



## Top tips for applicants for the NSA Samuel Wharry Memorial Award for the Next Generation

NSA and the Company of Merchants of the Staple of England provides this advice for young people planning to apply for a 2019/2020 travel bursary.

### Choosing a topic

- Have a clear topic in mind. You can use the bursary to travel wherever you want and, wherever you go, you are bound to see plenty of farming practices and sheep production systems. However, the selection panel will be looking for someone with a particular topic in mind, so that person can focus their attention while travelling and report back afterwards in a way that provides practical information.
- Before you apply, think about the written and verbal reports you'll be asked to give afterwards! We're not looking for the world's best public speaker or the finest report writer. And we will offer as much help as you need with planning presentations or writing the report, so don't worry about that. However, we won't want a travel diary – "I went here and then I went there and I saw this farm and then I went to this farm". What we will want is to know what you *learnt* – "I went to this farm and they did this, which made me think I could try that at home and so now I'm back I'm doing this with my flock and, if it works, I think other farmers could try it too."
- You can choose any topic you like, as long as it relates to the application of science in sheep production. In this context, science is a broad term and means looking at factual, observational and experimental work in any area affecting sheep farming. Here are just a few general areas and some topics within them that might be of interest.

Area	Potential topics
Nutrition / Grassland / Soil	Practical integration of sheep in arable rotations for the benefit of soil health and flock health.
	Different options for over-wintering.
	Effective utilisation of mob grazing.
	Different systems for grazing diverse grass swards.
Health	On-farm implement of sustainable parasite control options.
	Practical protection of health statuses / engaging farmers with biosecurity measures.
	Effective flock health plans.
Genetics	Using technology to measure performance traits and implementing breeding improvements.
	Integrating abattoir feedback (meat yield/quality and disease data) into breeding programmes.
	Options to share performance data across flocks and different systems.
Wool	Changes on-farm (breeding, management and wool handling) to add value further down the chain.
	Maximising wool as a sustainable alternative to synthetic textiles.



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National Sheep Association is an organisation which represents the views and interests of sheep producers throughout the UK.  
 NSA is funded by its membership of sheep farmers and its activities involve it in every aspect of the sheep industry.

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<b>Sheep and the environment</b>	Simultaneously maintaining high standards of sheep production and water quality.
	Integrating sheep and agroforestry.
	Ways to measure and reward farmers for delivering public goods.
	Balancing sheep farming with at-risk wildlife species (e.g. high level predators)
	Successful partnership working/collaboration between sheep farmers and other land users.
<b>Meat marketing &amp; promotion</b>	Making sheepmeat appealing to younger consumers.
	Promoting sheepmeat in a world where veganism is on the rise.
	Selling sheepmeat by promotion of production system, specific breeds or age of sheep.
<b>The next generation</b>	Effective ways to engage farming families in successful planning.
	Successful match-making systems – e.g. young farmers and retiring farmers / sheep farmers and arable farmers / shepherds and employment opportunities.

### Planning your trip

- Don't just pick the obvious! Yes, there are lots of sheep and some really exciting things happening in Australia and New Zealand, but countries like China and India have lots of sheep too, and countries closer to home, such as Scandinavian countries and the Republic of Ireland, have plenty going on too. We're not suggesting you travel to a war zone (!) or spend time in a country where English isn't widely spoken if you don't have a magic touch with languages, but do your research and think about where you might learn the most.
- £2,800 is a lot of money and, depending on where you plan to go and how much time you can spend away from home, you might want to consider more than one country.
- You don't need to have planned exactly what you'll be doing each day, but the more specific you can be the better, as it shows you've put some thought in and are serious about getting the most out of the trip. Think about roughly how the bursary will split between flights/travel, accommodation and subsistence. Will you need a visa(s)? Can you provide some of your own money for e.g. beer money and tourist trips?!
- NSA and the Staple will invite the two successful applicants to a preparation day very soon after they are awarded the bursary, to help you plan your trip and make the most of it. So don't worry if you know where you want to go and what you want to learn but are unsure which specific farms, businesses or companies you need to contact to make it happen. We can give you lots of ideas and contacts – but what we want to know is that you're self-motivated and organised enough to use those ideas and contacts to make your trip a reality.

### Selling yourself

- The selection panel is going to have a really tough job to choose who to give the award to, so put yourself ahead of the rest of telling us what we really want to know:-
  - That you are committed to the sheep sector and plan to continue with sheep long into the future.
  - That you are self-motivated, organised and enthusiastic about this opportunity.
  - That you will be a good ambassador for the UK sheep sector while you are overseas.
  - That you have a positive outlook and are willing to consider new ideas and apply new skills to your own sheep farming situation. There's no point travelling overseas and seeing new things if you're going to get home and keep doing what you've always done!
  - That you are aware of the wider industry, and the importance of the work of NSA and other industry bodies to provide a voice for the sheep sector.