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International Student Program in Research Experience (InSPIRE)

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (**WEHI**) was founded in 1915 and is the oldest and leading independent medical research institute in Australia <https://www.wehi.edu.au/>. WEHI is committed to forging new and strong education and research collaboration links with top institutions in Asia. As part of WEHI strategy to engage with Asia, WEHI launched the **International Student Program in Research Experience** <https://www.wehi.edu.au/education/undergraduate/inspire/> in 2016 and has since developed collaborative relationships with Tsinghua, Fudan, Nanjing, Zhejiang, Nankai and Jinan universities in China, Ehime and Osaka universities in Japan, Indian Institute of Science, National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, and Ulsan National Institute of Science & Technology in South Korea. To date, InSPIRE has provided an exceptional opportunity for over 160 talented young students across Asia to immerse themselves in Australian culture and gain valuable world-class biomedical research experience. The InSPIRE students have not only contributed to Australia's medical research, including co-authorship on at least 10 significant publications but have also been fantastic ambassadors for the Australian medical research sector and their home universities / countries.

The InSPIRE program seeks to:

- Strengthen Australian medical research ties throughout Asia
- Promote and strengthen interaction and long-term collaboration with the brightest minds at top universities across Asia
- Engage with the next generation of passionate young scientists
- Promote Australian institutions and Australia as a location for cutting edge biomedical research

Selection of InSPIRE students and placement of students in research laboratories at WEHI and co-host institutions

We rely on our InSPIRE partner universities to nominate third-year undergraduate / master's students in the fields of life sciences, pharmaceutical sciences, bioinformatics, computational biology, and medicinal chemistry to participate in the program. Nominated students then send their CV, application letter and areas of research interest to WEHI. Selected students are matched to laboratories based on their research interests. During the 10-week internship, the interns are imbedded in a research lab and are expected to contribute to the labs ongoing research. They will live with host families while in Melbourne, so they can have the wonderful experience of life and biomedical research in Australia.

How is the InSPIRE program funded?

The InSPIRE program is supported by WEHI as well as funding from philanthropy, co-host institutes, InSPIRE partner universities and the Australian Government to reduce the costs of hosting students, and we are continuing to explore various avenues in this regard. Participating students are not means tested, so allowing all students an equal opportunity to participate in the program. Each student will be provided with a stipend (\$8,000 AUD) to cover the students' living expenses in a host family including meals and accommodation and their return economy airfares.

2025 InSPIRE intern recruitment

In 2025, we are planning to recruit a total of 30-32 InSPIRE interns, with numbers determined by funding and host lab capacity, from 14 top universities in Asia: Ehime University and Osaka University in Japan, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in India, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and National University of Singapore (NUS) in Singapore, Fudan University, Jinan University, Nankai University, Nanjing University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University, the University of Hong Kong (HKU), and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) in China, and Ulsan National Institute of Science & Technology (UNIST) in South Korea.

2025 InSPIRE period: From mid-May to mid-October.



Accommodation and meals

WEHI aims to arrange all interns to live with a host family during their internship in Melbourne and will coordinate this arrangement between interns and host families.

Visa application

All interns will apply for an Australian tourist visa subtype 600 /601. WEHI will guide their visa application.

Should they join a travel insurance to cover medical costs for the stay? And do you have any support system if our participants suffer from illness/injury during their stay?

Yes. We recommend selected students to take up adequate travel insurance before they travel to Australia. The student stipend is designed to provide some financial contribution to health insurance. Any health care costs incurred by the students during their stay that is not covered by their insurance will be at the students' expense. WEHI has a safe working environment and a strict safe work policy in place. We will also coordinate with host families to make sure that students will live in a safe environment.

Who are the other co-host institutions in Melbourne?

WEHI co-hosts the InSPIRE program with other institutions which may include Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (PMCC), The Peter Doherty Institute, CSL, The Florey, ONJCRI, and Bio21 / The University of Melbourne.

A Brief Introduction to WEHI

WEHI (<https://www.wehi.edu.au>) was founded in 1915 and is the oldest and leading medical research institute in Australia. In its 109-year history, WEHI has produced one Nobel Prize winner, Frank MacFarlane Burnet in 1960, and four Lasker Award winners, Frank MacFarlane Burnet in 1952, Donald Metcalf in 1993, Mark Feldmann in 2003, and Jacques Miller in 2019. From the beginning, WEHI has partnered with the University of Melbourne (UoM) and is the Department of Medical Biology in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences. WEHI's scientific staff are honorary UoM academic staff members, and all students are enrolled through the UoM. WEHI also enjoys a research relationship with the UoM, and all scientists work collaboratively on projects and share scientific resources. WEHI currently houses 12 research divisions. More than 90 faculty members lead research groups with major research areas in cancer, immune health and infection, and development and ageing and are supported by professional service teams. 1300 staff and students work in a collaborative environment and use interdisciplinary methods to address their research questions. WEHI has a reputation for performing impactful research and clinical translation that leads to long-term improvements in disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.



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