

UKRI Policy Internships Scheme

Guidance for applicants

A three-month internship opportunity for doctoral students funded by the Research Councils of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to gain training and experience of how research can inform policy making undertaken as part of the doctoral studentship

Closing date for applications: 16:00 on 2nd October 2023

About the UKRI Policy Internships Scheme

1. Research can make a vital contribution to public policy in a range of areas. Policy making is carried out across a wide range of organisations, including government departments, civil society, groups within parliament and devolved administrations, as well as other public bodies and learned societies.
2. The UKRI Policy Internships Scheme provides an opportunity for doctoral students funded by the Research Councils of UK Research and Innovation (AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, MRC, NERC and STFC) to gain training and experience for three months in one of a selected group of highly impactful organisations relevant to UK policy. Students funded through UKRI Centres for Doctoral Training in Artificial Intelligence may also apply and should follow the eligibility criteria and funding details for EPSRC grants.
3. The intention of the scheme is to equip students with transferable skills and training by embedding them in an environment where they can engage with the process of converting research outputs on one or more policy topics of interest to both the student and the organisation. Through these internships, students will produce at least one briefing paper, participate in a policy inquiry and/or organise a policy event, or equivalent.
4. The Policy Internships Scheme is competitive with a success rate of approximately 51% across all applications over recent years. For the 2023/24 round, there are approximately **235** internships available.

Eligibility

5. This scheme is only open to doctoral students funded by the Research Councils of UKRI and applicants must state which Research Council(s) issued the training grant from which they are supported on their application form. For the purposes of applying to this scheme, students funded through UKRI Centres for Doctoral Training in Artificial Intelligence should follow the eligibility criteria and funding details for EPSRC grants. Applicants should contact the training grant administrator at their Research Organisation with any queries relating to their funding status.

6. All internships must start before the end of a student's funded period of study as well as fulfilling any Research Council specific criteria as appropriate (see Funding section below). All internships should be completed by the end of the 2024 calendar year.
7. Students who are studying on a Student visa must check their eligibility to undertake a studentship placement, particularly where this requires an extension to the studentship period. UKRI consider Policy Internship placements to be integral to the studentship; however, international students must contact the relevant staff at their Research Organisation for confirmation.
8. Some host partners have security vetting requirements for interns placed within their organisations, in some cases this includes nationality. Applicants should view the Host Partner Information document for further information on security requirements and ensure that they discuss security clearance requirements with preferred host partners in advance of submitting an application.
9. Applications from part-time registered students are welcomed. If successful, part-time students who are eligible for studentship extensions (see Funding section below) will have these applied on a part-time basis.
10. Internships are available with 25 host partners:
 - Committee on Climate Change
 - Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero
 - Department for Education (DfE)
 - Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)
 - Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)
 - Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
 - Government Office for Science (GO-Science)
 - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS)
 - Home Office
 - Institute for Fiscal Studies
 - Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
 - Ministry of Justice
 - National Library of Scotland
 - Natural England
 - Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe)
 - Office of the Sentencing Council (OSC)
 - Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)
 - Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe)
 - Select Committees, House of Commons
 - Senedd Research/Ymchwil y Senedd
 - The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST, UK Parliament)
 - The Royal Society
 - The Royal Society of Biology (RSB)
 - UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)
 - WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme)
11. Further information about these organisations, the internship opportunities available and contact details for host partners are available in the accompanying Host Partner Information document.

12. Applicants can apply to only one host partner but are invited to note a second choice on their application. Applicants may be contacted by their second-choice host partner should additional opportunities become available.
13. Some host partners only accept applications from students funded by certain Research Councils, where this is the case, the details are highlighted within the relevant section of the Host Partner Information document. Students funded by STFC are eligible to apply to the Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST) and the Government Office for Science only.
14. Applicants wishing to undertake an internship at the Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST), the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe), Senedd Research or Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) as their first choice should record this as 'Parliamentary Host' in the 'Internship Preferences' section of the application form. The parliamentary hosts will undertake a joint assessment process with the actual host finalised during the interview process. When indicating the reasons for applying to these hosts on the application form, applicants should complete this section as though the application is being made to the first-choice host partner.

Funding and travel and accommodation expenses

15. Internships are financially supported by the Research Councils and host partners. The funding details will depend on the applicant's Research Council and which host partner is chosen. Some Research Councils provide additional funding to cover internships costs while students of other Research Councils should access funds from their training grant (Doctoral Training Partnership, Centre for Doctoral Training, Doctoral Training Centre etc.). **Applicants should read Annex A carefully and ensure that they and the training grant holder at their Research Organisation understand the funding arrangements that apply** (the training grant holder is a member of staff at the student's Research Organisation who is responsible for the grant that funds the studentship).
16. Doctoral stipend (where eligible) and fees must continue to be paid by Research Organisations throughout the three-month internship period.
17. Most host partners provide a co-funding contribution to meet eligible travel and accommodation costs arising from the internship up to a maximum limit of £2,400. Accommodation costs can only be claimed by students for whom it is necessary to relocate in order to undertake the internship.
18. The Parliamentary hosts (Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST), the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe), Senedd Research and Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) do not have a co-funding agreement in place. Therefore, eligible travel and accommodation costs up to a maximum limit of £2,400 should be claimed from other sources, such as the training grant (see **Annex A** for these funding details for each Research Council).
19. All expense costs must be in line with those set out in the UKRI Travel and Subsistence Policy. Research Organisations and host partners must ensure timely reimbursement of eligible expenses, so students are not left out of pocket during their internship.
20. All computing, email and other facilities necessary to complete the policy internship will be provided by the host partner.
21. Students who currently receive a London allowance stipend, will continue to receive this supplement for the duration of the internship, regardless of the host partner location.

Students who do not currently receive a London allowance stipend, will not qualify for this, regardless of the host partner location. Additional costs arising from undertaking an internship within London are to be met through the internship travel and accommodation allowance.

Internship arrangements

22. Successful applicants will be given the option of being able to carry out their internship either remotely, or in a hybrid way, where this would better support both the students' needs and the requirements of the host partner. Specific arrangements should be discussed between successful applicants and their host partners. The Research Councils are keen to encourage applicants from all over the UK. For those successful applicants not within reasonable travelling distance of the host partner, funding is available to cover travel or accommodation costs as set out in the Funding section.
23. All host partners are strictly non-partisan – applicants will be required to abstain from any party political or lobbying activity and to uphold the principles of parliamentary / public service. Interns based at Parliamentary organisations will be required to declare and sign a commitment to conduct, conflicts of interest and confidentiality, during their internship. If applicants have any questions concerning this, they should contact their intended host partner for further information.
24. There are no official guidelines regarding taking annual leave during policy internships. If annual leave is taken during the internship, this should be arranged between the student and their host partner line manager. Any annual leave should not negatively affect the overall internship experience.

Start date and length of internship

25. Placements are expected to take place within the 2024 calendar year, with the earliest starting in January 2024. The internships last for three months. Following confirmation of award, the host partner will agree a start date with the applicant, the applicant's supervisor and Research Organisation.
26. Changes to the start date must be agreed between the applicant, the host partner, the applicant's supervisor, and Research Organisation.
27. Successful applicants are not permitted to delay the start date of their policy internship so that it begins following the end of their doctoral funded period.

Guidance for completion of the application

28. Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to thrive and succeed in an environment that enables them to do so. Students should be supported by relevant staff at their research organisation to complete their application. If you require any reasonable adjustments to enable you to participate in the application process, please contact researchcareers@nerc.ukri.org to make a request. Applicants who require reasonable adjustments to enable and facilitate their placement should discuss their requirements with their host partner and relevant staff at their research organisation.
29. Applicants must submit a completed [online application form](#). The application must be approved by the student's primary supervisor and the training grant holder before it is submitted (the training grant holder is a member of staff at the student's Research Organisation who is responsible for the grant that funds the studentship). It is possible to save and return to the form on a later occasion.

30. As part of the application, applicants answer a set of questions (for information, details of the questions requiring longer answers are provided in **Annex B**) and upload two documents which must be in Microsoft Word or PDF format:
 - A signed Funding and Permissions Form – this form requires the signature of the applicant, the applicant's lead supervisor and the training grant holder.
 - A summary policy briefing in the style of a [POSTnote](#)– this should not be directly related to the applicant's doctoral research topic but instead should be relevant to current issues, legislation and/or government policy.
31. Please note, any attachments uploaded to the online application form using the save and resume function will **not** be saved until the form is submitted. Therefore, users should not add attachments until they are ready to submit their application.
32. The summary policy briefing should be no longer than two sides of A4 in Arial size 11 font excluding references and/or diagrams. Applicants should include their full name and the title of the policy briefing in the document header.
33. The summary briefing is not intended to be as long or exhaustive as an actual policy briefing, but applicants should use the document to demonstrate their ability to write in a style suitable for a policy-making (rather than academic) audience and organise the content accordingly.
34. The online application form will automatically close at **16:00 on 2 October 2023**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their application well in advance of the 16:00 deadline as servers can be busy and slow to respond. Any application that misses this deadline, is incomplete (**including all the necessary attachments and signed permissions**), or does not meet the eligibility criteria, will not be considered.

Assessment

35. Assessment is via a two-stage process:
 - i. **Written applications**
36. Submitted online application forms will be assessed by representatives from the host partner.
37. The criteria for assessment of the written applications are:
 - Motivation and aims for undertaking a policy internship
 - Writing style (including brevity and clarity)
 - Research content
 - Policy content
 - Impartiality
 - Timeliness and relevance
38. Host partners will notify individual candidates who are unsuccessful at the written application stage. Please note that unfortunately, not all host partners are able to provide feedback at this stage.
39. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to stage two:

ii. Interview

40. The interviews will take place at a location decided by the host partner which may include a remote option.
41. Interview panels will consist of representatives chosen by the host partner.
42. The host partner will inform all applicants of their interview outcomes.

End of internship feedback

43. At the end of the internship, students will be required to complete a feedback form detailing the outcomes achieved during their three-month internship.

Timeline

- Policy Internships Scheme opens for applications: 14 July 2023
- Policy Internships Scheme closing date: 2 October 2023
- Sift period: November 2023
- Interview period: November/December 2023
- Successful applicants informed by: 18 December 2023
- Internships commence: from January 2024

Contacts and further information

44. The Policy Internships Scheme is coordinated by NERC on behalf of the other Research Councils of UKRI. Any queries relating to the application process should be directed to the NERC Talent and Skills Team (researchcareers@nerc.ukri.org) or the relevant host partner.
45. Further information about the host partners, including relevant contacts, can be found in the Policy Internships Scheme Host Partner Information document.
46. Please note that neither the Research Councils nor the host partners will be able to advise on the strengths or weaknesses of individual applications.
47. All personal data provided to UKRI via your application will be processed in accordance with UK data protection legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. For the purposes of application assessment and the running of the Policy Internships Scheme, applications and personal data will be securely shared with the relevant host partner organisations. Further information on how we use personal data can be found in the UKRI [Privacy Notice](#).

Annex A: Funding details by Research Council

For the purposes of applying to this scheme, students funded through UKRI Centres for Doctoral Training in Artificial Intelligence should follow the eligibility criteria and funding details for EPSRC grants.

A. AHRC funding details

Stipend and fees

1. Your Research Organisation will continue to pay your stipend and fees and your studentship will be extended. In line with AHRC's Training Grant Funding Guide, when the AHRC funding continues during an internship or placement, it is not possible to extend the submission date.
2. Your stipend and fees should be supported from the existing training grant award. If the Training Grant award holder has any questions, they should contact the AHRC for advice.

Travel and accommodation

3. The process for claiming eligible travel and accommodation costs varies depending on your host partner:
 - a. For students hosted by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Senedd Research, Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of £2,400 should be claimed from other sources, such as your training grant. If successful, it is important to agree with your Research Organisation's finance office the best way to cover these costs in the short-term prior to your internship. Please contact your training grant nominated contact to discuss.
 - b. For students hosted by other organisations, travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the host partner up to a maximum of £2,400. If successful, you should contact your host partner and Research Organisation regarding the procedure for claiming these expenses.

B. BBSRC funding details

Stipend and fees

1. Your Research Organisation will continue to pay your stipend and fees. BBSRC does not offer any extension to the studentship funded period for this internship.
2. BBSRC students undertaking a DTP studentship will have their internship funded as their PIPS internship.
3. Applicants undertaking a BBSRC CASE studentship will have their internship supported from funds within their training grant.

Travel and accommodation

4. The process for claiming eligible travel and accommodation costs varies depending on your host partner:-

- a. For students hosted by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Senedd Research, Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of £2,400 should be claimed from other sources, such as the training grant. Any shortfall in funding will need to be met by the cash limit of the training grant.
- b. For students hosted by other organisations, travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the host partner up to a maximum of £2,400. If successful, you should contact your host partner and Research Organisation regarding the procedure for claiming these expenses.

C. ESRC funding details

Stipend and fees

1. Your Research Organisation will continue to pay your stipend and fees and your studentship will be extended.
2. The required costs to support stipend and fees should be accessed through your ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) or your equivalent Research Council funding structure.

Travel and accommodation

3. The process for claiming eligible travel and accommodation costs varies depending on your host partner:-
 - a. For students hosted by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Senedd Research, Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of £2,400 should be claimed from other sources, such as your DTP. If successful, it is important to agree with your Research Organisation's finance office the best way to cover these costs in the short-term prior to your internship. Please contact your DTP nominated contact to discuss.
 - b. For students hosted by other organisations, travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the host partner up to a maximum of £2,400. If successful, you should contact your host partner and Research Organisation regarding the procedure for claiming these expenses.

D. EPSRC funding details

Stipend and fees

1. Your Research Organisation will continue to pay your stipend and fees and your studentship will be extended.
2. These costs must be met from the Research Organisation's existing doctoral training grant.

Travel and accommodation

3. The process for claiming eligible travel and accommodation costs varies depending on your host partner:-

- a. For students hosted by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Senedd Research, Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, the required costs to support travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of £2,400 should be met from the Research Organisation's existing doctoral training grant.
- b. For students hosted by other organisations, travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the host partner up to a maximum of £2,400. If successful, you should contact your host partner and Research Organisation regarding the procedure for claiming these expenses.

E. MRC funding details

Stipend and fees

1. Your Research Organisation will continue to pay your stipend and fees and your studentship will be extended.
2. The required costs to support stipend and fees can be accessed through the MRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) Flexible Supplement. No further supplements will be provided by MRC to support successful internships.

Travel and accommodation

3. The process for claiming eligible travel and accommodation costs varies depending on your host partner: -
 - a. For students hosted by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Senedd Research, Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, the required costs to support travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of £2,400 can be accessed through the MRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) Flexible Supplement. No further supplements will be provided by MRC to support successful internships. You should liaise with your Research Organisation on how to claim necessary expenses for this internship.
 - b. For students hosted by other organisations, travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the host partner up to a maximum of £2,400. If successful, you should contact your host partner and Research Organisation regarding the procedure for claiming these expenses.

F. NERC funding details

Stipend and fees

1. Your Research Organisation will continue to pay your stipend and fees and your studentship will be extended.
2. For students funded through training grants that started before 2019 or research grant associated studentships, students must complete an expense claim form for the stipend and fees incurred during the internship period. NERC will then reimburse the Research Organisation for these costs after the internship. For students funded through training grants that started in 2019 or after, these costs must be met from the existing training grant.

Travel and accommodation

3. The process for claiming eligible travel and accommodation costs varies depending on your host partner:-
 - a. For students hosted by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Senedd Research, Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of £2,400 should be claimed in the first instance from your Research Organisation. For students funded through training grants that started before 2019 or research grant associated studentships, these costs should be included on your expenses claim form, NERC will then reimburse the Research Organisation. For students funded through training grants that started in 2019 or after, these costs must be met from the existing training grant.
 - b. For students hosted by other organisations, travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the host partner up to a maximum of £2,400. If successful, you should contact your host partner and Research Organisation regarding the procedure for claiming these expenses.

G. STFC funding details

Stipend and fees

1. Your Research Organisation will continue to pay your stipend and fees and your studentship will be extended.
2. STFC will transfer funds to your Research Organisation to cover an additional quarter payment for your stipend and fees.

Travel and accommodation

3. The process for claiming eligible travel and accommodation costs varies depending on your host partner:-
 - a. For students hosted by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of £2,400 will be paid upfront to your Research Organisation.
 - b. For students hosted by the Government Office for Science (GO-Science), travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the host partner up to a maximum of £2,400. If successful, you should contact GO-Science and your Research Organisation regarding the procedure for claiming these expenses.

When reconciling costs, the Research Organisation should put all costs related to the Policy Internships Scheme under the heading "Other Costs".

Annex B: Details of application form questions.

These are provided to give applicants notice of questions that are part of the application form.

- Please use the box to include information from your CV including your education and employment history for the last 3 years and any relevant work experience. (Maximum 7000 characters with spaces)
- Please provide a brief summary of your PhD project. This should be suitable for a non-specialist audience. (Maximum 1043 characters with spaces)
- Please explain why you are applying for a UKRI Policy Internship. (Maximum 3469 characters with spaces)
- Please explain why you are applying to your chosen host partner (Maximum 3469 characters with spaces)
- Please provide a list of skills you can bring to this internship and your achievements to date of relevance to undertaking this internship (Maximum 1679 characters with spaces)
- What skills do you hope to gain from this internship? (Maximum 1043 characters with spaces)