



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Joint AHRC and POST Postgraduate Fellowships 2014

Closing Date: 28 May 2014

A three month placement opportunity for AHRC-funded PhD students to gain experience of working in a policy environment.

1. Background

Parliaments pass laws, scrutinise Government and act as a forum for debate on issues of concern. Science-based issues permeate all these areas of work. Most MPs and Peers do not have a background in science or technology and look to others for specialist advice and information.

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) is an office of the two Houses of Parliament (Commons and Lords), charged with providing balanced and independent analyses of science and technology based issues of relevance to Parliament.

During their time at Parliament, AHRC/POST Fellows will work on a policy topic predominantly grounded in science and technology. This is the third round of AHRC/POST fellowships; last year's two award holders researched briefings on 'Stroke' and 'Social Media and Big Data' and the topic of the first AHRC POST fellow was 'Managing Online Identity'. Other topics covered recently by POST have included: 'Electronic cigarettes', 'Urban Green infrastructure', 'Measuring Wellbeing' and 'Impacts of Video Games'.

2. Eligibility

All AHRC funded postgraduate students registered for a PhD who will be entering their second or third year on 1st October 2014 are eligible. Part-time PhD students must be entering their third, fourth or fifth year on 1st October 2014.

You must already be funded by AHRC to be eligible to apply. If you are not funded by AHRC there are other opportunities available for working at POST, see:

<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/post/fellowships/>

If you are unsure about your eligibility, please do not hesitate to contact Pete Henly (p.henly@ahrc.ac.uk) to verify.

AHRC is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equality groups. Accordingly, no eligible funding applicant should receive less favourable treatment from the AHRC on the grounds of: gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or similar philosophical belief, spent criminal conviction, age or disability.

3. Details of Placement

3.1 Nature of Work

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) regularly publishes short briefing papers (POSTnotes) and longer reports, giving Parliamentarians a broad overview of the background to an issue and an analysis of the policy implications (see <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/post/publications/>) for examples of POST publications). POST also works very closely with a wide range of Select Committees in both Houses.

During their time in Parliament, successful applicants should expect to produce a POSTnote, contribute to a longer report, assist a Select Committee in a current inquiry, and/or carry out related activities such as seminars and podcasts.

The topic of the placement will be determined in liaison between the Fellow and POST, depending on the research interests of the applicant and the relevance and timeliness of the topic in Parliament. The overall work programme of POST is determined by its Parliamentary Board and applicants are often expected to work on something other than their originally proposed topic.

Whilst individual preferences and research backgrounds will be taken into account, successful applicants will be allocated to work in one of POST's subject areas by the selection panel.

The Fellowship 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.
- Responding to comments from internal and external peer review.

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

POST is a strictly non-partisan organisation - Fellows will be expected to abstain from any party political activity and generally to uphold the principles of parliamentary service, including a commitment to confidentiality, during their time with the Office.

In all cases, Fellows will be 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 Group' meetings and the very wide range of other activities at the Palace of Westminster. Access to conferences, workshops and seminars can be arranged.

3.2 Funding arrangements

The successful applicant will receive a 3 month extension to their PhD funding. AHRC will make arrangements to reimburse the additional costs to the Research Organisation to ensure that their stipend will continue to be paid while based at POST. All computing, email and other facilities necessary to complete the project will be supplied by POST.

3.3 Working arrangements

Successful applicants are expected to spend as much time as possible working in POST's offices in Westminster. AHRC are keen to encourage applicants from all over the UK. For those successful applicants who are not within frequent travelling distance of POST in London, AHRC will cover reasonable travel and accommodation costs.

3.4 Assessment of placement

At the end of the secondment, successful applicants will be required to complete a Final Report detailing their work over the three months and the outcomes achieved. The Final Report form can be found on the AHRC website, or obtained from Pete Henly (p.henly@ahrc.ac.uk)

4. How to Apply

4.1 Applications

Applicants should complete the [Joint AHRC and POST Postgraduate Fellowships 2014- Applicants survey](#) on Smart Survey.

As part of the survey the following documents will need to be submitted and uploaded on to Smart Survey:

- A completed application form, which has been approved by your principal supervisor and studentship grant holder, including a brief summary of your PhD research (the area of research and its relevance to the wider scientific field) and why you are applying for a policy placement.
- As an additional attachment a two page POSTnote-style summary briefing on a topic that you think could be the subject of an actual POSTnote and falls within AHRC's remit (see <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/research/subjectcoverage/>).
- A completed Equal Opportunities Form. This form is optional but will help us in monitoring our commitments to equal opportunities. It will not form part of the assessment process

In the briefing, you may want to use text boxes and graphs to highlight key facts. References should be included and can be in a smaller font at the bottom of the page. The briefing does not need to follow the same format as a POSTnote but it should be written in the same style.

The briefing 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/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/post/publications/>

Please refrain from including any identifying text on your POST-style briefing (name, institution) as the POST panel reads the briefings blind before ranking them.

Your application form, the summary POSTnote, and the Equal Opportunities form (optional) should be uploaded to Smart Survey at [Joint AHRC and POST Postgraduate Fellowships 2014 - Applicants survey](#) by 28th May 2014.

To attach a file to the survey: First, click on the link within the survey, where it says 'Attach a file'. A new window will open in which you can browse your documents to find the document you would like to upload. After choosing a document, click the 'Upload'

button and the file will be uploaded to the survey. Once the file has been uploaded, it will appear under 'Attached files'. This process needs to be repeated until all attachments have been uploaded

There is a large red X next to 'Attached files'. Clicking on this X permits you to delete a file from the survey if you have uploaded a file in error. You can then repeat the process above to upload the correct document.

4.2 Assessment

Applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of members of AHRC and POST. The criteria for assessment are:

- content (accuracy and breadth of research)
- clarity
- writing style (pitched at a suitable level)
- policy relevance
- balance and objectivity
- structure
- awareness of other relevant work in the area

Applicants who are successful at this stage will then be invited for interview, which will take place on Wednesday 16th July.

Please note, neither AHRC nor POST will be able to offer feedback on unsuccessful proposals.

4.3 Schedule

Deadline for applications:	28th May 2014
Outcomes issued:	25th May 2014
Interviews (at POST):	16th July 2014
Final decision:	July 2014

The start date for successful applicants will be from September 2014 subject to security clearance

4.4 Start date and length of placement

The placements are for 3 months and will start between September 2014 and September 2015 but placements will generally not start in June, July and August, which are the summer recess months.

Successful applicants must undergo security vetting before they can start their placement in Parliament and all placements are conditional on this clearance being

obtained. Changes to the start date must be agreed between the applicant, POST, the applicant's supervisor and Research Organisation, and AHRC.

5. Data Protection

In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, AHRC and POST will use information provided on the application form in processing the application, any placement awarded and subsequent payment, including maintenance and review processes. This includes:

- registration of applications
- operation of AHRC application and award processing and management information systems
- the preparation of material for use by peer assessment panels
- statistical analysis to inform the evaluation of the quality of the placement undertaken and the study of trends
- policy and strategy studies
- economic and/or social impact

Please contact the AHRC Information Services Manager – Patrick Ffinch (a.ffinch@ahrc.ac.uk) - for further information.

6. Areas of interest

Applications falling into any area of AHRC remit will be accepted, although the relevance to parliamentarians must be demonstrated.

Applicants are invited to look at POST's previous and current areas of work when considering the subject of their POST style briefing:

- social science
- biological science and health
- energy
- environment
- physical sciences and ICT

7. Contacts and sources of further information

Any queries relating to the application process should be directed to Pete Henly,
p.henly@ahrc.ac.uk

Sarah Bunn from POST is available on BUNNSK@parliament.uk or 020 7219 1860 to discuss any general aspects of the scheme and of parliamentary activity.

Please note neither AHRC nor POST can advise on the strength or weaknesses of individual proposals.

For more information on science in parliament see:

- POST – <http://www.parliament.uk/post>
- Council for Science and Technology – <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/council-for-science-and-technology>
- Parliamentary and Scientific Committee - <http://www.scienceinparliament.org.uk/>
- House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee - <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-archive/ius/>
- House of Lords Science and Technology Committee - <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/science-and-technology-committee/>

For more information on the 'Arts and Humanities Research Council' see:

- The Arts and Humanities Research Council – <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk>