

Experimental Research – Intermediate

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Once again we waited with anticipation to see the entries in the Intermediate Experimental Research section of the Science Talent Search. Students who enter this section are in Years 9 to 10 and again it was clear that many students had flourished when given the opportunity to work on a project that inspired them.

There were fifty entries this year and many were of an excellent standard, which made the section very competitive. Five major bursaries and twelve minor bursaries were awarded. The Distinction category enabled us to acknowledge the eight high-quality entries that just missed out on bursaries.

Once again, girls and girls' schools were very well represented in this section this year, with many being awarded bursaries.

Some of the topics of investigation that were awarded bursaries included:

- The science of voice recognition
- What material can block a WiFi signal
- Laptop lurgies
- How do we digest meat?
- Development of an antimicrobial biodegradable plastic

Not only did these entries involve creativity to come up with an original idea to investigate, but also the discipline required to undertake a controlled experiment and document the process in detail. Undertaking research projects and then presenting them as a report parallels what scientists do in the 'real world'. All of the students who managed to undertake this process and produce an entry for the Science Talent Search which satisfied the requirements of both originality and scientific rigour deserve congratulations.

The Science Talent Search aims to stimulate an ongoing interest in the study of Science by encouraging independent, self-motivated project work amongst students.

An entry in the Intermediate Experimental Research section of the Science Talent Search satisfies the requirement of the Science Inquiry Skills strand of the Australian Curriculum for Years 9 and 10. Providing students an opportunity to enter the Experimental Research (Intermediate) section of the Science Talent Search gives them an opportunity to conduct authentic research, with unknown outcomes, rather than replicating an experiment from a science textbook.

It has been a pleasure coordinating the Intermediate Experimental Research section and having the opportunity to work with our valued judges to discover the many students with talent, creativity, and scientific inquiry skills. We would like to thank the judges for their work and commitment to the Science Talent Search. We also recognise and thank the teachers, school laboratory technicians and mentors who supported the students and, finally, the students who accepted the challenge.