

MSD Animal Health Research Bursary for Student/Qualified Veterinary Nurses

1. Eligibility criteria

The bursary scheme is open to all student and qualified veterinary nurses in Great Britain.

2. Submission of project applications and deadline

The application form can be downloaded from the following website:

www.msdahresearchbursary.co.uk. The closing date for research bursary application submissions is **27th October 2023** and completed application forms should be emailed to msdahbursary@msd.com.

Applications will be acknowledged within 7 days of receipt. If you do not receive this acknowledgement, you are advised to send a further email to check your application has been received.

3. Use of veterinary medicines during the research project

A project does not need to study the use of a veterinary medicine in order to be considered for a bursary, but where it does so, the use of such medicines must be within the licensed indication. If you are not sure if the intended use of a product is within the licensed indication or not, you are advised to seek guidance via sending an email to msdahbursary@msd.com prior to submitting a project proposal.

4. Legal/ethical considerations

There should be a clear statement that the applicant has given full consideration to the techniques to be employed and have taken the necessary steps to ensure that they are working within the Law. If there is any doubt whether the procedures employed will fall within the remit of *The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* advice should be sought from a Home Office Inspector before the application is submitted to MSD Animal Health. MSD Animal Health will not be responsible for obtaining an Animal Test Certificate (ATC). In such an instance, the applicant will need to demonstrate proof of application for, and granting of, an ATC.

NB. Any invasive sampling, such as blood samples, outside of normal treatment or management of livestock requires an ATC from the Home Office.

Ethical review and approval of the research project should be considered and is encouraged for practice-based research. Further information regarding guidance on ethical review and obtaining it through the RCVS can be found at:

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/who-we-are/committees/ethics-review-panel/>

5. Research bursary selection process

The judging criteria for the research project applications will consider:

- Quality and clarity of the research project application
- The realistic aspirations of the proposed research project
- The project's potential value in terms of clinical relevance
- Its societal and/or welfare impact
- Originality of the research project

MSD Animal Health is not bound to award a bursary if there are no projects deemed suitable for funding.

6. Notification of bursary

Applicants should receive notification as to whether they have been successful or not in being awarded a bursary.

7. Research bursary project deliverables

On project completion, the research bursary recipient must provide a 1,500 word report and relevant photography submitted to MSD Animal Health, detailing the research bursary project results and conclusions. Good photography is an essential part of your final report as it may be used for promotional purposes. Please ensure high quality images are included that could be used in the veterinary media.

8. MSD Animal Health Research Bursary Day

The successful applicant will be invited and expected to attend the annual MSD Animal Health Research Bursary Day to present their research conclusions and will have the opportunity to meet other research bursary recipients. Depending on circumstances, this event may take place online or at MSD Animal Health's headquarters in Milton Keynes. The date for the Research Bursary Day will be confirmed closer to the time.

The bursary recipient will be required to make a 20-25 minute presentation outlining the findings of their research. Based on the content of this presentation and the written report an additional £1,000 top prize will be awarded for the best research project and a £500 runner-up prize. The two prize winners will have the opportunity of receiving a further £500 award if they present their findings at a relevant UK veterinary conference. This will be facilitated by MSD Animal Health with funding of hotel accommodation and delegate registration. The reports will also be featured in MSD Animal Health's company and veterinary industry publicity.

9. Contract

The successful research bursary recipient will be asked to sign a research bursary contract prior to commencing the research project and receiving any funding.

Appendix – Project Design Information

Study design

Studies are normally categorised into two main types – Descriptive or Analytical. Descriptive studies would include case reports/series, surveys and cost of disease. Analytical studies would include observational or experimental studies. Any of these study types is suitable and can be considered for a bursary, although bear in mind that the strength of evidence can vary between each.

Any project involving the use of live animals should use as few animals as necessary to prove a statistically significant result which shows that the results were not just due to chance. Detailed planning of a study is integral to these outcomes and should be undertaken with care.

Experimental studies involve researchers assigning subjects to groups (usually treatments and controls). These types of studies should incorporate attributes of the ‘ARRIVE’ guidelines (see <http://www.nc3rs.org.uk> and type in “Arrive Guidelines” in the search criteria).

Observational studies involve researchers observing animals already having exposures, receiving treatments, etc. for specific outcomes (incidence of disease, production parameters, etc.). The three major types of observational studies are cohort, case-control and cross-sectional studies. These types of studies should be fully defined and incorporate attributes of the ‘STROBE’ statement (see <http://www.strobe-statement.org> “Available Checklists”).

At the very minimum, all project details provided should address:

- What is the objective, or hypothesis(es) you are looking to test
- Design of the study and particularly how you will avoid bias in your results (randomisation, blinding, etc.)
- Which experimental outcomes are being assessed
- Determination of how you might analyse the data and the statistical methods which you may employ

Further Reading:

Javier Palarea-Albaladejo and Iain McKendrick. Best practice for the design & statistical analysis of animal studies. *Vet Record* 2020 **186**: 59 - 64

Neil Forbes. Undertaking research in practice 1. Why and what? *In Practice* 2001 **23**: 613 – 615

Neil Forbes. Undertaking research in practice : 2. How? *In Practice* 2002 **24**: 44 - 46

James Anderson and Helen Jukes. Clinical trials in practice: what do you need to know? *In Practice* 2007 **29**: 546-549