



Which Scholarship is for You?

When it comes to scholarships and fellowships, most people assume they're out of reach. Too high of a GPA needed. Too much work. Nothing that really fits what you want to do... In reality, there's a huge range of scholarships and fellowships out there — some reward academic excellence, yes — but many others are about curiosity, motivation, or even economic need.

In this guide, we'll break down the different types of scholarships and fellowships available for you, including a decision tree that helps you to navigate all of those:

Getting An Overview

As we mentioned, there are scholarships for people at different stages, with different strengths, and for different purposes.

Contrary to common perception, scholarships come in all shapes and sizes—whether for top academic performance, learning new methods, conducting experiments, or even supporting leadership, creativity, and volunteering:





1 – Scholarships to Attend Conferences

Conferences are gatherings of researchers who study a similar topic, use a shared technique, or are united by some other way. These are great opportunities to present your research in the form of a **poster**, or **oral presentation**!

There are many different types of conferences. It's best to consider the following questions when deciding which ones you want to go to:

Large vs Small Conferences: Larger conferences have more high profile researchers, you see more research, and there are generally more travel grants. However, they may be very general and not be specific to your field, and it may be harder to connect with people. Smaller conferences can be more intimate, friendly, and if they are local, cheaper to attend.

Presenting Research vs Developing Skills | While conferences generally exist for researchers to share new

research, some can have inbuilt workshops that teach skills relevant to the conference topic. Inversely, some summer schools can also have poster sessions/opportunities to present research. The lines between conferences and short courses are often blurred, so it's best to search both, and benefit from funding schemes offered for both.

To attend conferences, one has to pay for the registration, as well as food, accommodation and travel. There exists numerous grants that cover just the registration, just the travel costs, or both. This type of funding may already be provided by your lab, otherwise your own university/research department may have internal funding that you could apply to. If not, travel grants are often offered by societies that are participating in/attending the conferences. These are either advertised on society pages, or on the conference pages themselves.



The following are some scholarships provided by the IUBMB to attend conferences:

[Conference/Course] IUBMB Travel Fellowship

- **Goal:** Support students to travel to and attend international meetings in the IUBMB region. These include conferences (poster/presentation required) and advanced courses.
- **Funding:** USD \$2,500
- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be a graduate student up to five years post-PhD. Applicants must be a resident of a country that is a full or associate member of the IUBMB.
- **Deadlines:** March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 1 every year.

[Conference] IUBMB MilliporeSigma ENABLE-Africa Fellowships

- **Goal:** Supports PhD students/researchers <5 years post-PhD from any African country to attend the annual FEBS-IUBMB-ENABLE Conference (location varies, in 2024 it was in Singapore)
- **Funding:** Varies, the fellowship will cover the visa application and registration to the meeting and contributions towards travel costs.
- **Eligibility:** PhD students/researchers <5 years post-PhD from any African country
- **Deadlines:** TBD, likely September in 2025





2 – Scholarships for Internships and Lab Exchanges

Internships and lab exchanges are a great way to gain hands-on research experience in a new setting. They're available for both undergraduate and PhD students, and can help you build valuable skills, grow your network, and explore different career paths.

For undergraduate students, internships offer a first taste of research outside the classroom. They usually run full-time for 2–4 months over the summer or part-time over a semester. These experiences can lead to letters of recommendation and help you decide whether research is for you. Lab exchanges are not common because you are normally not permanently affiliated with a lab, but short term/semester long exchanges are permitted in many degree programs.

For graduate students, internships are a chance to explore how research is applied beyond academia. These can be in biotech

companies (like Pfizer), international organizations (like the WHO or UN), or even in consulting, policy, or media—your research skills are valuable in many sectors! As for lab exchanges, these are often fostered by collaborations that you or your lab has, and exist to exchange skills and data.

Funding is often provided by the host institution, though some programs also offer relocation bursaries. For example, the EPFL School of Life Sciences Summer Research Program in Switzerland fully funds international bachelor's and master's students for summer research internships.

If you're applying abroad, keep in mind that visa requirements may apply. Always check deadlines and eligibility criteria early.

The following are some scholarships provided by the IUBMB to conduct lab exchanges:

[Lab Exchange] PROBio-Africa Fellowships



- **Goal:** Support PhD/postdocs from African countries affiliated with the Federation of African Societies of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (FASBMB) to conduct research for 1–6 months in a European country affiliated with the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS).
- **Funding:** Max. EUR €7,000
- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be PhD/postdocs from countries affiliated with FASBMB. They may apply to any FEBS labs listed [here](#) or request to apply to visit a non-listed lab in a FEBS country at least two months before the deadline.
- **Deadlines:** March 1 2025

[Lab Exchange] IUBMB Wood-Whelan Research Fellowships

- **Goal:** Supports PhD students/researchers <5 years post-PhD from any IUBMB affiliated country to conduct research for 1–4 months in any other IUBMB affiliated country.
- **Funding:** Max. USD \$5,000
- **Eligibility:** PhD students/researchers <5 years post-PhD from any IUBMB affiliated country
- **Deadlines:** March 15 and September 15 every year.

[Lab Exchange] IUBMB Early-Career Research Fellowships

- **Goal:** Supports early career researchers 5–15 years post-PhD from any IUBMB affiliated country to conduct research for 1–2 months in any other IUBMB affiliated country.
- **Funding:** Max. USD \$6,000
- **Eligibility:** Early career researchers 5–15 years post-PhD from any IUBMB affiliated country.
- **Deadlines:** June 15 every year.

[Lab Exchange] PROLAB Fellowships

- **Goal:** Supports PhD students/researchers <5 years post-PhD from any country affiliated with the Pan-American Association for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (PABMB) to conduct research for 1–6 months in a



country affiliated with the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB).

- **Funding:** Max. USD \$5,000
- **Eligibility:** PhD students/researchers <5 years post-PhD from countries affiliated with PABMB.
- **Deadlines:** March 6, 2025.





3 – Scholarships for Science Communication and Field Work

Science doesn't just happen in labs – it happens in the field and in public spaces too. Whether you're hiking through rainforests to collect samples or crafting stories that make science accessible to everyone, there are scholarships to support these efforts.

Field Work

Fieldwork can be essential for research in ecology, geology, anthropology, or epidemiology – but it's often expensive. Scholarships and grants can help cover travel to field sites, equipment, permits and accommodation.

These are often offered by research societies, field stations, or university departments. For example, the *British Ecological Society*, the *Society for Conservation Biology*, *National Geographic*, and the *Scientific*

Exploration Society offer fieldwork grants for students at all levels.

Science Communication

If you're passionate about sharing science with the public, there are scholarships, fellowships, and prizes to support you. These can fund:

- Science writing or podcasting projects
- Museum or exhibition internships
- Training courses in public engagement

Look for opportunities through organizations like *The British Science Association*, *AAAS*, or your local university's public engagement office. In the US, there is also the *Smithsonian Voices Science Writing Internship*.



4 – Scholarships for Bachelor's/Master's Degrees

Scholarships exist to provide partial or full funding to support you to complete your Bachelor's or Master's. Very often at the Bachelor's level, the main scholarships available are available through the university that you are studying at, but at the Master's level, there are often nationwide or even international scholarships available. In saying this, numerous countries also provide university for free – if you are studying in one such country, lucky you!

Scholarships exist for a variety of reasons:

- **To attract international talent to a university, country, or to study a certain course:**
e.g. *Rhodes* (Oxford), *Fulbright* (USA), *Schwarzman Scholars* (Master of Global Affairs)
- **To support students studying abroad or in specific regions:**
e.g. *Ramsay Scholarship*
- study, religion, or region.

(Australians abroad), *Defence University Sponsorships* (you must stay in the country and work in the military post-graduation), *co-op scholarships* (you work-part time in a company while studying)

- **To fund specific fields or causes:**
e.g. *Rotary International* for public health, peace, or education-related degrees
- **To promote equity and access:**
e.g. scholarships for rural, low-SES, Indigenous, or LGBTQ+ students – often based on your background, location, or life circumstances
- **To support specific affiliations:**
Some are linked to schools, donors, or personal criteria – like field of



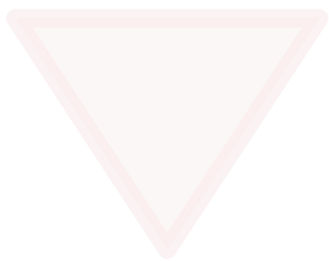
There exists a variety of scholarships:

- **Full** (everything covered),
- **Partial** (some costs covered), or
- **Top-up** (adds extra to an existing scholarship)
- **Specific** (accommodation, books, etc)

- **Relocation** (semester exchanges, to study a new degree elsewhere)

Hot tip: You can usually hold multiple scholarships — unless explicitly stated otherwise. Apply broadly and sort out conflicts later. Better to have too many than too few!

Hopefully this gives you an idea of the vast types of scholarships out there, and which ones may be of interest to you!





5 – Scholarships for PhDs

Scholarships exist to provide partial or full funding to support you to complete your PhD. There are often nationwide or even international scholarships available.

Scholarships exist for a variety of reasons:

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e.g. *Rhodes* (Oxford), *Fulbright* (USA), *Schwarzman Scholars* (Master of Global Affairs)
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e.g. *Ramsay Scholarship* (Australians abroad), *Defence University Sponsorships* (you must stay in the country and work in the military post-graduation), *co-op scholarships* (you work-part time in a company while studying)
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- **To promote equity and access:**
e.g. scholarships for rural, low-SES, Indigenous, or LGBTQ+ students — often based on your background, location, or life circumstances
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Hot tip: You can usually hold multiple scholarships — unless

explicitly stated otherwise. Apply broadly and sort out conflicts later. Better to have too many than too few!

The IUBMB provides a relocation scholarship for PhD students:

[Relocation] IUBMB Relocation Support for Displaced Trainees

- **Goal:** Supports PhD students/researchers <10 years post-PhD from countries where natural disasters, war, or other events beyond their control that interrupt their training.
- **Funding:** Max. USD \$2,000
- **Eligibility:** PhD students/researchers <10 years post-Ph.
- **Deadlines:** March 6, 2025.



6 – Scholarships for Short Courses and Summer Schools

Short courses and summer schools are a great way to grow as a researcher – and many offer scholarships to help you get there.

These programs can range from one-day crash courses to multi-week international summer schools, and cover everything from bioinformatics to microscopy, science writing, or data analysis. Some are held at universities, others at research institutes or even in the field.

In short courses, you can:

- Learn hands-on skills that may not be taught in your program
- Connect with peers and mentors from around the world

- Present your research (some summer schools have poster sessions – see “1 – Scholarships to Attend Conferences”)

In terms of funding, many summer schools and short courses offer fee waivers, discounts, and travel and accommodation bursaries.

Alternatively, there may exist external scholarships from research societies or your university.

For example, EMBL Summer Schools, Cold Spring Harbor courses, and SIB bioinformatics courses often offer financial support. Don't forget to check your university's mobility office or graduate school for internal funding!

The IUBMB also provides a travel fellowship to attend short courses:





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7 – Scholarships for Miscellaneous Endeavors

Haven't found exactly what you want? That's alright! The key thing to know is that whatever you are interested in, no matter how niche or crazy, there will be ways to fund it. Here are some non-traditional activities and how people get funding/scholarships to do them:

Competitions

In your undergraduate and postgraduate degree, you may wish to participate in a science competition. From individual essay contests and *Three Minute Thesis*, to big team-based challenges like *iGEM*, *BIOMOD*, or *XPRIZE*, competitions give you the chance to dive into a project, build something meaningful, and maybe even win prizes (yes, real money!).

While smaller competitions are often free to enter, larger ones come with entry fees, travel, and accommodation costs. Funding might come from:

- Your university or department
- Grants from the competition itself (e.g. *iGEM's Impact Grants*)
- Team fundraising (think selling baked goods – it really does work!)

Incubators & Start-Up Support

Got an idea you think could change the world? Start-up incubators can help you explore it – offering both seed funding and expert mentorship to grow your project into a company.

Incubators can be:

- **Sector-specific** (e.g. *ThermoFisher* for lab tech, *OpenAI Start-Up Fund* for AI)
- **Broad and general** (e.g. *Y Combinator*)

Universities often offer their own start-up grants, especially for



student-led ideas. Talk to your tech transfer office, look up entrepreneurship programs, or reach out to alumni who've done it before.

Bottom line: Whether you're entering a competition or launching a start-up, there's funding out there — and people willing to back your bold ideas.



Finding the Right One Online



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Now that you have an idea of the scholarships available, how can you find more that can help you achieve your goals?

Here's the perfect strategy to help you find the best scholarship for you, all of which can be done in under ten minutes:

Conduct Targeted Google

Searches: You can use "speech marks" to limit google searches to contain the exact phrase within your speech marks. You can also restrict the types of sites that you want to look at with "site:". You can also filter out articles with certain words with dashes (-). Look at these examples.

Example 1: If you're pursuing studies in molecular biology or biochemistry, and only want to search organizations or educational sites, type this in Google:

1. "molecular biology" OR
"biochemistry" scholarships
site:.org OR site:.edu

Example 2: If you want to find scholarships in Australia, but do not want to look for PhD scholarships, type this into Google:

"scholarships for international
students" Australia -PhD -doctor



2. **Follow International and Professional Societies:** Many academic and professional organizations offer scholarships to students within their field. For example, the International Union for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB) provides various funding opportunities. Visit their [Twitter/X](#), [Linkedin](#), or join the [mailing list](#) for upcoming scholarships.

To find other societies, here's a quick search query to help you out. Change it to fit your interests and region:
"computational" OR
"bioinformatics" society
Europe site:.org OR site:.edu

3. **Search Scholarship Databases:** There exists several scholarship databases to streamline your search. Some require a paid subscription, but some just need a free sign up, or nothing at all. [International Student](#) is

one such database where you can search for relevant scholarships in seconds.

4. **Follow Social Media Platforms:** Social media can be a powerful tool to discover and receive timely updates on scholarship opportunities. Follow societies that you share interests with, universities you want to study in, or organisations/people that give/share scholarships. Even if you forget about them, when you are scrolling through social media you will be reminded of new opportunities. As a starter, you can follow:
 - a. On Twitter/X: [Scholarships Region](#). You can also check out [Denis Wirtz](#), who frequently posts and updates his own scholarships database.
 - b. On LinkedIn/Bluesky: While following/joining specific societies is the best to have targeted

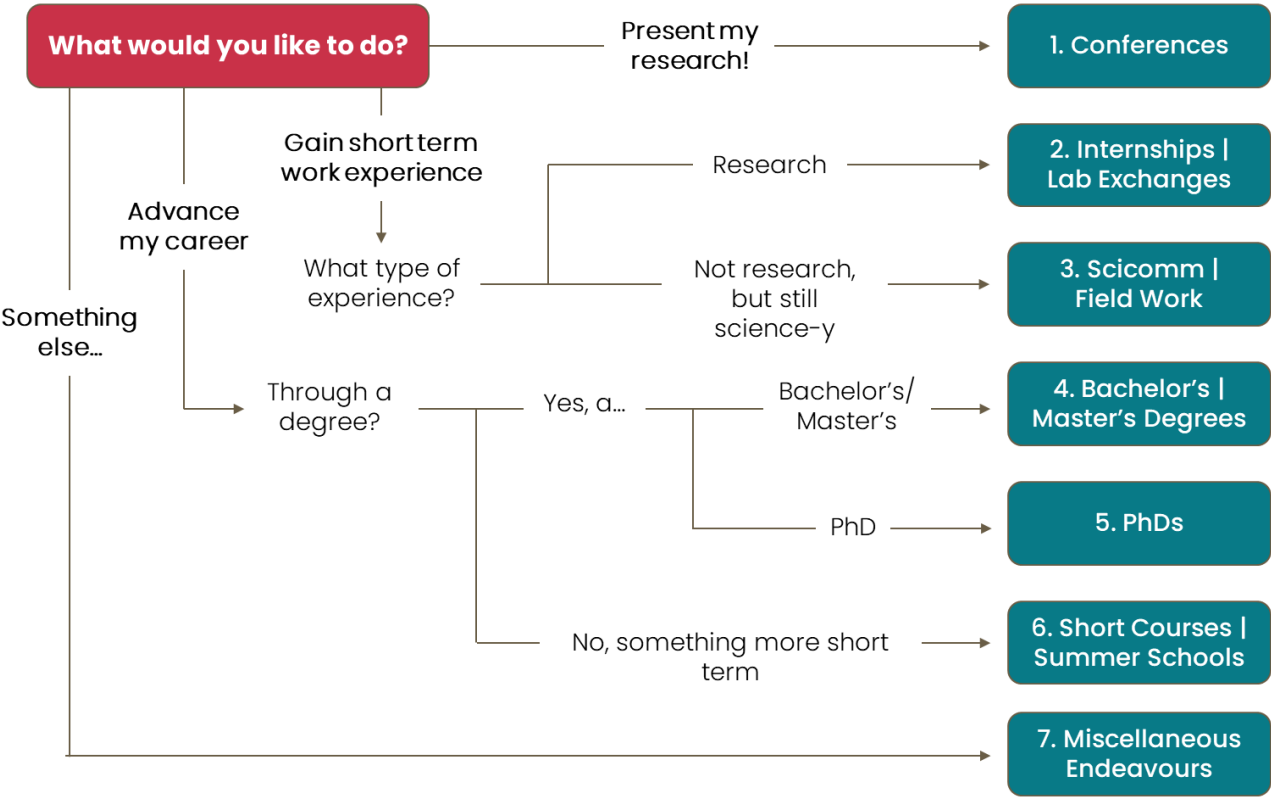


posts and not congest your feed, you can also follow hashtags like #scholarships and #scholarshiptips.

So there you have it! You now know how to find the perfect scholarship for you, and are equipped to apply for it and get it!

How should you find the right one for you without spending hours searching?

This **decision tree** will help you narrow down the exact types of scholarships you should be looking for. For each choice, we also provide extra detail, as well as some examples that you can apply to today!



Written By Simon Tang & Patrick Penndorf

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At the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB), we bring together biochemists and molecular biologists from over 70 countries. Our goal is to advance research and education in the biomolecular sciences worldwide – and especially to support scientists in regions where resources are limited.

Beyond our Scholar- and Fellowships, we organize events, workshops, symposia, and hands-on training sessions in biochemistry and molecular biology

Want more?

Follow the IUBMB on

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