

In²STEM



Volunteer Guide 2025

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Our Mission

Welcome to the In2STEM 2025 programme, we're so excited to have you onboard! This guide will help support you to deliver a successful and meaningful experience. It covers leading both placements and workshops so please check the previous page to view the sections relevant to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

In2scienceUK provides students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with the support, skills and experience needed to achieve their potential and progress to degrees, apprenticeships and careers in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

The young people we support are interested in pursuing STEM, but face barriers to their progression. This may include a limited understanding of the careers available within the sector, a lack of friend and family connections who can advise and help them to access opportunities, as well as inadequate support needed to produce successful applications. Participants on our programmes receive high-quality opportunities and support, enabling students of all backgrounds and abilities to build the skills, knowledge and confidence to produce successful applications and become the next generation of researchers, innovators and pioneers.

Meet the Team:



Jordan Stephenson
In2STEM Programme Manager



Zoe Marras
In2STEM Programme Officer



Tim Green
In2STEM Programme Officer



Ben Dinsdale
In2STEM Programme Officer

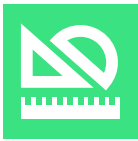
The **In²STEM** Programme

The In2STEM programme consists of three parts:



In-person placements:

Students are matched with a volunteer host whose work is of interest to them, and gain experience through a hands-on placement. This supports them in making informed decisions about their own career pathway.



Workshops:

Online workshops provide key information, advice and guidance to support students in their career choices and in making competitive applications to universities, apprenticeships and jobs.



Competitions:

A chance for students to develop their skills in written and visual communication based around their experiences on the programme.

Student Eligibility

Students are shortlisted based on our [eligibility criteria](#) which includes receiving free school meals, financial support such as Pupil Premium, have parents or carers with no higher education, and/or have experience of care. This year we're aiming to offer places on our in-person programme to 650 young people from across the UK.

Our Students

The students you will interact with are currently in Year 12 (S5/S6 in Scotland) or equivalent and about to enter into their final year of schooling. This typically means they are 16 to 19 years old and are currently doing their first year of A-level (or Highers/Advanced Highers in Scotland) or equivalent.

All students will be studying at least one STEM A-Level or BTEC (or equivalent such as a Scottish Higher). Many students on our programme tend to be studying a combination of STEM subjects.

The group of students you will be supporting are of mixed abilities. Studies have highlighted the attainment gap between students from underrepresented backgrounds compared to their more advantaged peers, therefore gaining a place on our programme is not dependent on academic achievement.

The In2STEM programme gives many young people the first chance to connect with STEM professionals. They may be shy or lack the confidence to communicate clearly to professionals at this stage.

Here are three key barriers students from low socioeconomic and/or underrepresented backgrounds face when accessing higher education:

Knowledge

The programme aims to provide students with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their future. Many career options will be presented to the students, allowing them to think more widely about their options.

Aspiration

Through encountering a diverse range of STEM professionals and gaining insights from them, students can be inspired to challenge any assumptions they may have. The programme helps students to gain confidence in their choices and goals.

Attainment

Volunteers provide expert insights to support students to be successful with higher education applications, CV writing and interviews and provide opportunities to build their skills in communication and critical thinking.



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Hosting an In2STEM Placement

Key information & working with your students

Many students won't have interacted with professionals before and this may be a chance for them to meet a STEM role model for the first time. Please keep in mind that some won't have ever experienced a STEM environment or workplace so this is an invaluable experience. We support the students that need it most regardless of their background or academic ability. Our aim is to show them that there is a place for them in STEM.

Be Yourself

Share stories of success and challenges you have overcome in your career.



Be Inspiring

STEM is amazing. You know it; it's time to let your students know it too!



Be Patient

Students may feel nervous. Take time to explain and reassure if they're unsure.



Be Interested

Ask questions about students' interests and what motivates them.



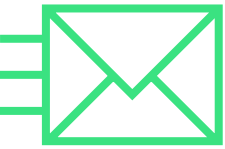
On rare occasions, students may not engage with the placement fully. In these cases, please let us know so we can follow up with them to ensure everything is okay and to prompt their engagement. To be on the programme, all students have signed a Code of Conduct agreement which involves being engaged, on time (unless there is a valid reason) and polite.

Communicating with Students:

Direct communication with students should be done via your professional/university email and not through channel such as social media, Whatsapp or Discord. BCC students to begin with, as they have consented to share data with you but not with each other. You may start a joint email chain with their permission.

Key Dates:

2 June - 18 June	Online Host Inductions take place.
9 June	Deadline for hosts to sign the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy. If you have any concerns about this, please let us know.
18 June onwards	Hosts receive student emails, make introductions and give info about the placement. Final deadline to make contact is 8 July.
21 July - 22 August	In-person placements take place.
23 August onwards	Stay in contact and offer mentoring if you wish.



Send an introductory email as soon as possible after receiving students' email addresses to help students prepare and feel at ease.

We recommend that this includes things like:

- Your name and place of work
- A quick overview of your background
- Why you volunteered
- A fun or interesting fact
- Personal interests and hobbies
- An unusual skill that you have

Find an example on introduction email on [Page 19](#)



Once final arrangements are made on your side, provide students with information about the placement. The key information is arrival/departure times, where to meet (we recommend a landmark), dress code and lunch plans. If students need to bring anything specific, let them know. Our best tip for good communication is to give a concrete reason to reply, such as asking specific questions. There are a few example emails in the appendix.

Please get in touch with us if a student does not reply after two emails so we can follow this up. If anything raises safeguarding concerns, please contact us immediately at: safeguarding@in2scienceuk.org 🚩.



Planning your placement

Activities will vary as much as individuals and workplaces across STEM vary. However, the main purposes of all placements are for your students to:

1. Understand your job, career journey and day-to-day work
2. Get to know more about the field you work in
3. Understand the different roles of your colleagues



Choose timings to suit you, however we recommend placements run slightly shorter than a working day, e.g. 10:00-16:00. This makes student travel easier and helps you fit the placement around your working day. Start the first day with a welcome tour to point out fire escapes, toilets, places for coats/bags and refreshments.

Much of your placement will involve hands-on activities. These take the most time to plan, so spread them evenly. Here are some ideas:

Experiments

Students conduct or observe experiments. Keep safety and confidentiality in mind!

Data analysis

Students complete tasks with real or dummy data. This may require demonstrating how to use new software.

Scenario

Talk students through a common issue in your role. Elicit solutions from students.

Mock interviews

Give time to prepare before conducting mock uni, job or PhD interviews. Give feedback.

Challenges

Discuss the challenges you've had during your career, the value of mistakes and how they're part of one's journey.

Past, present and future

Discuss the advice you would give yourself at 12, the students' age (16-19), and your age. Ask students to do the same.

Key qualities

Students write qualities (e.g. patience or empathy) for relevant jobs. Reflect on how to improve skills with a specific job in mind.

SMART targets

Introduce the concept of **SMART targets** [↗](#) giving an example from your life. Ask students to set a SMART target for a goal.



Additionally, hands-off activities help balance your workload. These don't require your direct supervision, but you should be nearby to assist. **Hands-off activities could include:**

Research paper

Give students a paper to read. You might ask students to write a summary or prepare a short presentation.

Meetings

Where appropriate, bring students along to internal or external meetings. Ensure you ask colleagues/clients in advance.

Competitions

Give students time to work on an In2STEM competition entry or attend one of our online workshops.

Meet colleagues

This could take the form of set activities with an individual, or quick-fire interviews. See later in this guide for **safeguarding** considerations.

Tour

Students take a site tour. Contact your university's outreach team or office manager to arrange this.

Report, CV, personal statement

Ask students to attempt to write a CV, university personal statement, or lab report. Provide feedback and support where possible.

Other activities:

It may be possible for students to visit a local scientific attraction. You can accompany them by public transport or they may travel alone. Try to integrate this into the placement, for example by setting a task or short report. We allow and encourage you to involve your colleagues. This is both a more varied experience for students and gives you a break! Please do not travel alone in a car with your students, see later in this guide for further **safeguarding** implications.

For further inspiration, you can find example timetables on our **resources webpage** [↗](#)

Other Considerations

Because you and your institution have a duty of care, you must confirm that a risk assessment and appropriate insurance is in place and meets UK health and safety law. This is confirmed as part of the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding form.

Your department/institution may have existing policies and requirements, most commonly requirements are:

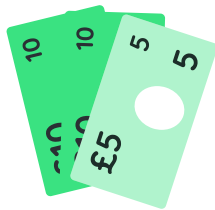


- Visitor passes
- Workplace insurance
- Health and safety procedures such as PPE
- Computer log-ins
- An up-to-date DBS check
- Data protection considerations and confidentiality agreements

Some students may have accessibility requirements. We will contact you with information and advice on their needs and we are always here to answer any questions. If you speak to students about their needs, avoid doing so in front of other students.

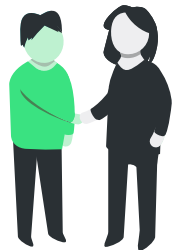
Lunch

Students receive a bursary to cover travel and food costs. If required to pay for lunch, e.g. because a student has no money, please keep this receipt and we will reimburse you. We recommend you choose somewhere where cheap food can be purchased and packed lunches eaten, such as a canteen. You may also choose to go out for a team lunch, but please be aware students are unlikely to be able to pay for this themselves.



On the day

Before students arrive, have PPE, desks, fobs, forms etc. prepared. Meet students at a landmark such as a fountain on the first day. If you have a reception, let receptionists know in advance. If you are the Lead Host for a group, you will need to greet students every morning even if they are spending the day with other staff. **If a student is more than 15 minutes late without notice, call us straight away on 07830 300 759.** We will contact the missing student so the placement can continue.



Getting in touch:

There are lots of ways of getting in contact and we're always happy to hear from you.

Drop us an Email:

STEM@in2scienceuk.org 

Phone & text:

07830 300 759

Freephone:

+44 808 175 6766

View recent posts and highlights on LinkedIn  and 

Hosting FAQ's

Q: A student has added me on LinkedIn, is that okay?

A: LinkedIn is a professional networking platform so differs from other forms of social media. If a student adds you on LinkedIn, this is fine as long as all interactions remain appropriate. Please check any internal policies first. **If anything worries you, please contact safeguarding@in2scienceuk.org** 📩

Q: What do I do if a student doesn't arrive at placement?

A: If a student is more than 15 minutes late without notice, call us on **07830 300 759**. We will contact the missing student so you can continue with the placement.

Q: Can I stay in touch with students after the programme?

A: Yes! Many volunteers choose to stay in touch. For safeguarding reasons, you should continue to use a professional email address. Schools and parents should also be informed of this ongoing relationship. If you want to arrange another placement, you are welcome to use our resources, although we can't help directly.

Q: What should I do if a student hasn't received their bursary?

A: Email **STEM@in2scienceuk.org** 📩 and we can address this. Find somewhere cheap to get food; if you need to buy a student lunch, keep the receipt and email us so we can arrange a reimbursement.

Q: Can my colleagues attend inductions?

A: Yes! If they would like to, they can attend to learn more.

Q: I can't attend any inductions, can I still participate?

A: We strongly recommend you attend a live session to get the most out of the induction. However, if this is not possible you can access the recording of the session.

Workshops

Key information

The information below is intended to be a general reference point covering workshops with us over the summer. You will receive a personalised workshop brief with tailored guidance separately.

- The workshops will run between **Monday 21 July – Friday 22 August 2025**, with sessions scheduled to take place between 11am - 7pm BST, based on your preference and availability.
- The workshops will last for **1 hour (unless stated otherwise)**, which should also include **5-15 minutes for Q&A**.
- All workshops will take place **live via Zoom** and will be advertised exclusively to In2STEM students via Eventbrite.
- Workshops will be open to all students on the programme to join. As an approximation, you could expect around 25-30 students joining your session, but please be prepared that this could be less or up to 100+.
- Your main point of contact at In2STEM regarding workshops is Zoe Marras. Please get in touch if you have any questions or need additional support: z.marras@in2scienceuk.org ↗

Code of Conduct and Young Person Safeguarding

By volunteering as part of a workshop for the In2STEM Programme, you are committing to abide by our [Code of Conduct](#) ↗

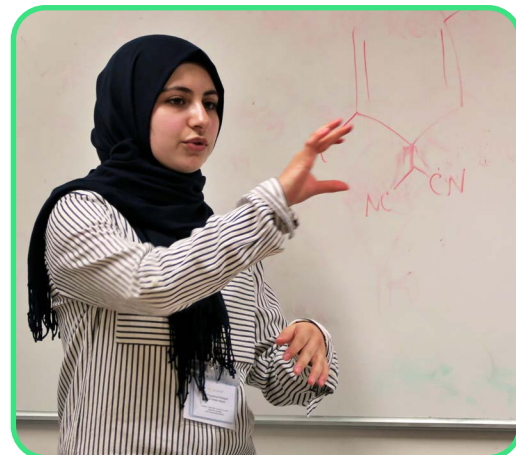
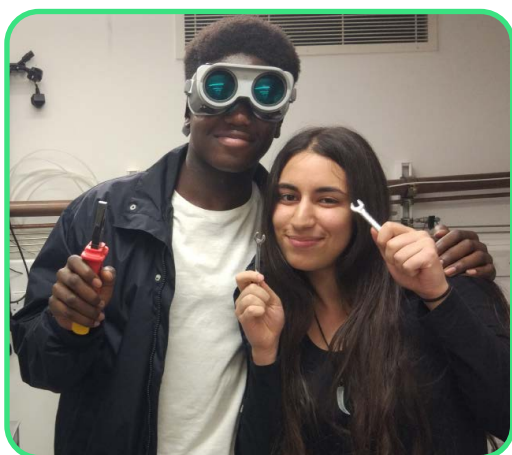
- All workshops will be recorded for safeguarding purposes, as well as being made available for In2STEM students to watch back. Recordings will be available for students to access via our website until the end of January 2026 but will not be shared outside of the programme.
- In2scienceUK staff will be present for each workshop to moderate the session, support volunteers throughout, and for safeguarding purposes. If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a young person on the programme, please raise these to the staff supporting the workshop as soon as possible and email safeguarding@in2scienceuk.org ↗
- When interacting with attendees via the chat and Q&A, please ensure students' first names only are read aloud or avoid using names altogether.



What Makes a Good In2STEM Workshop?

We have a couple of years of experience running online workshops under our belt. Here are some of our tips on what has worked well in previous years to keep your audience engaged throughout.

- **Finding the right person for the session.** Students enjoy sessions delivered by knowledgeable, enthusiastic, honest and confident speakers.
- **Interactivity is key!** Workshops that incorporate polls, interactive platforms (e.g. Mentimeter), questions to answer directly in the chat or encouraging Zoom reactions are rated most highly.
- **Having a clear structure.** Presentations that are well structured and give an overview before going into detail work well.
- **Knowing your timings.** In general, shorter 30 minute presentations with ample time for questions work best. Going at a good pace and not rushing to cover too much content is also recommended.
- **Tangible outcomes.** Sessions that provide students with practical advice, skills and real-life examples are highly rated. Offering links to further resources is also very useful.
- **Knowing your audience.** Successful workshops are pitched at the right level for students' knowledge. You can read more about our students on [Page 5](#).
- **Smooth delivery.** Whilst we can't always account for any technical difficulties, a certain level of disruption can be minimised by practising your delivery in advance and assigning one person the responsibility for sharing their screen with the presentation, if delivering with other people.
- **Unbiased information.** As far as is possible, delivering objective sessions that provide all the information students need without influencing them either way, allowing them to make their own decisions.



Safeguarding & emergencies

All volunteers must read and sign our [relevant policies](#) ↗. For placements, an up-to-date Basic DBS check is recommended if you will be lone working (no other adults present) with your student(s) for more than half a day. If this applies to you, please let us know as soon as possible. You may also need a DBS check if a student has any special educational needs. In these cases, we will reach out to you.

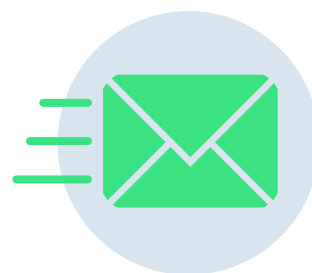
Any DBS checks should be processed through your organisation. Your HR team will need to notify us that the check has been received by emailing us at STEM@in2scienceuk.org ↗. Contact us if you have any questions or can't get a DBS check internally.

You should:

- ✓ Feel comfortable using first names.
- ✓ Speak about appropriate personal experiences.
- ✓ Create a relaxed but professional environment.

You shouldn't:

- ✗ Add students on social media. LinkedIn is an exception, please see [Host FAQs](#) for more information.
- ✗ Take photos or videos of students on a personal device without their consent.
- ✗ Contact students through your personal email account or phone.
- ✗ Leave the placement site when students are with other staff members. Lone work with a young person in a closed space without a DBS check.



In rare circumstances, students may be vulnerable or at risk and share information with you. If this occurs, follow the steps below as well as any internal safeguarding procedures.

1. Stay calm and reassure the student.
2. Do not promise to keep secrets; it is your legal duty to share this information in line with [safeguarding policies](#) ↗ and procedures.
3. Do not ask leading questions or push them to give details they may not feel comfortable sharing. Let them take the lead.
4. As soon as possible after, write everything down including the date and time the disclosure happened. Quote the student directly, keep it factual and avoid your opinions.
5. If there is immediate danger, call 999. If there is no immediate danger or once everyone is safe, ring the team, on 07830 300 759 or email us at safeguarding@in2scienceuk.org ↗.

If you are the lead host who will be running placement, it is your responsibility to:

- ✓ Meet students every morning and contact us if a student doesn't show up on placement.
- ✓ Remain present on site during the week and be aware of where students are. If anything changes, please let us know and provide the email and phone number of the appropriate staff member leading the placement.
- ✓ Contact safeguarding@in2scienceuk.org ✓ about any safeguarding concerns.
- ✓ Inform colleagues of their safeguarding responsibilities and ensure they sign the **Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct**.

Emergencies

Not all emergencies are related to safeguarding. Should you need to respond to a non-safeguarding emergency, such as an accident or medical incident, follow these steps:

- Step 1.** Follow workplace guidance. Call security/emergency services (999) as needed.
- Step 2.** Once everyone is safe, ring us on **07830 300 759**. We will get in touch with parents/guardians.
- Step 3.** Email a description to us at STEM@in2scienceuk.org ✓ Include timings and actions you/others took. Follow any internal policies and procedures relating to the incident.



Spotting Safeguarding Concerns



Safeguarding can be an incident or concern related to the workplace, school, home or any other environment. Here are some examples of concerns that would need to be raised with us:

- Direct disclosure by anyone
- Third party disclosures (abuse happening to someone else)
- Marks, bruises, burns or other injuries including those due to self-harm
- Disordered eating, anxiety or serious depression or omitting themselves from certain activities
- Sudden change in behaviour, e.g. very withdrawn when previously confident and happy, or suddenly aggressive
- Serious aggression or inappropriate behaviour
- Concerning language including sexualised and inappropriate comments
- Sharing inappropriate or sexualised content of themselves or others with anyone
- Unexplained absences

If you are concerned or something has been disclosed to you regardless of if it is outside the workplace it is your duty to report it to us, no matter how small it may seem.



[The NSPCC provides a list of additional things to watch out for](#) ↗

Safeguarding Resources & Support

Here are some resources and contacts should you need further information:

- [Our Safeguarding policy](#) ↗
- Impartial and confidential advice:
 - [Thirty-one Eight](#) ↗ - 0303 003 1111
 - [NSPCC helpline](#) ↗ - 0808 8005000
- In2scienceUK Safeguarding contact: safeguarding@in2scienceUK.org ↗
 - Designated Safeguarding Lead - Stephen Hancock
 - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - Rebecca Jelbert


If a safeguarding concern relates to a member of In2scienceUK staff, email tsl@in2scienceuk.org ↗ (this email is managed by our Trustee Safeguarding Lead).


Data Protection

Social media & photos

During the programme it is your responsibility to handle all information in a secure, GDPR compliant manner. Student contact details should not be added to databases or servers, or shared without the permission of the student. If hosting a placement, be conscious of the data your students encounter in your workplace.

You're welcome to take pictures during the placement and you may post them onto professional social media (e.g. your LinkedIn or departmental X account). **Please always follow any internal policies that your organisation has and ask the students' permission before taking any photos.** Let them know how the photos will be used and stored. Use a professional device where possible; if you take a photo on a personal device, please delete them once they have been uploaded.

If you are happy for In2scienceUK to use your photos on our social media or future promotional materials, please send us your photos and videos to STEM@in2scienceuk.org 

Please use our hashtag **#In2STEM25** when creating posts. This way we are able to interact with your content and share posts on the In2scienceUK official social channels. [Click here](#)  to download our volunteer resource pack that includes pre-made assets and graphics.



My host was incredibly supportive and friendly, making the entire experience both enriching and enjoyable. She ensured that I felt comfortable and included in every aspect of the research environment, encouraging me to ask questions and explore different areas of interest. She went above and beyond by helping me refine my CV, offering valuable feedback, and even arranging for her colleagues to share their experiences and insights with us. It was an unforgettable and highly educational experience, leaving a lasting impact on my academic and professional development”

Tereza, 2024 participant

Thank you!



Finally, we just want to say a huge thank you for contributing to the In2STEM programme! Without volunteers like you, the programme would not be possible. By offering your time, knowledge and expertise you are providing young people with an invaluable opportunity that empowers them in their future. Good luck, we're here to support you every step of the way.



Appendix

Introduction email

Hi Mariam!

It's great to finally have the chance to e-meet you! My name is Charlie and I will be your host this summer (placement 1st-5th Aug). I work at UCL and that's where your placement will be, I'll give you more info closer to the time. I'm originally from Tralee in Ireland although I moved to Manchester for my undergraduate degree. After graduating, I worked at a firm in Birmingham before moving to UCL for my PhD. I'm really looking forward to working with you and was so glad my application to In2STEM was successful!

A bit more about me. My first language is actually Irish, which I think makes me unique in my department! I'm really into drawing, and actually wanted to be an artist when I was younger. I currently live in London with my partner and our two cats.

It'd be great to know more about you. What are you hoping to get from the placement? What are you most looking forward to? Lastly, there'll be three students in total on this placement with me. Are you happy for me to start a group email with the other two students? It would make it easier for everyone!

All the best,
Charlie

Appendix

Placement Information email

Hi Everyone!

Really looking forward to seeing you all for our placement **starting Monday 1st August** and ending on Friday 5th August. Please meet me at **University Station on the University of Birmingham campus** at **10:00 am**. There are regular trains there from New Street and regular buses from across the city. Here is a campus map in case you get lost. We'll be in the Biosciences Building (R27) most of the time.

We'll be on our feet and working with chemicals, so please wear clothes that cover your arms and flat, closed shoes. If you have long hair, please tie it up. Aside from that, it's a casual office so jeans/ tops are perfect. We'll have lunch in Go Central, where you can buy cheap food or eat a packed lunch. You don't need to bring anything specific, but a pen and paper is always a good idea! We should be finished by 4:00 pm.

Looking forward to seeing you!
Laurie



Promoting **Social Mobility** and **Diversity in STEM.**

In2scienceUK.org/our-programmes/in2stem ↗

In2scienceUK is a registered charity (1164821) and company (07706662) in England and Wales.
Our registered address is: 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1BE.