

Policy internship scheme summary: FAQs for applicants

For information on the scheme, you should refer to the scheme summary, which is available on the Academy of Medical Sciences website. This FAQs document is intended to answer specific questions that you may have in relation to your application.

COVID-19 notice

The Academy is carefully monitoring the developing situation and advice about the current global outbreak of COVID-19. The health, safety and appropriate support of candidates and interns is our first priority. The Academy is currently working wholly remotely. We anticipate that interviews for this opportunity will be conducted remotely by video call. Successful candidates will be kept closely informed on any potential impacts on their internship period, including around remote working arrangements, and how these can be mitigated or managed.

Eligibility

Who is eligible for the scheme?

The scheme is open to Wellcome Trust four-year PhD Programme students who will be in the third or fourth year of their studentship when their internship takes place. The scheme is presently not open to clinicians, veterinarians, social scientists, or to PhD students working at the Sanger Centre.

I am on a Wellcome PhD programme, but am funded locally (i.e. not by Wellcome). Can I apply for the scheme?

Unfortunately, the scheme is currently not open to locally-funded students studying on Wellcome PhD programmes, however we are actively reviewing this position. We encourage students who are funded in this way, and who will be in their third or fourth year in spring 2021, to check for changes to this eligibility requirement at the next round of recruitment.

I am studying in the UK on a Tier 4 visa. Can I apply for the scheme?

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to accept applications from students on a Tier 4 visa, as the internship is a full-time post (35 hours per week). Students on a Tier 4 visa are limited to working 20 hours per week during term time, and regrettably it is not possible for the Academy to offer part-time internships. The internship period also does not count as a permitted work placement, as it is not an integral and assessed part of your PhD course.

Am I able to participate after my PhD funding has finished?

The scheme can also be undertaken in the three-month period immediately following the end of a student's fourth year. For example, a student who is in their fourth year in May 2020 (and whose funding finishes in September 2020) would be eligible for the October 2020 – December 2020 slot, but not the slots between January 2021 and September 2021.

Can I choose the timing of the internship?

The 2020/21 internship scheme will run four times: from October 2020 - December 2020, January 2021 – March 2021, April 2021 – June 2021 and July 2021 – September 2021. You can indicate on your application your preference regarding timings; however, positions are limited and we cannot guarantee that places will be offered on the preferred dates. Exact start and end dates for successful applicants will be confirmed within a month of the beginning of each internship.

Application process

What happens after I submit my application?

Candidates whose applications are shortlisted will be invited for a remote video interview on **12 or 14 August 2020**. If, due to exceptional circumstances, you are unable to attend on this date, you should state this on your application form and the Academy will contact you to make alternative arrangements.

Do I need to include referees in my application?

Your application must be endorsed by your primary PhD project supervisor and the Programme sponsor (the PhD Programme Director). There is a section on the application for your supervisor and sponsor to complete. Make sure that you leave enough time to secure this endorsement before they submit their application.

Written article

What are you hoping to see from my written article?

We are looking for a well-constructed, considered article, which demonstrates an interest in a policy topic and an appreciation of what makes your topic of relevance to policy-makers. There are many ways that you could achieve this. If you are writing about your own area of research you should focus on its policy implications – not simply describe your research. Consider the different stakeholders that might be impacted, or could be influenced around the topic you select. We are particularly interested in the relevance to the Academy and/or Wellcome Trust of the policy issue you choose. The most important thing to remember is that we are offering the internship as a learning experience; we do not expect you to submit a perfectly polished piece of policy writing.

Who is the written article meant to be aimed at; what is their level of scientific expertise?

The piece should be aimed at a non-specialist audience and written at a level that an interested lay person could understand, while conveying the policy significance of the issue/research.

Can you provide previous examples of written articles?

We do not make previous examples available to applicants. Examples of policy-writing can be found on the Academy's website and those of other relevant organisations (for example, the Wellcome Trust, the Royal Society, the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology).

Should I include references in my written article?

Please include references where you think they are appropriate. This is not a science-based essay, so perhaps does not need some of the robust referencing that you might include in a journal article. However, as a policy essay it should be evidence-based; so, for example, you should look to back up claims with appropriate references (e.g. if you are quoting statistics).

Financial arrangements

What practical and financial arrangements need to be in place for me to participate?

The three-month internships will be full-time positions and usually based at the Academy's offices at 41 Portland Place, London. If you are successful in your application, you will receive a three-month extension to your Wellcome Trust PhD stipend while you are based at the Academy.

Prior to social distancing measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, interns were required to attend the Academy's offices at 41 Portland Place, London. We

anticipate this will be the case again in future, when social distancing measures are lifted. This may require you to travel or temporarily relocate, for which financial support is available (see below).

Currently, Academy staff and interns are working remotely to comply with government guidance. We are carefully reviewing when and how we will return to the office, keeping principles including health and safety, social responsibility and transparency at the centre of discussion.

Home working will be our default operating principle in the immediate term. If the Policy team are working remotely during any part of your internship period, we will work with you to ensure that you have the IT, environment and support you need to work from home.

What if I live outside of London and need to travel or temporarily relocate in order to take part in the scheme?

Further financial support to cover travel or subsistence costs will be decided on a case-by-case basis, up to a maximum of £2000 per intern and subject to agreement by the Academy and Wellcome Trust. In certain circumstances, we will consider exceeding this limit if candidates can provide documentary evidence of the costs incurred above £2000.