



Joint STFC-POST Postgraduate Placement Scheme 2010/11

Closing Date: 31 August 2010

A three month (see details below) secondment opportunity to the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) now open to STFC funded PhD students.

This call document contains the following information:

1. Background
2. Eligibility
3. Details of placement
4. How to apply
5. Contact details and further sources of information
6. Application form

1. Background

Parliament passes laws, scrutinises Government and acts 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, STFC/POST Fellows will work on a policy topic grounded in science and technology. The fellow will be expected to informally liaise with STFC on their progress and make a short, formal presentation at the conclusion of the secondment.

2. Eligibility

The scheme is for STFC funded postgraduate students who have completed their first year but will still be registered at the time their fellowship starts.

You must be funded by STFC to be eligible to apply. If you are not funded by STFC there are other POST opportunities available, see

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_offices/post/about6.cfm.

3. Details of Placement

3.1 Nature of work

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/business/publications/research/post/> 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, the STFC/POST Fellow should expect to produce a POSTnote, contribute to a longer report, or assist a select committee in a current inquiry.

The topic of the Fellowship will be determined in liaison between the Fellow and POST, but it is unlikely to be directly related to your current research interests. The overall work programme of POST is determined by its Parliamentary Board, based on the relevance and timeliness of the topics in Parliament.

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 and Working Arrangements

The successful applicant will be eligible to receive funding for their secondment period equivalent to their existing stipend and will receive a three month extension to their STFC PhD status.

Fellows are expected to spend as much time as possible working in POST's offices in Westminster. STFC and POST are keen to encourage applicants irrespective of their existing study location and the overall level of funding awarded to the successful candidate will reflect their individual travel and accommodation requirements, within agreed limits.

When a candidate is based at POST, computing, email and other facilities necessary for the project will be supplied by POST.

4. How to Apply

4.1 Applications

Applicants should submit:

- a. A completed application form (at the end of this document), which *has been approved by their Head of Department or principal supervisor*.
- b. A 2-page briefing on the topic of "Nuclear Fusion". This topic has been chosen as part of the evaluation and we appreciate that it is unlikely to be an area of your current research activity (it is also unlikely to be the topic of the placement).

The briefing should be in 12pt font or larger and fit on two sides of an A4 sheet. You may want to use text boxes and graphs to highlight key facts. Appropriate referencing should be included, and can be in a smaller font at the bottom of the page. The briefing does not have to look like a POSTnote, but it should be written in the same style.

During the briefing you should:

- summarise 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/>

Please send an **electronic copy** of the completed application form and briefing to jack.fletcher@stfc.ac.uk or in writing to:

Mr Jack Fletcher
Science and Technology Facilities Council
R71.1.29
Rutherford Appleton Laboratory
Harwell Science and Innovation Campus
Didcot, OXON
OX11 0QX

Tel. 01235 778082

If you are sending the application form electronically, please send a scanned copy which includes the signature of your supervisor.

4.2 Assessment

Applications will be assessed by a panel of POST and STFC personnel. The criteria for assessment 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 October.

4.3 Schedule

Deadline for applications:	31 August 2010
Interviews (at POST):	October 2010
Final decision:	end October 2010
Start date for successful applicant:	By mutual agreement, no later than August 2011.

4.4 Start date and length of placement

The fellowship is for three months and may be carried out during the periods when Parliament is currently forecast to be sitting up to August 2011. The start date is to be agreed between the applicant, POST, the applicant's supervisor and University, and STFC.

5. Contacts and sources of further information

Any queries relating to the application process should be directed to Mark Foster, mark.foster@stfc.ac.uk ; 01235 778328.

Martin Griffiths from POST is available on 0207 219 8380 or griffithsm@parliament.uk to discuss any general aspects of the scheme and of parliamentary activity.

Please note neither STFC nor POST can advise on the strengths or weaknesses of individual applications.

For more information on science in parliament see:

- POST - www.parliament.uk/post
- Parliamentary and Scientific Committee - www.pandsctte.demon.co.uk
- House of Commons Science and technology Committee - <http://www.parliament.uk/science>
- House of Lords Science and Technology Committee <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/science-and-technology-committee/>



**Application Form
Joint STFC / POST Postgraduate Placement Scheme 2010/11**

Please type or print clearly in black ink

Applicant's Name:	
STFC funding source (e.g. Grant reference number):	
Department:	
University:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Title of PhD:	
Short paragraph summarising research: 	
I confirm that the above particulars are correct (applicant) Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Below to be completed by your Supervisor or Head of Department: I confirm that the above particulars are correct. If the application is successful, I give my permission for the above applicant to suspend their PhD studies for 3 months. I understand that STFC will not expect the university to continue paying the student their stipend during the placement and POST / STFC will agree funding terms with the applicant commensurate with the associated costs to the individual of undertaking the placement. Name (please print): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	
University Stamp: 	

Please attach this completed form to your submission and return to the address specified.