

BBSRC Policy Placements

A three month placement opportunity for BBSRC-funded PhD students to gain experience of working in science policy

Closing Date for Applications: 14th September 2012

About BBSRC Policy Placements

1. Science policy shapes the direction and funding of research and is carried out across a wide range of organisations, including groups within parliament and devolved administrations as well as several public bodies and learned societies. Within parliaments, science based issues permeate all areas of work but most MPs and Peers do not have a background in science and look to others for specialist advice and information.
2. BBSRC Policy Placements provide the opportunity for BBSRC-funded PhD students to work for 3 months in one of a selected group of highly influential science policy organisations. Successful applicants have the opportunity to work on a policy topic of interest to both the student and the organisation, by producing a briefing paper, participating in a policy inquiry and/or organising a policy event.

Eligibility

3. This scheme is open to all BBSRC-funded PhD students who will be in their penultimate or final funded year of study during the 2012-13 academic year. Placements must start before the end of the funded period.

Host institutions

4. Placements are available at the following organisations (listed alphabetically); further details about placements at these host organisations, as well as contact details and numbers of placements available, are available at the Annexes shown:
 - British Library (**Annex 1**)
 - Centre for Science and Policy (**Annex 2**)
 - Government Office for Science (**Annex 3**)
 - National Assembly for Wales Research Service (**Annex 4**)
 - Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (**Annex 5**)
 - Royal Society Science Policy Centre (**Annex 6**)
 - Scottish Parliament Information Centre (**Annex 7**)
 - Society of Biology (**Annex 8**)

5. Applicants invited to interview will have the opportunity to meet a representative from each of these organisations and hear more about what the different placements would involve.

Funding arrangements

6. Successful applicants will receive a 3 month extension to their PhD funding. Where the cost of the placement cannot be met from the Training Grant, BBSRC will make arrangements to reimburse the additional costs to the university / institute to ensure that their stipend will continue to be paid while undertaking the placement. All computing, email and other facilities necessary to complete the project will be supplied by the host organisation.

Working arrangements

7. Successful applicants are expected to spend as much time as possible working in the organisations' offices. BBSRC are keen to encourage applicants from all over the UK. For those successful applicants who are not within reasonable travelling distance of the host organisation, BBSRC will cover travel and accommodation costs.
8. All host organisations are strictly non-partisan – applicants will be expected to abstain from any party political or lobbying activity and generally to uphold the principles of parliamentary / public service, including a commitment to confidentiality, during their placement.

Start date and length of placement

9. The placements are for 3 months and will usually start in the first half of 2012. Successful applicants who are based in the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, the National Assembly for Wales or the Scottish Parliament will be required to undergo security vetting before they can start their placement. Changes to the start date must be agreed between the applicant, the host organisation, the applicant's supervisor and University / Institute, and BBSRC.

How to apply

10. Applicants should submit:
 - A completed application form, which has been approved by your principal supervisor and Training 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.
 - A summary policy briefing that you think could be the subject of an actual policy briefing. You may wish to consider the style of POSTnote or other policy briefings used by the host organisations – see Annexes 1 to 8 for links to past publications. The summary briefing should be **no longer than 2 sides of A4 in Arial size 11 font**. The policy briefing should be relevant to current issues, legislation and / or government policy (preferably of relevance to BBSRC). Note

that the summary briefing is not intended to be as long or exhaustive as an actual policy briefing, but you should use the document to demonstrate your ability to write in a style suitable for a policy-making (rather than academic) audience and organise the content accordingly.

11. Applicants must submit their application form and summary policy briefing **as word documents**, via email, to: policy.placements@bbsrc.ac.uk by **14th September 2012**.

Assessment of applications

12. Assessment is via a two-stage process:

- i. **Written applications**

These will be assessed by BBSRC's Training Awards Committee. The criteria for assessment of the written applications are:

- Writing style
- Science content
- Policy content
- Impartiality
- Timeliness and relevance

Equal weighting will be given to each of the five assessment criteria.

Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to stage two:

- ii. **Interview day**

This will take place in November 2012 (date and location to be confirmed).

Interview panels will consist of representatives from each of the host organisations and BBSRC, and will be chaired by a member of the Training Awards Committee. Successful students will be matched with the most appropriate host organisation based on interview performance and candidate preference.

Further details will be provided to successful applicants nearer the time.

End of placement report

13. At the end of the placement, students will be required to complete a Final Report detailing their work over the three months and the outcomes achieved.

Contacts and further information

14. Any queries relating to the application process should be directed to: policy.placements@bbsrc.ac.uk
15. Further information about the host organisations, including relevant contacts, can be found at Annexes 1 to 8.
16. Please note that neither BBSRC nor the host organisations will be able to advise on the strength or weaknesses of individual proposals.

Annex 1: British Library

Up to 2 placements will be available at the British Library, based in London.

Contact for queries:

Dr Karen Walshe

Research & Engagement Manager (Biosciences)

Email: Karen.walshe@bl.uk

Tel: 020 7412 7483 (office) or 07826 868897

About the British Library

- **See details at:** www.bl.uk/science
- Support for UK scientific research is a continuing strategic objective for the British Library and Bioscience is an area of particular focus for the Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) Department. By working closely with scientific researchers, funders and policy-makers we aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of science through enhancing information and data use and re-use. In order to do this, we aim to understand the way that researchers work, as well as gathering intelligence about the policy and funding environment which drives and underpins science.

BBSRC Policy Placement opportunity at the British Library

- The Science team at the British Library provides a unique and exciting environment for a three-month internship opportunity for BBSRC PhD students with interests in many aspects of science policy, but particularly those relating to the better use of bioscience and environmental science information and data, and the associated gaps between policy and practice. The intern will benefit from expertise and guidance from the STM team who collectively have experience in bioscience research, strategy development, policy making, funding, information and data management, publishing, science communication and public engagement.
- The student will be given the opportunity to design, organise and deliver a TalkScience event on a scientific policy related topic. TalkScience is a highly successful, quarterly evening series of informal, but informed, debates on topical issues in science, which cuts across cultural boundaries to bring together audiences from science research, funding, policy and the general public to discuss topics such as personalised genomics, GM crops, biodiversity and the role of scientific evidence in UK Government. The student would work with the science team to identify a topical issue and appropriate speaker(s); work with the speaker to set the discussion topics under an agreed theme; market the event; help to chair the audience discussion and produce an event report.
(www.bl.uk/reshelp/expertshelp/science/talkscience/talkscience)
- The student will also participate in a range of activities across the Science team. This could include contributing to research reports, assisting in community consultations and supporting related engagement activities such as meetings and workshops. Additionally the student may have the opportunity to be involved in activities designed to engage broader audiences with contemporary science, such as events on the public programme and/or writing for broad audiences. (See example feature articles in the Litmus Paper from Cheltenham Science Festival <http://design-science.org.uk/litmus-paper/>)

Annex 2: Centre for Science and Policy

1 placement will be available at the Centre for Science and Policy, based in Cambridge.

Contact for queries:

Dr Robert Doubleday

Executive Director, Centre for Science and Policy

Email: rob.doubleday@csap.cam.ac.uk

Tel: 01223 746 707

About the Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP)

- **See details at:** www.csap.cam.ac.uk
- The Centre for Science and Policy helps the sciences and technology to serve society by promoting engagement between researchers and policy professionals. Specifically, it:
 - provides policy professionals with access to the best academic thinking in engineering, science, computing, mathematics, social sciences, law and philosophy
 - provides training, support and opportunities for researchers to engage with policy makers
 - provides an arena in which those interested in the policy implications of the sciences and technology, and the relationship between research expertise and public policy, can discuss and develop fresh ideas.

BBSRC Policy Placement opportunity at CSaP

The successful applicant would work with the CSaP team to define a project that matched the applicant's interests and opportunities to contribute to CSaP's fast moving agenda. For example, the applicant could design and run a Policy Workshop for the Centre. This would involve:

- working with the CSaP team and network to develop an idea for a policy workshop
- identifying the chair, speakers and workshop participants
- providing written and oral briefings to the chair and speakers, and draft briefing materials for the workshop attendees
- attending and speak at the workshop
- writing up the workshop for relevant policy makers, the CSaP website, and for a wider audience (newspaper, magazine or blog).

The applicant would work directly with the Director and Head of Programmes in the design and running of the workshop. They would also be welcome to take part in other CSaP activities.

Annex 3: Government Office for Science

Up to four placements will be available at the Government Office for Science, based in central London.

Contact for queries:

Joanne Marsden. (Email: joanne.marsden@bis.gsi.gov.uk; T: 020 7215 1205)

About the Government Office for Science

The Government Office for Science (GO Science; <http://www.bis.gov.uk/go-science>) is the home of science and engineering across government and exists to support the Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA), Sir John Beddington. The key role of the GCSA and GO-Science is to ensure that **all** levels of government, including the Prime Minister and Cabinet, receive the best scientific advice possible, and to enable the many science-using departments across government to create policies that are supported by strong evidence and robust arguments. The work of GO Science includes:

- Bringing together departmental Chief Scientific Advisers to build capacity, share good practice and address cross-cutting issues where science and engineering can add value;
- Undertaking Foresight projects which bring together leading edge science and engineering with futures techniques to address issues such as Global Environmental Migration;
- Working with other Civil Service professions and the Cabinet Office to build the effectiveness of the science and engineering profession in government;
- Supporting the independent Council for Science and Technology (CST) to provide high level advice to the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

BBSRC Policy Placement Opportunities at GO Science

The placements are likely to involve undertaking research, drafting briefing notes and background papers, and organising workshops and meetings. The placements will offer opportunities to work with a number of different teams and across a wide range of science and technology policy topics. Areas covered in GO Science include:

- **The Global Issues Teams.** These teams support the GCSA on the full stretch of issues covered by Government ensuring that science and engineering is applied effectively and appropriately within Government and with specific reference to preparing for and responding to national crisis. Topics covered by the teams include: food and water, health and environment and climate change.
- **The Science Capabilities and Network Teams.** These teams support the GCSA in his capacity as GCSA and as Head of the Science and Engineering Profession. Topics covered include: supporting the cross-government network of Chief Scientific Advisers; external engagement (with research communities in academia and business); the Civil Service science and engineering profession; and the secretariat for the Prime Minister's CST.
- **Foresight.** Foresight is a strategic futures programme aimed at helping policy makers to make decisions today that are robust to future uncertainties. It operates through projects that investigate the challenges and opportunities arising from emerging areas of science and technology or that address major issues for society where science and technology have an important role to play. Current Foresight projects include: the future of manufacturing, the future of computer trading in financial markets, improving future disaster anticipation and resilience.

Annex 4: National Assembly for Wales Research Service

2 placements will be available at the National Assembly for Wales Research Service, based in Cardiff.

Contact for queries:

Nia Seaton

Senior Research Officer, Research Service, National Assembly for Wales

Email: Nia.Seaton@Wales.gov.uk

Tel: 029 2089 8987

About the National Assembly for Wales Research Service

- **See details at:** www.cynulliadcymru.org or www.assemblywales.org
- The Research Service provides confidential and impartial research support to the Assembly's scrutiny and legislation committees, and to all 60 individual Assembly Members and their staff.
- Examples of briefings and information produced by the Research Service can be accessed from: www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-assembly-publications-research
- These are primarily aimed at Assembly Members, but may also be of interest to external stakeholders.

BBSRC Policy Placement opportunities at National Assembly for Wales Research Service

Students based at the Research Service are likely to join either the Environment and Transport Team or the Health and Social Care team, depending on their subject knowledge and area of interest. They will focus on environment and agriculture or health and social care policy issues of interest to Assembly Members in Wales. They will be expected to produce at least one Research Briefing, as well as contributing to briefings for Assembly Committees and helping to answer enquiries from Assembly Members.

Annex 5: Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology

4 placements will be available at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), based in London.

Contact for queries:

Dr Peter Border

Email: borderp@parliament.uk

Tel: 0207 219 2876

About POST

See details at: www.parliament.uk/post

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/business/publications/research/post/> for examples of POST publications.

POST also works very closely with a wide range of select committees in both Houses.

BBSRC Policy Placements opportunities at POST

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 successful applicant 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.

Annex 6: Royal Society Science Policy Centre

Up to 3 placements will be available at the Royal Society Science Policy Centre, based in London.

Contact for queries:

Frances Hughes

Personal Assistant & Events Manager, Royal Society

Email: Frances.Hughes@royalsociety.org

Tel: 020 7451 2550

About the Royal Society

- **See details at:** <http://royalsociety.org/Policy/>
- The Royal Society is a Fellowship of 1400 outstanding individuals from all areas of science, mathematics, engineering and medicine, who form a global scientific network of the highest calibre. Founded in 1660, the Society has three roles: as the UK's national academy of science, as a learned society, and as a funding agency. The Society has a long track record of providing scientific advice to policy makers. Its earliest report, on the state of Britain's forests, was published in 1664.
- Today, scientific advice to underpin policy is more important than ever before. From neuroscience to nanotechnology, food security to climate change, the questions being asked of scientists by policy makers, the media and the public continue to multiply. Many of the issues are global in nature, and require international collaboration, not just amongst policy makers, but also between scientists. As part of its 350th Anniversary celebrations in 2010, the Royal Society established a Science Policy Centre in order to strengthen the independent voice of science in UK, European and international policy.

BBSRC Policy Placements opportunities at the Royal Society

- The Science Policy Centre undertakes a range of activities such as major reports, consultation responses, briefings, statements and policy workshops. During the placement, successful applicants will be involved in a range of activities such as researching potential projects, drafting briefing notes/background papers or organising and attending policy-related events. Policy placement students will become integrated members of the team and work closely with other policy advisers, gaining hands-on experience of the policy process.

Annex 7: Scottish Parliament Information Centre

1 placement will be available at the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, based in Edinburgh.

Contact for queries:

Graeme Cook

Email: Graeme.Cook@scottish.parliament.uk

Tel: 0131 348 5086

Or

Jude Payne

Email: jude.payne@scottish.parliament.uk

Tel: 0131 348 5364

About the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe)

- SPICe provides:
 - Facts, analysis, briefings
 - Research
 - Impartial expertise
 - News and current affairs
- to Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), their staff, Parliamentary Committees and other Parliamentary staff.
- SPICe has 24 researchers split into three teams, each of whom specialise in specific subject areas. In addition SPICe has an Enquiries Team, which manages enquiries that come into SPICe and deals with reference enquiries, and a Collections Team, which manages the the SPICe library collections and also operates the Document Supply service.
- SPICe researchers write briefings which give Members of the Scottish Parliament an overview of a subject, analyse Bills and provide background material in support of parliamentary Committee inquiries. See: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Research.aspx>
- SPICe researchers, working closely with Committee Clerks, provide advice and other research material to Parliamentary Committees, including background information in support of work programme discussions, issues papers for evidence sessions and managing external research commissioned by the Committee.
- In addition, SPICe researchers respond to in-depth enquires from individual MSPs and their staff on any topic.

BBSRC Policy Placements opportunity at SPICe

- The secondee to SPICe will be fully integrated within the Health, Environment and Europe Unit, and will be viewed as a member of the team
- The secondee can expect to write a formal SPICe Briefing, to contribute to briefings for Committees, and to answer enquiries from MSPs and their staff
- Working in SPICe will provide the secondee with the opportunity to be involved in other activities, such as attending cross-party-groups, attending internal meetings, and interacting with external stakeholders, including Scottish Government officials and other interested parties.

Annex 8: Society of Biology

1 placement will be available at the Society of Biology, based in London.

Contact for queries:

Dr Laura Bellingan FSB

Senior Science Policy Adviser, Society of Biology

Email: laurabellingan@societyofbiology.org

Tel: 020 7685 2560

About the Society of Biology

- **See details at: www.societyofbiology.org**
- The Society of Biology is a single unified voice for biology: advising Government and influencing policy; advancing education and professional development; supporting its members, and engaging and encouraging public interest in the life sciences.
- The Society of Biology is committed to ensuring that it provides Government and other policy makers – including funders of biological education and research – with a distinct point of access to authoritative, independent, and evidence-based opinion, representative of the widest range of bioscience disciplines.

BBSRC Policy Placements opportunity at Society of Biology

- The Society of Biology has a broad remit with interests across the biological sciences, including biomedicine, animal, plant, microbial and environmental science, as well as general science policy issues of research funding, careers in science, higher education, and science and society. We regularly reply to government and national level [consultations](#) and engage pro-actively with policy development through the work of our Fellows, Committees and [Special Interest Groups](#). Our individual members and Member Organisations represent a valuable network of expertise and policy interest.
- The Society's Policy Team works to support and guide the development and policy outputs from the Society as well as in developing workshops, events and [policy communication](#).
- A policy placement with the Society will involve responsibility for a specific project designed to be delivered within the period of the placement. This may be the generation of a policy response to a government consultation, the development of a policy activity (task force or workshop), or similar. It should be possible to ensure that this meets both the interests of the BBSRC Applicant and the needs of the Society at the same time. In addition to delivering a defined project, the Society will aim to encourage attendance at relevant Parliamentary evidence hearings, as well as participation in appropriate science-policy workshops and discussion groups, and authoring an article for our publication [The Biologist](#), etc. The Society has a busy calendar of committee, task force and steering group meetings so some experience of working with committees would also be on offer.
- Previous BBSRC students have worked on a range of consultation responses (e.g. the Defra Green Food Project, the Universities UK Concordat to support Research Integrity), organised and reported on high level science policy meetings and attended a variety of parliamentary and charitable events as part of the Society.