

Engage

Teacher Conference

Bridges to belonging: supporting the leap from school to STEM careers

Leading providers share their programmes that support secondary students to continue with STEM in higher education or careers.

Ben Dinsdale, In2Science

Caitlin Brown, The Sutton Trust

Anna Lambert, Queen Mary University of London

Maria Rossini, The British Science Association

Megan Kennedy, STEM Learning

Welcome, please be aware:

- Talks are recorded
- You can ask questions in the chat throughout
- There will be time for questions at the end



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In2STEM

Ben Dinsdale

In2STEM Programme Officer

www.in2scienceuk.org/our-programmes/in2stem



In²STEM

What is In2STEM?

In2STEM is a UK-wide summer programme dedicated to supporting current year 12 students (or S5/S6) from low socioeconomic backgrounds to progress into STEM pathways.

Workshops

In-person placements

Competitions

Professional
development

Continued support

5350 students supported to date

A further **650** on In2STEM 2026

Each year, **81-92%** are from ethnic minorities and **67-74%** are female

Why is In2STEM needed?

We aim to directly address four core barriers to STEM progression:

Opportunities and hands-on experience

Key knowledge and skills

Networks and role models

Confidence and sense of belonging





Our Impact in 2025



98% said they gained practical or professional skills

96% said they increased their confidence in applying for a STEM degree of apprenticeship

94% said the programme made them feel like they belong in a career in STEM

One year on...

88% of participants applied to university, compared to **68%** in the comparison group

91% applied to higher tariff universities and **97%** were offered a place.



“In2scienceUK made me feel more confident and reassured that I can pursue a career in STEM, regardless of being a woman and a person of colour.

Engaging with supportive professionals and working alongside other students in a welcoming environment showed me that my ideas and contributions are valued.

It made me believe that I have the ability, passion, and determination to succeed in STEM and make a meaningful impact in the field.”

Jumana, 2025 In2STEM participant

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The Sutton Trust

Caitlin Brown

Senior Digital Programmes
and Platform Manager

www.suttontrust.com



What is STO?

- Applications are open NOW for Sutton Trust Online!
- STO is our award-winning digital programme, providing expert advice to students on their journey to university or an apprenticeship, drawing on 25 years' experience supporting young people to access life-changing opportunities.
- What this means: students join our online platform and have access to it until the end of their time at school or college. Programme completers then become alumni and get access to STO's sister site, Sutton Trust Alumni (STA) where the support continues.



STO phases



Throughout the programme, students get:

- An extensive programme of webinars delivered by Russell Group university staff and top employers.
- Opportunities to connect with current undergraduate students via STO Chat.
- Detailed application support, including access to OSCAR, an interactive personal statement builder from Causeway Education as well as webinars specifically for university applications, assessments and interviews.
- ***"It was a lifeline for me; it gave me much needed advice and, most importantly, it gave me confidence."***



Required criteria

✓ 4+ 8/9 grades achieved

✓ Year 12 (England and Wales)

✓ Year 13 (Northern Ireland)

✓ S5 (Scotland) [in S6 in September 2026]

✓ Attend, and have always attended, a state (non fee-paying) school

Students need to also meet one of our social mobility criteria. We look at:

✓ Background

✓ School context

✓ Where students live

Full details on criteria can be accessed at:

<https://www.suttontrust.com/our-programmes/sutton-trust-online-sto/>

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Centre of the Cell

Anna Lambert
Youth Scheme Officer

www.centreofthecell.org



Centre of the Cell

- A unique science learning centre
- Part of Queen Mary University of London
- Work to inspire interest in cell science for people of all ages, but with a focus on children and young people
- First in the world to be located in a biomedical research laboratory



Youth Scheme

- Activities and opportunities for young people age 14 – 19 interested in science and health careers
- Currently over 1400 members
- Monthly newsletter with opportunities from us and others
- Free to join and take part, lunch vouchers and travel funds for specific programmes
- Mix of online and in-person opportunities



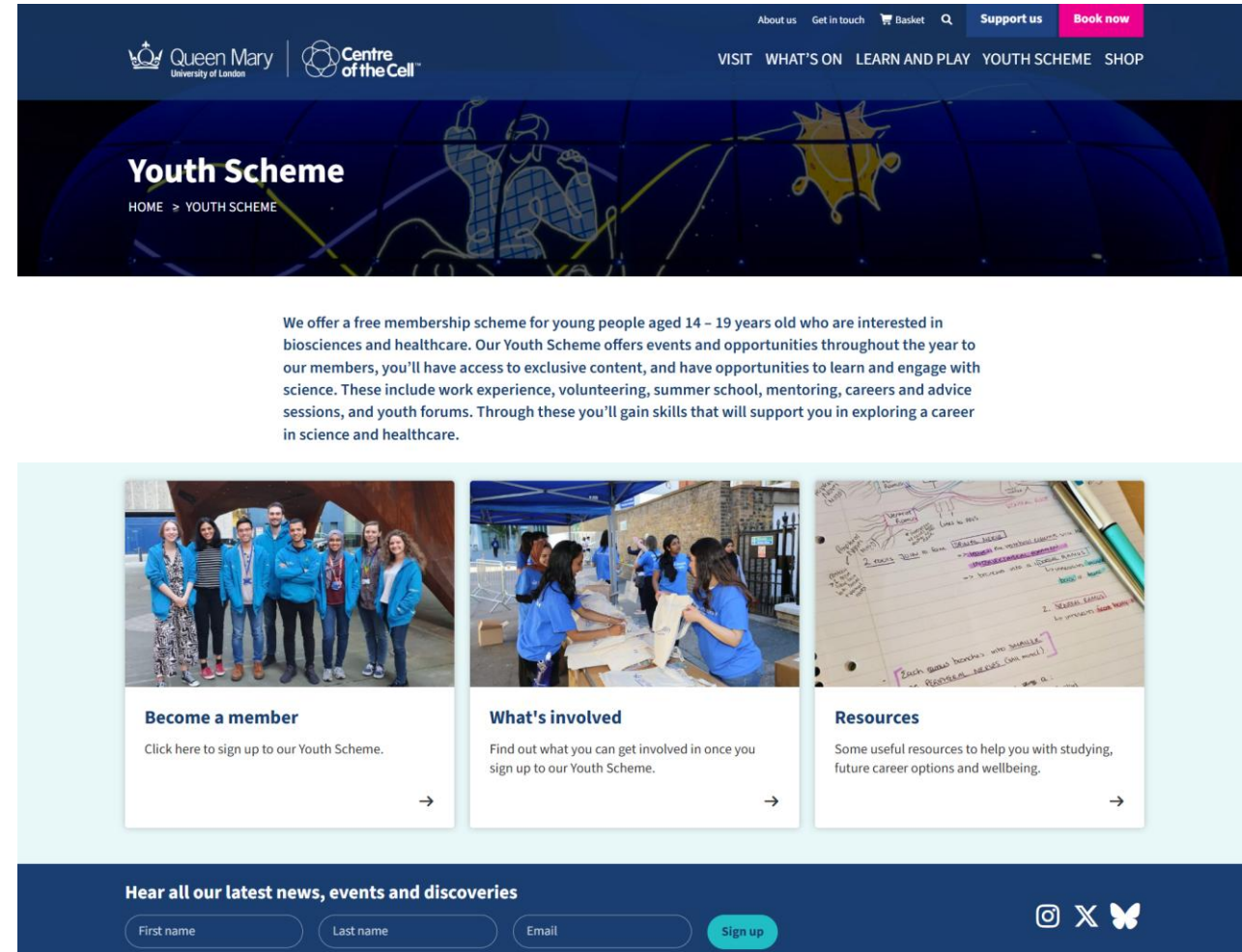
What opportunities do we offer?

- Work Experience
- Volunteering
- Summer School
- Mentoring
- Careers, Advice & Support Sessions and Clinics
- Big Question Talks & Youth Forums
- Steering Group
- Online Resources



centreofthecell.org/youth-scheme

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The screenshot shows the website's header with navigation links: About us, Get in touch, Basket, Support us, and Book now. The main navigation includes VISIT, WHAT'S ON, LEARN AND PLAY, YOUTH SCHEME, and SHOP. The page title is "Youth Scheme" with a breadcrumb "HOME > YOUTH SCHEME". A descriptive paragraph states: "We offer a free membership scheme for young people aged 14 – 19 years old who are interested in biosciences and healthcare. Our Youth Scheme offers events and opportunities throughout the year to our members, you'll have access to exclusive content, and have opportunities to learn and engage with science. These include work experience, volunteering, summer school, mentoring, careers and advice sessions, and youth forums. Through these you'll gain skills that will support you in exploring a career in science and healthcare." Below this are three cards: "Become a member" (with a photo of members and a sign-up link), "What's involved" (with a photo of a workshop and a link to details), and "Resources" (with a photo of a notebook and a link to resources). At the bottom is a newsletter sign-up form with fields for "First name", "Last name", and "Email", a "Sign up" button, and social media icons for Instagram, X, and YouTube.

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CREST Awards

Maria Rossini
Head of Education

www.crestawards.org











CREST Awards



Inspire young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers through STEM projects.

- Hands-on, practical and engaging, covering a broad range of STEM topics and themes, as well as making cross-curricular links.
- Projects are open-ended and student-led, using an enquiry-based learning approach with real-world contexts.
- Free, easy to use resources to support classroom delivery
- Students can also come up with their own project ideas in any STEM topic.



	PRIMARY			SECONDARY		
						
	STAR	SUPERSTAR	DISCOVERY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Description	Relatable real life science activities for children starting their STEM journey.	Relatable real life science activities for children looking for a challenge.	Explore student-led work with a collaborative project in a real-world context.	Introduce STEM project work with a focus on fun and transferable skills.	Develop experience of the scientific process in a self-directed investigation.	Awaken potential and conduct real research with a long-term, open-ended project.
Typical age*	3-7 years	7-11 years	10-14 years	11+ years	14+ years	16+ years
Time commitment	6 to 8 x 1 hour challenges	6 to 8 x 1 hour challenges	5 hours of work (can be done in a day)	10+ hours of work	30+ hours	70+ hours
Entry fee	£1 (inc VAT) per student in the UK, £5 internationally	£1 (inc VAT) per student in the UK, £5 internationally	£3 (inc VAT) per student in the UK, £7.50 internationally	£6 (inc VAT) per student in the UK, £12.50 internationally	£15 (inc VAT) per student in the UK, £25 internationally	£30 (inc VAT) per student in the UK, £40 internationally
Key benefits to young people	Gains appreciation of investigative work and develops key skills.	Develops investigative and teamwork skills.	Develops team-work and hands-on investigative skills.	Provides a real-life experience of 'being' a scientist.	Can improve GCSE grades and increases interest in continuing in STEM education	Enhances UCAS personal statements and is well regarded by employers
Assessment	A parent, teacher or facilitator	A parent, teacher or facilitator	A parent, teacher, facilitator, or group leader	A parent, teacher, facilitator, or group leader	CREST assessors	CREST assessors

* All ages given are simply a guideline, choose the Award level you think is most suitable for your students.



The benefits of receiving a CREST Award

- Well-respected by universities and employers
- Enhances your CV and UCAS personal statement
- Evidences employability skills
- Illustrates additional effort & commitment
- Provides interviewers with something interesting to ask you about
- Successful applicants receive certificates to recognise their achievements!



Collaboration/
teamwork



Technology use



Organisation



Research



Time management



Data processing



Lone working,
using initiative



Analysis



Problem solving



Leadership



Creativity



Reflection



Decision making



CREST project examples



Rugby High School
CREST Bronze Award
[Exploring reproductive health with CREST!](#)



George
CREST Silver Award
[Dunking a biscuit in tea? That can be a CREST Awards project!](#)



Toby
CREST Gold Award
[How CREST Awards can boost UCAS applications](#)

[All these projects connected students with real STEM careers and developed their employability skills](#)

Curiosity into achievement!

Richard's project earned him a Gold CREST Award

He used the project to boost his CV and as something to talk about in interviews.

That led to him being offered a spot on a highly competitive accounting apprenticeship with KPMG

<https://youtu.be/13mBkiZLZxc?si=DW-JTbqCWC4jCKgu>



"Because of doing a CREST Award project, it was a unique thing"



Personal statement support

Blog

Posted: 7 January 2019

Expert tips that will make any UCAS personal statement stand out

🕒 Reading time: 4 mins



www.crestawards.org/about-crest/news-case-studies/expert-tips-ucas-personal-statement-stand-out

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Destination STEM

Megan Kennedy
Destination STEM,
Programmes Co-Lead

www.stem.org.uk



STEM
LEARNING

Our vision is to improve lives through STEM education

STEM Sprints

Intensive 4-day learning experiences that extend the curriculum, designed to meet specific student needs and encourage continued engagement in STEM education

STEM Clubs

Hands-on extra-curricular sessions that let students explore science, technology, engineering, and maths in creative and practical ways

STEM Ambassadors

A network of STEM volunteers working to share their knowledge, experiences & skills with young people ages 5-19 across the UK

STEM Pathways (coming soon)

Mentoring support for young people (15-17) to explore their next steps, focused on apprenticeships & university, through structured interactions with STEM Ambassadors

STEM in Space: ESERO-UK

Careers in Space are brought to life through competitions, challenges, teacher CPD and resources, underpinned by a network of Space STEM Ambassadors

STEM Placements

Engaging, real-life workplace experiences, where talented year 12 students from the most underserved backgrounds are placed at the heart of a UK host organisation

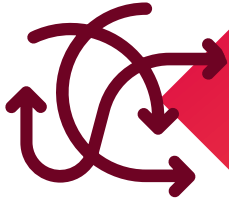


Research Placements & Experiences

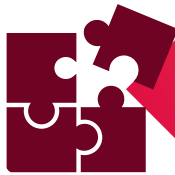
Where the employers of today inspire the generation of tomorrow



Deliver high-quality, authentic engagement with experts, supporting future applications and interviews.



Raise awareness of STEM pathways, inspiring young people to see these careers as relevant and attainable.



Equip students with essential and STEM skills, empowering students to have confidence in themselves and their future.



Provide equitable access to STEM opportunities that improve social mobility for young people.



Experience Placements

5-day broad explorations with industry experts to raise awareness, build insights and identify essential skills needed for employment in STEM sectors.

Engaging, hands-on and **authentic workplace experiences** for talented, enthusiastic and STEM-curious **Year 12 (or equivalent)** students from the most **under-served backgrounds**.

- Placements run in July/August
- In-person, hybrid or fully online
- Weekly subsidy for all students

Research Placements

2-week collaborations with a knowledge expert structured around an individual project that focuses on a live research question or area of development.

Building before the build: The Lower Thames Crossing
Balfour Beatty

Augmented reality storytelling: A technical and creative study
The Glasgow School of Art

Astronomy meets data science - using real NASA exoplanet data to teach machine learning fundamentals
University of Hull

Cell and gene therapy technologies in regenerative medicine
University College London

The science behind creating great snacks
PepsiCo

Researching and communicating plant biodiversity
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Ecology of artificial vs natural lakes: A comparative biodiversity study
Costain (Trawsfynydd, Wales)

Tracking antimicrobial resistance in our environment: A citizen science investigation
Queen's University Belfast

Impact

84% Meeting professionals helped them imagine doing those jobs themselves

96% Felt they developed valuable transferable skills

95% Gained greater sector awareness and career insights

98% Placement supported applications to jobs, apprenticeships and further education



On average, placement students gained the equivalent to nearly one grade improvement at A Level

“

I'm not as shy as I used to be... I'm more comfortable talking and meeting new people as well as giving presentations and learning the importance of managing my time well to keep up with deadlines.

”

Any questions?

Engage

Or get in touch with today's speakers:

In2STEM

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Sutton Trust

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Centre of the Cell

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youthmembers@qmul.ac.uk

CREST Awards

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Destination STEM

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students@stem.org.uk

Engage Teacher Conference

Thank you

Complete the **5-minute feedback form** for the chance to win one of ten **£10 Amazon vouchers!**
<https://www.tfaforms.com/5181926>



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