



1st Daniel Mervis Prize
St John's College/University of Oxford

Call for applications

The annual Daniel Mervis Prize is organised by St John's College on behalf of the collegiate University in memory of Daniel Mervis, a former Oxford student who died of an accidental drug overdose. It seeks creative contributions on challenging and difficult topics associated with drug use and its impact on students and on society.

There are two prizes to support: i) the awareness of the impact of drug misuse; ii) the celebration of students who have overcome adversity in any aspect of their life (whether or not connected to addiction).

The true horrors of addiction and drug misuse are not widely understood or recounted by those who have suffered or lost loved ones to the disease. The stigma associated with addiction often means that lessons are not learned and the scale of the problem not known. It is time for an active and open engagement on drug misuse.

Winning entries will be featured through the University of Oxford, St John's College websites and social media channels and will also be showcased on www.danielmervis.co.uk.

Details

The Daniel Mervis Prize offers prizes (of £250 for first prize, £150 for second prize, and £100 for subsequent awards) for original work (creative writing, drawing, painting, sculpture, poetry, music or photography) responding to an annual topic and a separate prize for a student who has overcome adversity (whether mental or physical, past or present).

Prize for Original Work

Applicants should send in **one** example of work done during the past twelve months. Written work should not exceed 2000 words and no more than six short poems can be submitted as a set of poetry.

The topic for this year's prize is:

With the stigma attached to addiction and death by drug use, there is limited data on the extent to which mood-enhancing drugs contributed to deaths caused by suicide. What can and should be done to stop this last 'taboo' area?

What are the links between mental health and the most vulnerable in our society and the impact of drug use?

Prize for Overcoming Adversity

This prize is ad hoc. It will depend on students identifying themselves or someone else (with their consent) to receive a prize for something inspirational they have done or for overcoming adversity. There will be one or more prizes in this field.

Applicants should submit a written statement for this prize, not exceeding 2000 words.

Schedule

Closing date for entries: 17.00, Friday 13 January 2023 (0th Week, Hilary Term)

Announcement of winners: Hilary Term 2023

Eligibility

The Daniel Mervis Prize is open to any current University of Oxford student (undergraduate and postgraduate in any course of study).

Application Process

[Applications should be submitted here](#) (you will need to use your SSO to access the entry form).

Applications will be judged by a Prize Committee consisting of the Assessor, President of St John's College, Mr Hilton Mervis, and the Vice-President (Welfare and Equal Opportunities), Oxford SU. The selection process is necessarily subjective, and all aspects of an applicant's entry will be taken into consideration, including any personal or demographic details that applicants wish to share.

If there is no entry of adequate standard, there will be no award. See full terms and conditions of the prize for further information.