



**Alzheimer
Scotland**

**Student Research
Programme**

Alzheimer Scotland Student Research Programme

Guidance Notes 2022

Introduction

The Alzheimer Scotland Student Research Programme is part of Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium's (SDRC) commitment to enhance the research environment in Scotland, in line with the aims of the Scottish Brain Health and Dementia Research Strategy available here <https://www.sdrc.scot/researchstrategy>

This round of funding will allocate two MRes awards based within Scotland that will include tuition fees, consumables, and a stipend. Applications will be open to projects that relate to the themes of Living with Dementia and Diagnosis, more information on which will feature further in the document.

We aim to offer to the successful applications more than funding and will collaborate with the successful students and research team to support career development. The successful applicants will work closely with Alzheimer Scotland, and our affiliated groups at the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC), Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN).

For any enquiries, please contact Carleen Smith, carleensmith@alzscot.org

About Alzheimer Scotland

Alzheimer Scotland is Scotland's national dementia charity. Our aim is to make sure nobody faces dementia alone. We provide support and information to people with dementia, their carers and families, we campaign for the rights of people with dementia and fund vital dementia research.

Find out more about the work of the Alzheimer Scotland at <http://www.alzscot.org>

About the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC)

The SDRC, supported by Alzheimer Scotland, is a network of dementia researchers, policy makers and people living with dementia from across Scotland. Our work celebrates and supports dementia and brain health research taking place across the country, in all disciplines.

Find out more about the work of the SDRC at <http://www.sdrc.scot>

About the Student Research Programme

The MRes funding will include stipend, consumables, and tuition fees to a total value of £25k per student.

By working together with colleagues, volunteers, and networks within Alzheimer Scotland we are able to offer more to the student/research team we are working with than a financial contribution. We will also support the professional and personal development of the successful awardee. The following opportunities will be available to the successful applicant.

- Opportunities to develop research communication skills through communicating progress of research through meetings with Alzheimer Scotland stakeholders such as Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN) and Alzheimer Scotland staff
- Learning about dementia from with lived experience
- Networking opportunities with researchers that work closely with Alzheimer Scotland, such as SDRC Executive Committee Members, Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Research Centre staff, Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice Staff.

About the Award

Eligibility Criteria

- This award is for new studentships only. We will not fund an MRes project that has already commenced.
- The student programme is open to UK and international students. However, Alzheimer Scotland will only pay fees at the UK tuition fee rate.
- The lead institution making the application must be based in Scotland. This can be a Scottish academic institution, NHS Scotland site or any other formally recognised research institution.
- Funding is for a one-year full time project. Projects must be completed within the one year timeframe. There will be no scope for cost extensions.
- Applications are only open to members of the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium. If you are not a member, you can register for free here: <https://www.sdrc.scot/join>

Project Specification

Funded projects will align within the intersection of the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC) research themes of Living with Dementia and Diagnosis. These include, but are not limited to:

- the experience of living with dementia before a diagnosis
- the experience of receiving a dementia diagnosis
- life after a dementia diagnosis

The above could be from the perspective of people living with dementia, their carers, loved ones or professionals related to these areas.

The Programme does not seek to be overly exclusionary. We will welcome innovation and creative ideas around the above topics. If you would like to discuss your idea before submitting an initial application, please get in touch with Carleen Smith, carleensmith@alzscot.org

Successful applications will also consider:

- A commitment to involve lived experience in the research throughout the application process and the research project, where appropriate.
- An expression of interest to be involved in relevant Alzheimer Scotland and SDRC activity for the purposes of personal and professional development.
- An alignment with Scottish Dementia and Brain Health Research Strategy.

Research team Specification

The Alzheimer Scotland Student Research Programme aims to be as inclusive as possible and welcome applications from diverse research disciplines.

The research team applying for funding does not need to have a specific track record in dementia research. Although it is important to demonstrate how their research has relevance to brain health or dementia or how the outcomes of the research could benefit people living with dementia. The research team must also express interest in the aims and mission of Alzheimer Scotland and commit to engaging with Alzheimer Scotland throughout the studentship.

The supervisory team in general should have experience of supervising students. Although we are aware that this MRes award presents an opportunity for early career researchers to gain supervision experience. We will welcome applications led by early career researchers with limited supervision experience, however you may consider including a more experienced supervisor to be a key part of the research team.

Specifics of supervisory arrangements can be discussed during the second stage of applications.

Importantly, we do ask that supervisors are employed at the host institution for the duration of the grant to ensure continuity for the successful student.

Student specification

- Understanding of how research can be translated into real world outcomes and benefit of people affected by dementia.
- Track record, either in academia or through workplace experience.
- Understanding of and empathy with aims and purpose of Alzheimer Scotland charity

Expectations of the successful student

We expect that the successful student in this project shows an interest and commitment to be an ambassador for Alzheimer Scotland and to promote their work to the wider dementia and brain health research community. Activities may include:

- Regular meetings with National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN) and Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) to update on progress of research and to answer questions.
- Visiting Alzheimer Scotland Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centres to learn more about the work of Alzheimer Scotland
- Contributing content for the SDRC and Alzheimer Scotland websites, either in written blogs or videos relating to their research.
- Speaking at events/conferences

We will work with the host institution/ supervisory team to ensure both formal and informal reporting commitments are met. However, we are aware that institutions will have their own processes and expectations of the student and we will work closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the expectations are reasonable.

Application Process

The application for the Alzheimer Scotland Student Research Programme will be a three-stage process. More information on the timelines of this and what each stage involves are outlined below.

Timeline

8 th November 2022	First stage application open
9 th January 2023	First stage application close
31 st January 2023	Outcome for second-stage shortlist announced
Early February 2023	Second-stage applications open
End March 2023	Second stage applications close
End March 2023	Outcome for interview candidates announced
Mid April 2023	Interviews
Late April 2023	Outcome for successful candidates

First-Stage Application

At the first-stage application, an expression of interest will be invited from supervisory teams by filling out an application form available on the SDRC website. Applications should be made by the prospective supervisor.

The application will summarise the type of research being proposed. This summary should be lay-friendly and written in plain English.

The application should include:

- Relevant background information, aims of the research, what the research will do
- How this MRes specifically fits in with wider piece or research being undertaken by the team (if relevant)
- How the project aligns with the themes of “Living with Dementia and Diagnosis”
- How the project benefits people affected by dementia
- Any Public Patient Involvement (PPI) throughout the project

- Demonstration of an understanding of the aims and ethos of Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Brain Health and Dementia Research Strategy.

We also ask at this stage for an estimate of consumables that may be required. However, exact breakdown of cost is not required.

Given an MRes is a small-scale project, we are also asking applicants to consider how they expect the project will be completed within the one-year timeframe. Please also highlight any potential aspects of the project which may be subject to delay, for example, obtaining ethical approval, and how these delays could be overcome.

In addition to the application form, please also attach CVs of relevant people to the project. The exact supervisory team does not need to be finalised at this point but would be helpful to have an indication of who could be involved in this project, and the capacity to which they would be involved.

Applications can be made with or without a named student. If you already have a student selected, please also include their CV. Applicants should state why the named student is appropriate for the award.

Second-Stage Application

The second stage application will involve a more detailed application with more in-depth scientific and costing information.

More information on the second-stage application process will be provided to applicants who reach this stage.

Interview

The second round of applications will be shortlisted, and successful candidates will be invited for interview. Interviews will take place at one of the Alzheimer Scotland Head Offices, either in Glasgow or Edinburgh.

At the interview we will go through the detailed application and discuss the project in more detail, find out more about the research team, the breakdown of costs and expectations of collaborative working with both Alzheimer Scotland and the SDRC.

About our Selection Panel

Lived experience is of central importance to the Alzheimer Scotland Student Research Programme. Therefore, the Selection Panel includes members of the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and the National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN) who will lead on shortlisting applications, interviewing candidates and ultimately deciding the successful awardees. These members have a range of expertise and experience in the Programme topics and will also be advised by researchers that are part of, or nominated by, the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium (SDRC) Executive Committee.

How to apply

The first stage of application is now open. The application form is available at <http://www.sdrc.scot/alzheimer-scotland-student-research-programme-application>

Closing date for first stage applications is 9th January 2023