**Personal Statement**

I am a second-year PhD student, initially with the University of Dundee, and now at the University of Oxford, focussing on how *Haemophilus influenzae* persist the lungs of bronchiectasis patients. Having benefited enormously from the collaborative spirit both within our respiratory research group and across the wider UK lung research community, I am eager to give back by serving as the BALR PhD Student Representative.

Working in a highly collaborative environment throughout my PhD has shown me how important it is for early-career researchers to build networks. The ability to build connections across different institutions to share and develop ideas has directly shaped my own development, and I want to ensure PhD students across the UK feel equally supported and connected through BALR.

In the lab, I have been involved in the training of undergraduate honours and master's students, helping them with experimental design, data analysis, and day-to-day troubleshooting. This experience has given me a genuine passion for helping fellow students build confidence both in and out of the lab. It is universally agreed that a PhD can be a very daunting and isolating experience and I have first-hand experience of the common hurdles PhD researchers face—from navigating complex techniques to preparing for their first major conference—and I feel I would be well suited to act as an approachable and proactive voice for our student community on the BALR committee.

If appointed, I would focus on strengthening peer-to-peer links between doctoral students at different institutions to support with areas such as abstract writing and keeping up-to-date with important news and deadlines. I would love to continue to grow the existing PhD community in BALR through mechanisms such as spotlighting PhD research across social media channels to help students build their networks before in-person meetings.

This vacancy was brought to my attention by a member of my supervisory team, who is also a committee member of BALR. I therefore have full support to commit the time required for committee meetings and BALR initiatives. I would welcome the opportunity to represent fellow doctoral researchers and help shape a supportive, connected community for the next generation of respiratory scientists.