



[The Carnegie Vacation Scholarships](#) aim to encourage undergraduates to develop their independent research skills. The Scheme is open to students enrolled on an undergraduate degree course at an eligible Scottish institution. The application scheme is competitive, students submit a research proposal and the Carnegie Trust selects those to be

awarded on the basis of the academic standing and motivation of the student, the quality of the project, and the supervision and environment provided. This is the second year in a row the Department has been successful in having an undergraduate awarded with this scholarship.

**Andy Jupp explains more about his experience as a vacation scholarship student this year:**

I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Mental Health Nursing student who was lucky enough to be accepted for the Carnegie Vacation Scholarship this summer. I was involved in a research project aiming to explore the LGBT+ knowledge, attitudes and experiences of student nurses and their educators, supervised by Dr Rebecah MacGilleEathain. The participants for this research were drawn from the staff and students from the Department of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of the Highlands and Islands, from across Highland and the Western Isles.



Preliminary findings indicate that 72% of participants had experience of nursing an openly LGBT+ patient and that 43% of participants reported that they had encountered trans/bi/homophobia in healthcare staff in clinical practice. Differences were found in the experience of participants depending on their geographical location, those in more urban locations were more likely to experience the above, than those in rural locations. We gathered further useful data, there were some surprises and some confirmation of previous research; but getting to carry out research in an area that had not been investigated before was very rewarding and hopefully the results will be useful in informing future student nurse education.

Working on the Carnegie Vacation Scholarship project has been a really useful learning experience. Getting to carry out actual research instead of just reading it has been instructive. I feel pretty lucky that we chose an online survey as our data collection method as this allowed the project to carry on during the COVID-19 lockdown. Working on this project from design to write up has given me a good over-view of the research process from end-to-end. This experience has encouraged me to consider a post-grad in Research Methods once I complete my nursing degree. I have always been pretty nerdy but the excitement of seeing patterns emerge from the data we collected has given me a wee bit of inspiration about the direction I want to head in for both my studies and clinical practice.