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AWARDEE REPORT FORM

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| NAME | | Luke Barlow | | |
| TWITTER HANDLE\* *optional* | | BarlowPalaeo | | |
| UNIVERSITY | | King’s College London | | |
| NAME OF AWARD | | Symington Bequest Fund Awards 2024/25 | | |
| PURPOSE OF AWARD *conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.* | | | | |
| To attend the European Student Symposium on Anatomical Research by the European Federation for Experimental Morphology (EFEM) in Salamanca, Spain on the 2/9/25. | | | | |
| REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| Before attending the EFEM European Student Symposium in Salamanca, I expected several key benefits. My main aim was to engage with other young researchers in anatomy and developmental biology, exchanging ideas and broadening my perspective on craniofacial research. As my PhD focuses on the development of the pterygoid complex and its functional integration, I anticipated that meeting peers working with different models and methods would help refine my hypotheses. I also looked forward to presenting my research internationally. Preparing a talk for a broad audience forced me to distil complex findings into a clear narrative, and I hoped for constructive feedback to sharpen my project. Engaging with critical but supportive questions was something I anticipated would build both my confidence and analytical skills.  Another expected benefit was exposure to new techniques through lectures and workshops, particularly in imaging and morphometric analysis. These promised practical insights are directly relevant to my research. Finally, the symposium offered an important networking opportunity. Building connections with fellow students and senior researchers across Europe was something I valued highly, both for possible collaborations and for understanding different academic pathways. Overall, I anticipated that the event would enrich my technical knowledge, improve my communication skills, and situate my research more firmly within the wider anatomical sciences community. | | | | |
| COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event.  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| Attending the EFEM Student Symposium in Salamanca was an inspiring and rewarding experience. The programme brought together a diverse range of research, from developmental and molecular anatomy to applied clinical studies. This breadth gave me a better appreciation of how my craniofacial work fits into a much wider scientific context. Presenting my project on the pterygoid complex was a highlight. The questions I received were thoughtful and encouraged me to consider new angles on my findings. Informal discussions afterwards led to useful suggestions and potential future collaborations. Delivering a talk to an international audience also strengthened my confidence and improved my ability to explain my data clearly.  The keynote lectures and workshops were particularly valuable. Talks by senior researchers highlighted not only cutting-edge science but also effective ways of framing and communicating research questions. Practical sessions on imaging and analysis provided tools I can directly apply in my own work.  Equally important were the networking opportunities. Conversations with students and faculty from across Europe created a strong sense of community, and Salamanca’s cultural setting made the whole event especially memorable. Overall, the symposium deepened my enthusiasm for research, broadened my skills, and left me with a clearer vision of how my work contributes to the wider anatomical field. | | | | |
| REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant.* For public engagement/outreach awards what did your audience gain and how did you evaluate success?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| The symposium allowed me to develop a wide range of academic and transferable skills. Most immediately, it improved my communication skills. Preparing and delivering my talk required condensing complex developmental biology data into a clear narrative for an international audience, teaching me how to balance precision with accessibility. This experience strengthened my ability to present research effectively to both specialists and non-specialists. I also developed critical engagement skills. Listening to talks outside my field broadened my scientific perspective, while formulating questions and giving feedback sharpened my analytical thinking. Responding to questions about my own work trained me to think on my feet and adapt explanations in real time, which will be valuable for future presentations, peer review, and teaching.  Networking was another key area of growth as it is something I have struggled with in the past. Introducing myself to peers and senior academics, exchanging ideas, and discussing research environments across Europe improved my confidence in professional settings. These conversations also gave me new insights into different approaches and methodologies.  Finally, working to a strict time limit helped refine my organisation and prioritisation skills. Overall, the symposium strengthened my communication, analytical, networking, and professional abilities, providing a foundation that will benefit my academic career moving forward. | | | | |
| REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? For public engagement/outreach awards how with the materials/knowledge generated by this activity be used in the future?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| The symposium was a fantastic opportunity for me to hone a variety of academic and transferable skills. Right off the bat, it really boosted my communication abilities. Crafting and delivering my presentation meant I had to distill my project into a straightforward story for an international audience, which taught me how to strike a balance between being precise and making things accessible. This experience really enhanced my capability to present research effectively, whether to experts or those less familiar with the topic. I also sharpened my critical engagement skills. Listening to talks outside my area of expertise expanded my scientific viewpoint, and coming up with questions and providing feedback helped refine my analytical thinking. When I had to respond to questions about my own work, it trained me to think quickly and adjust my explanations on the spot, which will come in handy for future presentations, peer reviews, and teaching. Networking was another significant area of growth for me. Meeting peers and senior academics, sharing ideas, and discussing research environments across Europe really boosted my confidence in professional settings. Those conversations also opened my eyes to different approaches and methodologies. Lastly, working under a strict time limit helped me polish my organization and prioritization skills. All in all, the symposium really strengthened my communication, analytical, networking, and professional abilities, laying a solid foundation that will support my academic career as I move forward. | | | | |
| Data Protection/GDPR: I consent to the data included in this submission being collected, processed and stored by the Anatomical Society. Answer YES or NO in the Box below | | | | |
| YES | | | | |
| Graphical Images: If you include graphical images you must obtain consent from people appearing in any photos and confirm that you have consent. A consent statement from you must accompany each report if relevant. A short narrative should accompany the image. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Copyright: If you submit images you must either own the copyright to the image or have gained the explicit permission of the copyright holder for the image to be submitted as part of the report for upload to the Society’s website, Newsletter, social media and so forth. A copyright statement must accompany each report if relevant. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| SIGNATURE | Luke Barlow | | DATE | 8/9/25 |

*If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature*

*File: AS-Award-Report-Form-171023 – International Conference*

*File: Award Report Form SBF 202425 R5 LB Uploaded website 220925*