

Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) Fellowships

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) is offering a three-month fellowship to PhD students from the NERC funded Science and Solutions for a Changing Planet (SSCP) and SCENARIO DTPs. The opportunity will be funded directly by the DTP in which the student is hosted.

These fellowships are an exciting opportunity for students to gain real-world experience of the translation and communication of research findings to help inform decision making. The Fellow will contribute to the activities of Parliament, by working with POST on an area of science and technology policy, potentially outside their immediate area of expertise, and producing outputs such as a short briefing note (a 'POSTnote') or report. Alternatively, the Fellow may be placed with a Select Committee, engaging directly with science and policy by supporting the Committee's work in scrutinising Government.

Background

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)

POST is the UK Parliament's in-house source of independent, balanced and accessible analysis of public policy issues related to science and technology.

Its aim is to inform parliamentary debate by:

- Publishing [POSTnotes](#) (short briefing notes)
- Supporting Select Committees with informal advice, oral briefings, background [POSTbrief](#) papers or follow-up research
- Informing both Houses on public dialogue activities in science and technology
- Organising events to stimulate debate on a wide range of topical issues
- Horizon-scanning to anticipate issues of science and technology that are likely to impact on policy.

Eligibility

The DTP Fellowships are open to all postgraduate students registered for a PhD within the SCENARIO & SSCP DTPs in their second or third year of study.

All applicants must be eligible for a full award under NERC's standard studentship criteria (please see the [Research Councils UK's harmonised postgraduate terms and conditions](#) for further information).

DTP Information

SCENARIO DTP

The Postgraduate Centre in the [Science of the Environment: Natural and Anthropogenic Processes, Impacts and Opportunities](#) (SCENARIO) focuses on collaboration between universities, research centres and business. Graduates will play a major role in advancing the quantitative science of the environment, in understanding the interaction between people and environmental change, and in the exploitation of environmental science and engineering by industry and policy makers. They will become tomorrow's leaders in the ever expanding, and increasingly high profile, field of environmental science. The scientific scope of SCENARIO is broad, spanning the physical, chemical and biological processes within the overarching theme of "environmental risk and sustainability" over a wide range of temporal and spatial scales. Along with the University of Reading as lead institution, SCENARIO also involves three other institutions who will be hosting PhD students:

- University of Surrey
- NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- the British Geological Survey

Sixteen other partner organisations offer a range of additional training opportunities and expertise, including the Met Office, Environment Agency and companies in the space, water,

Science and Solutions for a Changing Planet DTP

The SSCP DTP brings together Imperial College London's world leading expertise with that of six core partners and 27 other private and public organisations to offer a unique world-class multidisciplinary PhD training programme. The training programme is designed to provide students with the depth of knowledge that comes with an Imperial College London PhD, but with a wider breadth of knowledge gained from attending bespoke training courses and events and participation in secondment opportunities designed to expand students' horizons and awareness of how to tackle environmental issues.

The core research partners are:

- The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (Kew)
- The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH)
- The Met Office
- The Natural History Museum (NHM)
- The British Geological Survey (BGS)
- The Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Details of placement

Nature of work

The overall work programme of POST is determined by its Parliamentary Board and successful applicants will likely be asked to work on a subject *not* directly related to their doctoral thesis. The topic of the DTP Fellowship will be determined in liaison between the Fellow and POST, depending on the general research interests of the Fellow and the relevance and timeliness of potential topics to Parliament.

During the placement, the DTP Fellow will be expected to produce a POSTnote or assist a Select Committee, for example in a current inquiry. These activities will involve:

- Identifying and liaising with a wide range of interested parties including industry, academia, regulatory bodies, non-governmental organisations and government.
- Drafting concise briefing materials for a policymaker audience.
- Responding to comments from internal and external peer review.

There may also be opportunities for the Fellows to organise seminars to inform or disseminate their work.

POST is a strictly non-partisan organisation; Fellows are expected to abstain from any party political activity and generally to uphold the principles of parliamentary service, including a commitment to confidentiality and impartiality, during their time in Parliament. In all cases, Fellows are encouraged to interact closely with people and activities in the two Houses of Parliament, including Select committees, MPs and Peers, their support services, 'All-Party Parliamentary Group' meetings and the very wide range of other activities at the Palace of Westminster. Access to conferences, workshops and seminars can be arranged.

At the end of the placement the DTP Fellow will be asked to write a short report for their host DTP, accompanied by a blog post that captures their experience within POST and its value to their development.

Funding arrangements

Successful applicants will continue to receive their PhD stipend as a funding extension from their host DTP during their POST fellowship, at the same rate as their standard current PhD maintenance stipend (excluding any industry partner top-up). While candidates are based at POST, computing, email and other facilities necessary for the project will be supplied by POST.

Fellows will be responsible for informing their DTP administrators and host departments and discussing with them whether in their case it is necessary to suspend registration of their PhD degree. For further details, including information on stipend extension following the fellowship, applicants should speak to their DTP administrator (p.5).

Working arrangements

Fellows are expected to work full time on their POST assignment for the 13 weeks. Fellows are typically based in POST's offices in Westminster for at least four days a week, but flexible working arrangements are also available. SCENARIO DTP candidates requiring additional support for travel costs will negotiate these directly with their host DTP.

How to apply

Applications

Applicants should complete the short online form and submit:

- a) A CV and cover letter that details why they wish to work at POST and any relevant experience they have that would support their application.
- b) A two-page POSTnote-style summary briefing that you think could be the subject of an actual POSTnote. The topic should not be in the area of your PhD. The briefing should be in 12 pt font on A4 paper. You may want to use text boxes and graphs to highlight key facts. References should be included. **It should also be free of identifying details such as the applicant's name or affiliation.** The briefing does not have to look like a POSTnote, but it should be written in the same style. You should:
 - Summarise relevant current research and developments in this field.
 - Highlight the main policy issues.
 - Demonstrate your ability to write in a style suitable for a parliamentary (rather than academic) audience.

Before preparing your briefing you should examine the 'POST style' of writing, and the type of policy issues that are raised and discussed. POST publications can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/post/>.

Applicants should send the above to postfellowships@parliament.uk with subject title "2019 NERC DTP fellowship application" before the deadline at midnight on Sunday 28 April.

Receipt of the documents will be acknowledged by email. Please note that POST cannot advise on the strengths or weaknesses of individual proposals.

Assessment

The fellowship will be awarded competitively and applications will be assessed by POST.

The criteria for assessment of the briefing are:

- Content (accuracy and breadth of research)
- Clarity of explanation
- Writing style (the type of language and vocabulary used – this should be pitched at a suitable level for parliamentarians)
- Policy relevance
- Balance and objectivity
- Structure and presentation
- Awareness of other relevant work in the area

Applicants that are successful at this stage will be invited for interview in London.

Start date and length of placement

The fellowship is for three months and may be carried out from September 2019 onwards. The exact start date is to be agreed between the applicant, POST, and the applicant's supervisor.

Application Timetable

Activity	Date
Advert released	Week commencing 28 January
Deadline for applications	Sunday 28 April
Initial sift of applications	Week commencing 29 April
Interviews (at POST)	Week commencing 20 May
Final decision	Successful candidate confirmed by 3 June
Start date for successful applicant	September 2018-January 2019

Contacts & further information

To discuss general aspects of the fellowship and of parliamentary activity, please contact:

Jack Miller (POST Advisor)

Email: millerjd@parliament.uk

Phone: 0207 219 1159

For queries relating to the application process, please contact:

Sophie Smith – SSCP DTP, Imperial College London

Email: sophie.smith@imperial.ac.uk

Phone: 0207 594 5885

For further information on specific institutions please contact:

Wendy Neale – SCENARIO DTP, University of Reading

Email: w.neale@reading.ac.uk

Sophie Smith – SSCP DTP, Imperial College London

Email: sophie.smith@imperial.ac.uk

For more information on science in Parliament see:

[POST](#)

[House of Commons Science and Technology Committee](#)

[House of Lords Science and Technology Committee](#)

Note that many other parliamentary committees of the two Houses often concern themselves with matters that have scientific or technological dimensions, besides the two specific committees.