee competition before¹, I will provide information for students required to organise the competition. However, students will take the lead in all tasks, including contacting different secondary schools in Edinburgh and organising the the competition.

Aims:

1. To broaden university students' experience in science outreach activities through student-led activities. These activities shall be organised by students to help promote neuroscience in different secondary schools. These useful skills will benefit the future employability of the students involved.



2. To enhance the relationship between the University of Edinburgh and the local school community.

3. To increase pupil participation in the local school community, especially underprivileged school pupils who can have a chance to learn more about neuroscience. Through this event, school pupils have opportunities to speak to our university students and get to know more about life in higher education life and the subjects on offer.

Implementation:

The time scale of this project will be 6-9 months. The roles and responsibilities of the staff and the students involved are listed below:

Stage 1: Nov 2019 Recruitment

- Recruit university students (15-20) to join this student-led Edinburgh Brain Bee competition
- Nominate one-two Edinburgh Brain Bee (EBB) student coordinators (one of the coapplicants is a MSc student (AN) who will be one of the coordinators)
- a member of staff (DT) will provide operational and general support for students

Stage 2: Dec 2019 and Jan 2020 Contact schools and disseminate reading materials

- Through Edinburgh Neuroscience and my previous contacts, students will reach out to different schools in Edinburgh especially those with unprivileged backgrounds.
- Students will confirm the number of pupils who will take part in the competition and liaise with school teachers and pupils to prepare them for the competition.

Stage 3: March 2020 Edinburgh Brain Bee competition

- University students will organise the competition; for example, set questions for the competition, book the venue and invite speakers and examiners.
- The top 3 winners from the Edinburgh Brain Bee competition can attend the British Brain Bee competition, which takes place in April. The winners also have the chance to go to international Brain Bee competition, so our student organisers will liaise with national and international Brain Bee coordinators.

Dissemination of student experience

1. Submit a report for Teaching Matters showing what students learned from this project, with an emphasis on what students in other university schools should be aware of if they wanted to run a similar programme.
2. Present this project at the University of Edinburgh teaching and learning forum in 2020.

Link:

1. <https://www.edinburghneuroscience.ed.ac.uk/news/edinburgh-neuroscientists-help-firstscottish-brain-bee-competition>



Required Signatures

Please add further team members if needed.

Please email one signed electronic PDF copy of your proposal to: iad.teach@ed.ac.uk