

RSC POST Fellowship

Application pack

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) is offering two three-month Fellowships to members of the Royal Society of Chemistry who are undertaking, or recently completed, PhD studies (“recently completed” applies to people whose PhD funding ended within the last six months). This opportunity is funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry on a continuing basis. Successful applicants will be expected to produce a POSTnote or POSTbrief (Parliamentary briefing documents), contribute to a longer report, assist a select committee in a current inquiry, and/or carry out related activities on an area of public policy. Fellows may also be placed directly with select committees or with the House of Commons or House of Lords Libraries. Fellows are typically based in London, although POST is happy to consider flexible working arrangements if a successful applicant would not otherwise be able to take up the Fellowship.

1. Background

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) is a Parliamentary office set up in 1989 that bridges academia and industry and Parliament, ensuring that the best available research evidence is incorporated into parliamentary business. POST is funded by Parliament, serves both Houses and is apolitical. The POST Board, which is comprised of MPs, Peers, non-Parliamentarians from the science and technology community, and the Head of POST, set the work programme.

The main activity of POST is producing [POSTnotes](#), which are four-page summaries on emerging science or technology topics that will have a bearing on public policy. POSTnotes are widely used as briefing material by Parliamentarians, particularly around the time of relevant discussions in Parliament. POSTnotes are produced by full-time staff and Fellows, who are usually PhD students based at POST for a three-month period. POST also aims to inform Parliamentary debate by:

- Supporting Select Committees with POSTbriefs (rapid evidence syntheses), informal advice, oral briefings, data analyses, background papers or follow-up research.
- 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.

The Royal Society of Chemistry is a learned society with over 50,000 members in 120 countries and a knowledge business that spans the globe. It is the UK’s professional body for chemical scientists, supporting and representing our members and bringing together chemical scientists from all over the world. The membership includes those working in large multinational companies and small to medium enterprises, researchers and students in universities, teachers and regulators. The Royal Society of Chemistry has an active policy and public affairs team.

2. Eligibility

The Royal Society of Chemistry Fellowship is open to members of the Royal Society of Chemistry who are undertaking or recently completed their PhD study (“recently completed” applies to people whose PhD funding ended within the last six months). If not already a member of the RSC, candidates can submit an application for RSC membership prior to their fellowship application.

Please note you will need to submit your application for RSC membership by 16th April at the latest in order to receive your membership number in time to apply for the Fellowship by the 26th April deadline. On applying to RSC membership, candidates will receive a 6-digit membership number in the email confirming the application has been received: even if membership is not formally approved, this number will be sufficient for application to the Westminster Fellowship.

Candidates must be eligible to work in the UK.

Successful candidates will be required to complete pre-employment checks in order to work on the Parliamentary Estate. This includes security vetting to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level unless otherwise specified. All successful candidates are required to pass these checks before an offer can be confirmed.

Applicants should be aware that if they have resided outside of the UK for a total of more than two of the last five years they are not eligible for vetting.

Please visit: <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/PSD-Security-Vetting-booklet.pdf> for further information.

Some international students may have working restrictions as part of their visa that will require undertaking the Fellowship part-time. We will discuss this with all successful applicants on a case-by-case basis.

3. Details of the placement

3.1 Nature of work

During the placement, the Fellow will be expected to produce a POSTnote or POSTbrief (Parliamentary briefing documents), contribute to a longer report, assist a select committee in a current inquiry, and/or carry out related activities on an area of public policy. The topic of the placement will be determined by the POST Board or relevant host parliamentary team. The RSC is welcome to suggest POSTnote topics, but the overall work programme of POST is determined by its Board or Head. Applicants may also be placed directly with select committees to work on reports or with the House of Commons or House of Lords Libraries.

There may also be opportunities for the Fellow to organise a seminar to inform or disseminate their work.

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. Parliament is a strictly non-partisan organisation; Fellows are expected to abstain from any Party-political activity and to uphold the principles of Parliamentary service, including a commitment to confidentiality and impartiality, during their Fellowship.

During the placement, the Fellow will meet with the RSC to talk about their Fellowship and during or after the placement will provide an article to, or be interviewed by, the RSC for dissemination through the RSC's member communications channels.

Intellectual Property Rights

Under section 165 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (CDPA) “Parliamentary Copyright”, the House of Commons or the House of Lords, separately or jointly, are the first owners of copyright in any work (including preparatory materials) made by or under their direction or control. Most, if not all, of the work it is proposed that the Fellows will complete will fall within s.165 CDPA. Insofar as Parliamentary Copyright does not apply in relation to the Fellow’s work (including any preparatory materials), all Intellectual Property Rights in that work (not held by a third party) shall belong to or be assigned to the Corporate Officer of the House of Commons as a term of the Fellow’s appointment.

Work produced for Parliamentary Committees or the Chamber of the House of Commons may be subject to parliamentary privilege and may not be disclosable to RSC or any other person or body. For the purpose of clarity, proceedings of the Houses may occur in private session, and any involvement of the Fellow within that session would be bound by confidentiality.

POST briefings produced during the Project will be available publicly, for example on the POST website.

3.2 Funding and working arrangements

RSC will make two payments of £3250 each to the Fellow. The first payment will be made approximately one month before the start of the placement and the second payment will be made at the end of the first month of the placement.

For PhD students this total £6500 payment will cover reimbursement of their PhD stipend (student to organise, where appropriate). For all Fellows, travel and accommodation costs will also need to be paid out of this amount, with no further expenses claimable from the RSC.

The Fellow will be based at POST’s offices in London. Any additional costs incurred by the Fellow as part of their work at POST, for example for travel to relevant meetings or conference fees, will be covered by POST with prior agreement between the Fellow and their supervisor.

The Fellow will be responsible for suspending their university registration for the duration of the Fellowship. University fees will not be covered by this award. Please contact the Royal Society of Chemistry or POST for further details.

While the Fellow is based in Parliament, computing, email and other facilities necessary for the project will be supplied by Parliament.

4. How to apply

4.1 Applications

Applicants should submit:

- a) A completed application form, which has been approved by their PhD Supervisor and Head of Department.
- b) A two-page POSTnote-style briefing on a topic that you think would be of current interest to Parliamentarians. The briefing should be in 12 pt font on A4 paper and should not include your name or any identifying details as it will be assessed blind. You may want to use text boxes and diagrams to highlight key facts. References should be included and can run on to a third page if required. The briefing does not have to look like a POSTnote, but it should be written in the same style. You should:

- Summarise relevant research and current 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/>. The application briefing should not be directly related your area of expertise, and should be relevant to current issues, legislation and / or government policy.

Please send an **electronic copy** of the briefing and the completed application form, including all signatures, to Phoebe Rountree, Public Affairs Adviser, routreep@rsc.org.

The deadline for applications is Sunday 26th April at 23:59pm.

Please note that CVs are not required and will not be assessed as part of the application process.

4.2 Assessment and Person Specification

The fellowship will be awarded competitively, and applications will be assessed by POST and the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Person specification

Applicants for this role will be assessed on the following ('I' indicates assessment at interview, 'A' indicates assessment at application):

- Understanding of how Parliament works and the distinction from government (I)
- An interest in and understanding of the relevance of science to a breadth of policy areas and how science fits in to the work of Parliament (I)
- Awareness of key stakeholders and of science and technology issues relevant to public policy (A, I)
- Ability to synthesize complex information from a wide range of sources into clear, impartial and concise pieces of writing (A)
- Excellent time-management skills (I)
- Excellent critical thinking and analytical skills (A, I)
- Ability to work independently and receive feedback constructively (I)
- Confident oral communicator; ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people (I)

Written assessment

The criteria for assessment of the POSTnote-style briefing are:

- **Content** (topic choice, policy relevance and breadth of research): POSTnotes are designed to support the work of parliamentarians so, it is important to pick a topic that is likely to be relevant to parliamentary discussion. Your sample POSTnote should draw on information from a wide range of relevant sources.

- **Writing style and clarity:** POSTnotes should be easily understood by a non-specialist audience, including people with no background in your chosen topic.
- **Structure:** POSTnotes are designed to have a clear structure and use headings and sub-headings to make them easy to navigate.
- **Impartiality:** POSTnotes set out the relevant research and information about a topic in a balanced way, summarising the balance of opinion on issues, where applicable.

Applicants that are successful at this stage will be invited for interview on **Thursday 4th June 2020** at POST's offices in London.

Reasonable travel and accommodation costs to attend an interview at POST's Westminster offices will be covered by RSC.

4.3 Start date and length of placement

The fellowship is for three months and can be undertaken between September 2020 and May 2021. The start date will be agreed between the successful applicant and POST. We will consider flexible working arrangements on a case by case basis.

The offer is conditional on obtaining parliamentary security clearance. Candidates must also be eligible to work in the UK (see Section 2 – Eligibility).

4.4 Timetable

Activity	Date
Fellowship advertised	w/c 9 th March 2020
Deadline for applications	26 th April 2020
Sifting applications	w/c 27 th April – w/c 11 th May 2020
Interviews (at POST)	4 th June 2020
Final decision	Directly after interviews
Start date for successful applicant	September 2020 – May 2021

4.5 Further information

It is important that we are able to make appropriate arrangements or adjustments for candidates if required, so as to ensure that they can participate fully and equally in the selection process. If you consider yourself to have a disability and require any adjustments to assist you during the interview, please get in touch with Lorna Christie, POST (christiel@parliament.uk) to discuss how we can meet your needs.

POST values diversity and seeks to ensure this where possible. We welcome applications from all qualified candidates regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age, marital status or whether or not they have a disability.

POST manages applicants' data in a way which is compliant with data protection law and POST's [Privacy Policy](#).

5. Contacts

Any queries about the application process should be directed to Phoebe Rountree, RSC:

Phoebe Rountree
Public Affairs Adviser
Royal Society of Chemistry
Burlington House,
Piccadilly, London
W1J 0BA, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1223 438410
e-mail: routreep@rsc.org

Queries about the placement should be directed to Lorna Christie, POST:

Dr Lorna Christie
Physical Sciences Adviser
Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology
Westminster
London
SW1H 9NB
Phone: +44 (0)207 219 5829
Email: christiel@parliament.uk