



## HiLIFE Research Trainee Scholarships 2026 – Introduction letter

### What are the HiLIFE Research Trainee scholarships?

- HiLIFE is a life science institute at the University of Helsinki established in 2017 supporting high quality research across campuses and life science faculties. HiLIFE builds on existing strengths and new recruits and partnerships to create an attractive international environment for solving grand challenges in health, food and the environment. HiLIFE operates across faculties that conduct research and education in life sciences.  
<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/helsinki-institute-of-life-science/about>
- As part of a research intensive training, HiLIFE annually awards several Trainee Scholarships for motivated bachelor, master, and licentiate students for a three months internship in a life science research group in the students field of interest. The awardees are selected based on the student's motivation letter, cv, study grades and progress, as well as a video interview (only for shortlisted applicants). The program has been increasingly popular and we currently award ca. 10% of the applicants. The evaluation of the applications and the decision are performed by members in the HiLIFE EDU work group.
- [HiLIFE EDU work group](#) (operating under HiLIFE) consists of HiLIFE staff members representing all career stages and operative units. The work group aims to support the potential top life science researchers of the future by offering funding opportunities but also mentoring and coordination of various activities, including the Trainee Scholarship program, as well as undergraduate and postdoctoral researchers conference grants, doctoral researcher events, research-intensive study module with lectures and training for undergraduates, annual [Aalto-Helsinki iGEM](#) synthetic biology competition.
  - Further details about the **Research Trainee Scholarships**: each autumn, selected University of Helsinki undergraduate students will receive funding from HiLIFE for up to 3 months, to be used during the following year. The idea is to offer opportunities for top students to try out research work in a selected research group within the life science area. The research groups can be selected within the University of Helsinki, or other institutions in Finland / abroad.
  - With this activity, HiLIFE EDU hopes to encourage students to enhance their practical research skills and learn how to interact in the research group, but also to provide moments of realization on what kind of work the students wish to focus on during their professional career.
  - Trainees who are conducting the research work at the University of Helsinki will sign the University's standard traineeship employment contract; Trainees going to other institutions in Finland or abroad will not form official contract with the University of Helsinki but handle the process with the host and receive the financial support via University of Helsinki HR-issued grant.
  - HiLIFE Trainee blog: <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/hilife-trainees/>



## How are the Scholarship applicants evaluated?

- **The selection of HiLIFE Trainees will be carried out in two stages**
  - First stage: independent review and scoring process of all eligible applications by the HiLIFE EDU selection committee. In this scoring process, each candidate receives a scoring from three reviewers on two different categories: **scientific quality and framing of the research question & motivation towards research work**. Also, the research relevance to life sciences indicated through Yes/No options.
  - Second stage: shortlisted applicants are invited to a ca. 10-minute video interview, diving deeper into the applicants motivation and research interests.
  - Given that the applicants are representing different life science areas, have varying levels of previous experience, and are in different stages of their studies, the HiLIFE EDU selection committee **will not score** their practical research skills. **Therefore, it is important for the research groups to ask any relevant questions** from the students in order to establish if they are suitable for the planned research, if there are any courses they should aim to take prior joining the research group, and how much supervision and guidance would be required from the hosting research group.

## What are the responsibilities...

- **of HiLIFE EDU?**
  - Providing financial support to the student according to the Trainee Scholarship call conditions
    - 1 600€ / full working month for max. 3 months period, regardless of the research group location
  - Providing three science communication workshops in collaboration with [The Science Basement](#), and support on the process for the trainees to write and publish their blog posts
  - Providing assistance on cases where the Trainee is unable to secure traineeship in a research group despite proactive attempts
- **of the Scholarship applicants / recipients?**
  - Contacting and agreeing on the traineeship with the proposed research group (if selecting a research group elsewhere in Finland or abroad, this must be done already at the application stage)
  - Also, if going elsewhere in Finland or abroad, arranging a co-supervisor at the University of Helsinki, handling the potential visa processes with relevant authorities (and host University), and taking care of purchasing a health insurance
  - Also for other institutions outside the University of Helsinki, obtaining written proof of the traineeship (either issued by the host university, or using University of Helsinki templates)
  - Discussing with the traineeship coordinator of the Trainees degree programme on how to obtain credits from the traineeship
  - Committing to work 100 % on the agreed research project during the 3-month traineeship
  - Acting according to the [ethical guidelines and other Code of Conduct principles of HiLIFE](#) and the host during the traineeship
  - Reviewing the blog texts and social media communication with the research group to ensure that confidential information will not be released without permission. The trainee should also review the texts with the assigned Trainee peer
- **of the research groups?**
  - Reading this introduction letter, further instructions for research groups hosting the HiLIFE Research Trainee Scholarship recipients, and contacting HiLIFE EDU if



there are any unclarities regarding the HiLIFE Research Trainee Scholarship concept

- Ensuring that the student is suitable fit for the research tasks offered
- Providing necessary materials and tools for the student to carry out the research that has been agreed on
- Providing active supervision for the trainee during the traineeship period
- Acting according to the [ethical guidelines and other Code of Conduct principles of HiLIFE](#) and the host during the traineeship