

Imperial College Union

Union Council – 7 February 2023

UROP Bursary Review

Author: Rea Tresa (UG Engineering Council Representative)

Seconders: Hugo Stanbury (CGCU Education Chair), Nathalie Podder (Deputy President of Welfare)

Union Notes

1. The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) is an opportunity for undergraduate students who wish to experience the research environment and develop skills that will further their appreciation for their field of study.
2. As STEM students, Imperial undergraduates particularly benefit from such a scheme, which helps them develop skills and become competitive applicants in a range of post-graduate destinations - be it graduate studies, industry, etc.
3. While every undergraduate student can, in theory, undertake a UROP experience upon agreement with a faculty member, many of them depend on funding sources (like the UROP bursary scheme) to handle the expenses of living in London for the duration of the research experience.
4. There is only a limited number of UROP bursaries awarded to students every year. While some students opt to handle expenses on their own, a significant number do not have that privilege, thus giving up a research opportunity to do paid work instead.
5. The success criteria for the UROP bursary application are not available to academic staff and students

Union Believes

1. A research internship is a valuable part of a STEM education.
2. There is an already existing socio-economic gap between students who need to work in summer to support themselves financially and those who do not, which is reflected in the demographic of students that can afford to do research without the support of the UROP bursary.
3. The UROP bursary success criteria should be made available to staff and students.

Union Resolves

1. For the DPW to advocate for an introduction of additional UROP funding for means-funded bursary categories for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Additional funding resources could come from alumni donations, funding reallocation, etc.
2. For the DPW to lobby the College to publish the criteria for funded UROP applications on the Imperial College website
3. For the DPE/DPW to collate feedback from student representatives on the current application criteria for funded UROPs and present it to the College's working group.