

Emmeline Ledgerwood is currently undertaking a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) PhD studentship with the University of Leicester and the British Library (BL) oral history department, funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Her PhD research is using life story interviews with scientists who worked in government research establishments to assess how privatisation policies of the 1980s and 1990s affected their working lives.



During her studentship Emmeline successfully applied for a three-month postgraduate fellowship at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). Emmeline explains what attracted her to the scheme:

“I applied for the policy fellowship as I have previously worked in Parliament [as a Hansard reporter in the House of Lords] and was keen to work in another department at Westminster. At POST I could contribute to the process whereby academic research makes its way into the policy-making environment.”

During this fellowship she researched and co-authored a parliamentary briefing paper (a POSTnote) on ‘Science Diplomacy’. This involved identifying suitable interviewees, arranging interviews, conducting desk research and writing the paper according to POST style. Emmeline interviewed a wide range of senior civil servants and policy professionals, expanding her knowledge of the policy environment and in particular the institutions that are involved in science policy in an international context. Through her visits to government departments she gained an understanding of the structures of scientific advice in Whitehall which is directly relevant to her PhD research.

During the POST fellowship she was given the opportunity to speak at a seminar for the London Diplomatic Science Club in Portcullis House and to act as a rapporteur at a POST conference on scientific research into Brexit. She took advantage of working in Westminster to attend PMQs and oral evidence sessions.

She represented POST at the World Science Forum in Jordan in November 2017. At the conference she met delegates from around the world who had come together to discuss the shared challenges facing the global scientific community and how nations co-operate in addressing those challenges. She wrote about her research at POST for the British Library Science blog in November 2017, and in February 2018 was invited to represent POST at a workshop on Science Diplomacy at the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine in Manchester. She will be involved in the 2018 POST annual reception which is also on the theme of Science Diplomacy.

Emmeline was one of a cohort of postgraduate fellows who make a fundamental contribution to the work of POST. Fellows are supervised by staff members who oversee

their work but they are expected to work independently, initiating meetings and managing their projects within a 12-week timeframe according to guidelines provided by POST. Approximately 25 postgraduates work at POST each year, either researching POSTnotes, assisting with Select Committee work or supporting researchers in the Commons or Lords Libraries.

Emmeline says that she decided to do a PhD because it was advertised as a pre-defined oral history project affiliated to the British Library. She was attracted to being part of the oral history team at the British Library, which leads the way in the UK in terms of training oral historians, collecting oral histories and archiving sound collections. Emmeline's project evolved out of the wider National Life Stories project 'An Oral History of British Science' during which many interviewees spoke about the impact of privatisation on their working lives.

An [internship](#) such as the POST fellowship can enable PhD students to expand their contribution to knowledge both within and beyond academia, as seen by Emmeline's experience as she took advantage of every opportunity to get involved.

For Emmeline, the benefits of the fellowship included:

- building on her previous experience of working in Parliament
- expanding her understanding of the policy-making process
- developing her knowledge of parliamentary systems of scrutiny, such as the work of the Select Committees
- gaining insight into areas directly relevant to her PhD research, such as the provision of scientific advice in Whitehall and Westminster
- making an original contribution to knowledge.

There is a short video on the BL website about Emmeline's PhD research:

<https://www.bl.uk/case-studies/emmeline-ledgerwood>

Emmeline's briefing on Science Diplomacy is now available online:

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/POST-PN-0568>

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