

Summary

Job title	NIHR Undergraduate Internship Programme
Division	Medical Sciences
Department	Psychiatry
Location	Department of Psychiatry, Warneford Hospital
Grade and salary	£2400 stipend plus £1000 in travel and accommodation costs (<i>pro rata</i> for internships <8 weeks)
Hours	Full time (37.5 hours per week)
Contract type	6-8 weeks
Reporting to	Dr Emma Soneson and Dr Galit Geulayov

The role

The [Undergraduate Internship Programme \(UIP\)](#) is a new scheme designed by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to encourage undergraduate students in the 2nd or 3rd year of degree-level study to consider a career in health and social care research, focusing on priority and under-represented professions and disciplines including public health and research methodology (see 'Selection Criteria').

The scheme, which is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), will allow interns to gain hands-on experience through a 6- to 8-week placement in the area or discipline they are interested in pursuing, supported throughout by dedicated supervision and mentorship from experts in the field. This opportunity will suit undergraduate students who are considering pursuing a research career after their studies.

This is a **fully funded internship**. Interns will receive a £2,400 stipend plus £1,000 to support travel and accommodation costs (pro-rated for internships <8 weeks). Interns will also have access to a small training and development fund (£200) to attend courses/training/conferences that will complement their internship experience.

The Section of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is advertising three internships, detailed in the following pages.

- **Internship 1:** Creating a 'database' of evidence-based mental health interventions for schools
- **Internship 2:** Exploring response patterns to self-harm related questions: understanding barriers to inclusion in the OxWell Student Survey and the potential impact of non-response and incomplete response on research findings
- **Internship 3:** Supporting evaluation of third sector child and adolescent mental health interventions

Internship 1: Creating a ‘database’ of evidence-based mental health interventions for schools (*Themes: methodology, public health. Supervisor: Dr Emma Sonesson*)

This intern will work on a project that aims to support child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing by developing a ‘database’ of evidence-based mental health interventions for schools. The intern will establish a ‘pilot’ version of this database to be pilot tested with schools. The intern will do this in two parts:

1. Identify key issues in schools: the intern will use the 2023 [OxWell Student Survey](#) data to identify 3-5 key problems students are experiencing that may influence their mental health and wellbeing. They will do this through use of an online platform that summarises the data (i.e. no specialised analysis skills required).
2. Collate evidence-based interventions for schools: the intern will search peer-reviewed literature on school-based mental health interventions, identify which interventions have evidence of effectiveness, assess the quality of the evidence, and summarise findings for 3-5 evidence-based interventions that could be used to address the key issues identified above. For each effective intervention, the intern would also summarise other information relevant to implementing the intervention in schools, such as cost, resource requirements, and time requirements.

The intern will also be involved in the practical design and development of this database. This could involve reviewing the research literature on implementation drivers in school-based mental health interventions, learning from other similar models (e.g. the Education Endowment Fund’s databank on evidence-based learning interventions), consulting with researchers and school staff about what such a database would need to include in order to be an effective tool for schools wanting to implement evidence-based interventions, and liaising with developers to create, user-test, and refine an online interface.

By the end of the internship, the intern should be able to:

1. conduct simple analyses of quantitative data using an online programme;
2. identify relevant research studies using electronic databases;
3. summarise findings from research studies;
4. critically appraise research studies;
5. synthesise findings across multiple studies;
6. summarise findings for a non-scientific audience; and
7. effectively present findings to an academic audience.

The intern will also develop their knowledge in the following areas: child and adolescent mental health, school-based mental health, public mental health interventions, and implementation science.

All interns will have individual and joint (i.e. with the other interns) supervisions throughout the duration of this internship to support them with their project and wider career development.

Internship 2: Exploring response patterns to self-harm related questions: understanding barriers to inclusion in the OxWell Student Survey and the potential impact of non-response and incomplete response on research findings (*Themes: methodology, public health. Supervisor: Dr Galit Geulayov*)

This intern will take part in a study which is based on data from the [OxWell Student Survey](#) (2019-present), a large school-based survey exploring a wide range of factors related to child and adolescent health and wellbeing. The study will focus on measurement and case-ascertainment of self-harm. This project will suit an undergraduate with an interest in the psychopathology of young people and/or an interest in mental health research methodology.

Self-harm in young people is a serious public health challenge. It is related to myriad adverse outcomes including suicide, depression and substance use disorders. Self-harm in young people influences the well-being of their family members and may increase their peers' risk of self-harm. However, self-harm in young people is largely under-detected. Evidence shows that a large proportion of young people who self-harm do not present to clinical services. Studying self-harm within schools presents an opportunity to involve the wider population of young people who may be self-harming but who are under-represented in research.

Our non-identifiable data from the OxWell Student Survey show variations in response patterns to the self-harm questions. While some young people provide complete responses, many provide incomplete or no response to the questionnaire. Understanding inequality in response patterns to survey questions is important for improving future research on self-harm and for understanding the potential needs of some young people whose perspectives may be underrepresented in research. We will study individual and school-level characteristics of young people according to their response patterns to the self-harm questionnaire.

The intern will be involved in reviewing the relevant literature; deriving, cleaning and coding variables; running descriptive analyses; summarising research findings; and presenting research findings to scientific audience.

By the end of the internship, it is anticipated that the intern will:

1. have gained basic knowledge about the epidemiology of self-harm and suicide in young people;
2. be able to understand key concepts in self-harm and suicide research;
3. be able to understand key issues related to the measurement of self-harm and suicide in various settings;
4. gain practical experience of data manipulation and analysis;
5. be able to start appreciating the challenges involved in real-world research and how methodological differences may impact research findings, interpretation and conclusions; and
6. enhance their skills summarising and presenting research findings.

All interns will have individual and joint (i.e. with the other interns) supervisions throughout the duration of this internship to support them with their project and wider career development.

Internship 3: Supporting evaluation of third sector child and adolescent mental health interventions (*Themes: methodology, public health. Supervisor: Dr Emma Soneson*)

This intern will work on a project designed to support charities to evaluate ‘grassroots’ interventions in child and adolescent mental health (i.e. interventions that the charities have developed or adapted but which do not currently have a scientific evidence base).

We know that there are many potentially interesting child and adolescent mental health initiatives happening in charities (the ‘third sector’), but without research and evaluation, it is difficult to understand their potential impact on mental health. For example, there may be innovative interventions that could be scalable and effective that go unrecognised, or equally, there may be other interventions that seem like a great idea but which do not actually improve mental health. Therefore, systematic evaluation has potential to ensure that we are getting the right interventions to the right people at the right time.

To support evaluation efforts, the intern will work to refine a pilot version of a tool created by members of the Department that guides charities in evaluating the work they do in child and adolescent mental health by helping them learn how to collect, analyse, and understand data in a meaningful way to support their broader aims. This work will involve a few iterative stages:

1. Refining the content of the tool so that it meets the needs of charities whilst providing useful scientific information as to the potential impacts of the intervention(s). This may involve working directly with charities to get their feedback on the initial pilot tool, liaising with other researchers involved in evaluating these types of interventions, and searching the scientific and grey (i.e. not peer-reviewed) literature for similar tools.
2. Working to create a digital version of the tool that can automate data collection and (potentially) data analysis.
3. Collaborating with a consortium of local third sector child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing organisations to refine and develop the tool. This may involve gathering evaluation ‘case studies’ to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the tool or interviewing charities to learn what they liked or didn’t like about it.

By the end of the internship, the intern should:

1. have an appreciation of the importance of evaluation and the complex intervention cycle more broadly;
2. have a basic understanding of how to evaluate interventions and the complexities of doing so;
3. have gained basic quantitative and qualitative evaluation skills;
4. be able to collaborate effectively with key stakeholders (particularly from third sector organisations), including eliciting and responding to feedback;
5. have gained practical experience in design and user-testing in health and care research;
6. have developed their communication and teamwork skills.

The intern will also develop their knowledge in the following areas: child and adolescent mental health, charity/third sector partnerships, public mental health interventions, and evaluation.

All interns will have individual and joint (i.e. with the other interns) supervisions throughout the duration of this internship to support them with their project and wider career development.

Responsibilities

General responsibilities (shared across the three internships)

- Contribute to drafting, developing, and writing research materials, presentations, and reports
- Attend all supervision meetings and maintain good communication with supervisor
- Attend additional trainings/development opportunities as agreed with supervisor
- Share regular internship progress updates with a small and supportive audience of researchers
- Draft and present a short report summarising the internship work at the end of the internship
- Attend group, Section, and Department talks, seminars, and meetings, and take part in other departmental/university events as relevant (e.g. Early Career Researcher Socials, journal clubs, etc.)
- Explore what it's like to have a career in research (e.g. by meeting with other researchers)
- Uphold [Departmental values and behaviours](#): team working & collaboration; innovation & development; kindness & generosity; professionalism & integrity; and respecting diversity, inclusion, & wellbeing.

Specific responsibilities

Internship 1:

- Conduct basic analyses of school-based survey data
- Conduct literature searches to identify relevant studies
- Summarise and assess the quality of intervention studies for a non-scientific audience

Internship 2:

- Manage a small dataset, including cleaning, manipulating, and deriving variables
- Contribute to analyses using survey data
- Conduct literature searches

Internship 3:

- Develop and refine a digital tool for intervention evaluation
- Actively collaborate with partners at charity/third sector organisations

Selection criteria

Per the NIHR scheme guidelines, applicants must:

- be in their second or third year of enrolment in degree-level study of one of the theme's disciplines of focus (health care professionals, social care, research methodology, public health, data science) or a related field (e.g. psychology) at a **UK-based higher education institution**, and
- be willing and/or committed to explore a career in health and social care research.

In addition, applicants to these internships should have:

- interest in and curiosity about the topic area (mental health/public health/methodology/schools)
- a strong academic record, including in relevant coursework
- good interpersonal and team working skills
- good written and oral communication skills
- quantitative analysis skills (**for Internship 2 only**)
- basic experience using statistical software such as Excel, SPSS, Stata, R (**for Internship 2 only**)

How to apply

For an informal discussion or to find out more about these internships please contact Dr Emma Soneson (Internships 1 and 3; emma.soneson@psych.ox.ac.uk) or Dr Galit Geulayov (Internship 2; galit.geulayov@psych.ox.ac.uk).

If you wish to apply for one of these internships, please send the following to Dr Emma Soneson (emma.soneson@psych.ox.ac.uk) by **9.00 am on 1st July**:

- A covering letter of *no more than 500 words* describing why you would like to be considered for the internship and how you meet the criteria
 - You can **rank a first and second choice** of these internships if you wish to be considered for more than one (you do not need to send in separate applications to be considered for two internships).
- Your CV/resumé
- The name and contact details of two referees who know you in an academic or professional capacity

We will hold online interviews on **8th July**. We will send you the interview questions in advance to help you know what to expect and to be more confident during the interview. We aim to welcome interns to the Department from **mid-late July** (but are flexible on the exact start date).

We particularly wish to encourage students from underrepresented backgrounds or who have lived experience of mental health difficulties to apply for these internships.

N.B. The offer of an internship will be subject to references and confirmation of right to work in the UK (a list of acceptable documents can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checklist>).