



Blue Marble Space
Institute of Science

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Eligibility

Is the program called the “Young Scientist Program” because you only accept people who are in their early 20s?

No. While the program is called the “Young Scientist Program”, this is not aimed at specific age groups, but rather at those who are “early career” in regards to their academic science education.

What do you mean by “4-year university or a community college (or the equivalent)”

If you are enrolled in a college or university and working on credits that count toward degrees such as Associates or Bachelors degrees, then this includes you. Some schools have 2 year programs, some have 4 year programs, and some even have 5 year programs. Unfortunately, due to the variations in educational institutions around the world, we can't list every single degree program. If you are working on a dual BS/MS degree, then you will also be included in this group as long as you have not yet entered your 5th year or above in working on the Masters requirements for your degree. Further questions can be answered via email.

I have completed a four-year university degree, but that was many years ago. Do I still qualify?

Yes. We have not placed a time limit on the years since completion of your degree.

I have been accepted to a Masters/Doctoral program that will start at the end of the summer. Am I still eligible?

Yes. Those who have already been accepted into a graduate program but have not yet started are still eligible.

I am in a join BS/MS program (such as a 5- or 6-year dual degree program). Can I still apply?

Yes. We are happy to accept students who are taking part in join degree programs as long as they have not yet started the Masters degree equivalent portion of their program (which often



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begins in the 4th or 5th year, depending on the length and structure of the program). Further questions can be directed to the project scientist or to apply@bmsis.org.

I'm pursuing or have attained an MBBS degree within the UK. Can I still apply?

The MBBS medical degree is a unique degree to the UK and a few other nations. It is the equivalent of doing an undergraduate degree and a graduate medical degree without completing the medical doctorate. As such, if you have completed the MBBS, you are not eligible for the YSP. If you are currently pursuing an MBBS degree and are in the earlier years of study, then you may be eligible. However, if you are at the point of graduate equivalent studies for the MBBS then you are likely not eligible. If you have questions, it is best to reach out to the project scientist to determine if they are willing to consider you in their application review, though questions can also be sent to apply@bmsis.org.

I was told in an email with the BMSIS Investigator on the project that I can still apply even though I have already started my Masters program. Please advise.

The BMSIS Investigators who lead the YSP projects have full discretion in when they would like to accept someone who has already started graduate school. However, in most cases we will still recommend that any students who have begun Masters or Doctoral program work instead apply to the Visiting Scholar Program.

I'm a high school student. Can I apply to the YSP?

The YSP was designed for college/university students and those who have completed their undergraduate degrees. We do not currently accept high school students unless they will have finished high school by the time the program begins and they have already been accepted to a university program for the year following the YSP. (Please note: due to the pandemic, we understand that some high school students are putting off entry into university - if you are a finishing high school student who is considering university but putting it off for the year, we are happy to consider your application, but please let us know about the discrepancy when you apply)



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How to Successfully Apply

Can I apply to more than one project?

Yes. We do not limit how many projects you can apply to, however we highly advise that only apply to two or three projects at most. If you apply to too many projects, it will be unlikely that you will be able to justify your qualifications and interests in the projects with the space you have on the application.

Also, please note that we only accept one application per applicant. If you apply to more than one project, then you will still only have 2000 words or less to argue for your interests in the projects to which you apply.

I'm applying to more than one project. Why can I only submit one application?

We are thrilled that you are interested in the YSP and in more than one project, however to avoid having to charge a fee for the application, we must limit the number of applications students can submit. So if you intend to apply to more than one project, please do be aware that you will still only have the single application form to use for applying.

If you make a mistake on the application and want to resubmit, you must email us at apply@bmsis.org to ask for us to allow for you to resubmit. We will then delete your application so that you can apply again. If you submit more than one application without informing us, you will be disqualified from the program.

What should I say when I email the BMSIS Scientist who leads the project that I'm interested in?

We highly recommend being **courteous** and **professional** in your messages to our scientists as well as in all of your professional activities.

Please DO NOT begin your emails with informal salutations, and be aware of the professional titles of the recipients.

Also, be cognizant of the amount of time it takes to read your email. Many of our scientists are very busy and do not have time to read emails that are unnecessarily long. Try to be direct in your approach. Some things we recommend that you state in your emails are:

- Briefly say who you are, what your background is, and why you're interested in the project



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- If you have specific skills that are relevant to the project, you should say so
- If you have questions about the project or the work of the scientist, then those are great to ask, but be courteous and concise in how you ask your questions. Asking for information that is available online, can be retrieved by a simple internet search, or that is irrelevant to the project will make you appear unprofessional.
- Also, please note that we receive a large number of applications and the project scientists most likely do not have time to have individual meetings or phone calls with interested applicants to discuss the projects. **Please refrain from inquiring about individual meetings to discuss project details.**

Again, we would like to highlight that we receive a large number of applications to this program. Please do not send lengthy emails to our scientists. You will make it less likely that they are able to consider you a qualified applicant if you cannot also be respectful of their time.

Also, please be aware that our scientists may not have time to read or review any documents you try to send to them. Some of our scientists receive hundreds of applications and most simply do not have the time to review these materials before the application review process.

I've emailed the BMSIS Investigator but they never wrote back...

We understand that it can be frustrating to send an email and not receive a response. Many times our BMSIS Investigators will happily respond to your emails, but they are also very busy in their professional lives and cannot always commit to responding to every single email they receive. If you do not receive a response from the project scientist, you can and should still apply. If you have asked them questions that will dictate whether or not you will apply and they have not responded, then please instead send those questions to apply@bmsis.org.

The application form requires a statement of interest that can be up to 5000 characters. Do I have to write something that is that long?

No. We aren't offering as much guidance on that section, as that is a place for the applicant to decide how they think it is best to answer (and it allows us to see how you reason through answering such a question). That statement is a good place to argue for your own interests, to share the skills you have that best fit the project, and to show us that you can communicate well. We do not require that the statement be exactly 5000 characters and we actually prefer that it be much shorter. **If you can concisely argue your case in the statement with 500 or 1000 characters, then that is excellent.**



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When I first looked at the Application Form, it said I was limited to 2000 words and now it says 5000 characters. Why is that?

We sincerely apologize to our applicants for having to make that change, but the Google Form we were using had an internal character limit that we were unaware of, so we had to change to this new character limit. You should still be easily capable of arguing for your interests in projects as well as for sharing your background within the space provided.

What happens if I submit the application with a mistake?

We CANNOT edit your application for you, nor will we append documents after you have submitted your application. If you make a mistake and would like to resubmit, then email us at apply@bmsis.org and we will delete your first submission so that you can submit the application again.

For this reason, we also highly recommend that you have a saved version of your essays and application materials. We will not be held responsible for your mistakes or for changes you would like to make.

Application Requirements and Potential Issues

Why do you have character limits on the responses for the application questions?

You should be able to argue the case for why you are a good fit for a project or how the YSP will impact your life without requiring more than the allotted limit. We understand that it can feel like you're not sharing enough information within that space, but it is a good test of your capabilities to be able to concisely state a response to a question. You don't need tens of thousands of words to make your case compelling. Indeed, many of the successful applicants in previous years were those who were able to complete these sections of the application without getting close to the character limits.



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I'm applying to more than one project, should I submit more than one application form?

No. We only accept one application form per applicant. If you wish to apply to more than one project, we do allow that, but we also highly recommend only applying to two or three at most since you will still only have the same amount of space in which to argue for why you are a good candidate for the given projects.

What happens if I go over the character limit?

Much as with any endeavor in your life, there can be consequences for breaking the rules. We will not accept applications that have gone over the character limit. Please be careful in how you complete your application.

Do you need official transcripts, or will unofficial transcripts suffice?

We do not require official transcripts if your university offers unofficial transcripts. We primarily want to see your transcripts so that we can know which courses you have completed successfully, especially the courses that are relevant to the projects to which you are applying. If this question seems confusing to you it may be because your university does not have unofficial transcripts, in which case the form of transcripts provided by your university must be submitted.

My transcripts from university are not in English. Can I submit my transcripts in their original language?

We understand that asking a university to provide transcripts in English can take time and might even cost money, even for unofficial transcripts. For this reason, we do accept transcripts in the original language that they are provided by the university. However, **if you submit your transcripts in a language that is not English, then we also require that you attach to them a document in English where you list the names of the courses in English along with the grades you earned and the year in which the courses were completed.**

I am a freshman student and I do not yet have transcripts. Can I still apply?

Yes, you may still apply (though do be aware that most of the projects for the YSP require a fairly extensive background that many freshmen will not yet have acquired). If you do not yet have transcripts from your university, then you must submit a document that explains that you



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are a freshman and do not yet have transcripts. The document must also contain a list of all of the current courses that you are taking as well as your **honest** opinion on the grades you are likely to receive.

Do you have a template or recommendation for submitting a CV/resume?

We do not provide a template for this section of the application. While some applicants do not have a CV or resume, it is a good practice to begin creating these for all of your professional endeavors in the future. There are lots of examples and best practices to be found online, but a few things that your CV/resume should include are: your educational background, any jobs or research positions you have previously held (especially those that are relevant to the YSP), and any relevant skills or courses that you think make you a good fit for the project(s).

Do you have a required format for the letters of recommendation?

We do not have a specific format for your letters of recommendation. Most often, the people who you will ask for a letter of recommendation will already have experience in writing such letters. However, if a letter writer does have a question, please ask them to direct their questions to apply@bmsis.org.

One thing we cannot accept is a hyperlink to a OneDrive, GoogleDrive, Dropbox, or other storage system. We cannot be expected to have accounts with these systems in order to retrieve files, nor will we accept such links as acceptable letters of recommendation. Please do ensure that your letter writers are aware that we will not retrieve their letters from online storage systems.

Is there any other information I should provide to my recommenders?

Yes! Please ask your recommenders to submit their letters with titles in the format of “first_name last_name Letter”, where they use your first and last name. When letters are sent to us, it is very helpful if the email subject includes a reference to the letter and your name.

Please let your recommenders know that we require more than just your first name for the letter. We receive a large number of applications and you will likely share a name with other applicants. We need your full name in order to add your letter of recommendation to your application materials.



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Also, as mentioned above, we cannot accept a hyperlink to a OneDrive, GoogleDrive, Dropbox, or other storage system. We cannot be expected to have accounts with these systems in order to retrieve files, nor will we accept such links as acceptable letters of recommendation. Please do ensure that your letter writers are aware that we will not retrieve their letters from online storage systems.

Who should I ask for a letter of recommendation?

It's rather important in your professional career to understand who knows your work and who is most likely the best fit to speak on your behalf. Oftentimes, letter writers will be previous college professors, managers and others in authority in positions you have held, or those from your professional network who know you well and who can speak to the value of your contributions. While your friends and family may know you well, they may not be best positioned to argue on your behalf in a professional manner and may even be seen to be providing a biased recommendation. It's a good practice to ask your letter writers directly if they have the time to write a letter for you, to provide them with sufficient time to complete the letters and to give them a good understanding of the program you are applying to and the other requirements, and it is highly advisable to tell them about the specific project you would like to work on and how they might best be able to speak to how your skills will serve on that project.

My recommenders do not know English. Can I submit my letters of recommendation if they're in another language?

We are a global community at BMSIS and we understand that some applicants won't have recommenders who know English. While English is preferable, we are also willing to accept letters of recommendation that are in the following languages: French, Serbian, Croatian, former Yugoslavian languages, Turkish, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Marathi, Hindi, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Japanese, and German. We are able to offer this as many of our researchers are willing to read letters that are in these languages.

Will you tell me when my letters have been received?

No. Due to the number of letters we receive in the program, we do not tell each applicant when their letters have been received. We do provide a confirmation email in response to the letter writers, however, if you are worried that one or even both of your letters have not been received by us, then please send us an email at apply@bmsis.org and we can check out records to see if your letters have arrived.



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Will you reach out to letter writers if the letters are not received?

No. It is entirely your responsibility to ensure that your letter writers have the time and capability to write your letters. If a letter writer has not sent in a letter, it is your responsibility to check in with them and ensure that they will be able to submit their letter.

I'm worried that one of my letters of recommendation won't be received until after the application deadlines has closed.

We understand that sometimes a letter writer needs a little extra time or may not have had a chance to send their letter in. While we advise having the letters submitted before the deadline, we will still accept applications that do not have both letters of recommendation completed, as long as the letter(s) then arrives within 1-2 weeks after the deadline. However, please be aware if we do not receive both letters of recommendation, you will not be selected for a project.

I made a mistake on the application form. Can I please resubmit the form?

Yes. We will allow you to resubmit the application form if you need to, but we only will do this once for any applicant, so please be careful in your submission. Also, be aware that when you resubmit your application, the first version you had submitted will be deleted without consideration. In order to be allowed to resubmit, you must email us at apply@bmsis.org to ensure we are aware of your resubmission.

I tried to access the application, but I only received the below message:

Young Scientist Program - Online Application

Thank you for your interest in the BMSIS Young Scientist Program. The application period for 2021 has not yet begun, but will be available soon.



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This has happened to a few applicants. The issue appears to be coming from those who have not recently cleared their cache or refreshed their browsers. If you haven't recently closed and reopened your web browser, try doing that first and that should fix the problem. If not, you may need to manually clear your cache (an internet search will show you how to do this). If the problem continues, then send us a message at apply@bmsis.org and let us know what you've already tried.

Can I count the Young Scientist Program as part of my university's required/compulsory internship program?

Such inquiries must be answered on a case-by-case basis, however we can say that your university can have absolutely no control over the format or structure of our programs. In cases where the YSP is counted towards a university internship requirement, our project scientists are often happy to write a review or submit a form as needed for the program after you have successfully completed the YSP; however, we will not provide certifications or letters of completion before the program has been completed.

I need to make a correction to my application. What should I do?

If you would like to edit your application or you have an updated version of transcripts to add or have any other reason to edit your application, please email us. We can delete your application from the database and allow you to re-apply. We CANNOT accept your transcripts and CVs separately and will not edit your application for you. For this reason, we recommend that you have a saved version of your essays and application materials in case you should need to make changes.