Summary

The Academy of Medical Sciences is pleased to open applications to a new policy internship scheme open to UK-based PhD students. Under the scheme, eligible PhD students will have the opportunity to undertake a 12-week (3-month) policy internship at the Academy.

The scheme is designed to give students first-hand experience of the medical science policy and communications environment, to gain insights into how research can impact on policy, and to build valuable networks with the UK’s most eminent medical scientists and key science and health stakeholders.


The details of the Academy scheme are set out below. In brief, in order to be eligible, interns must have access to either:

- a three-month extension to their PhD maintenance stipend or
- funding for a three-month placement integral to the programme.

All eligible candidates will be assessed through a competitive application process.

COVID-19 notice
The Academy of Medical Sciences is currently working primarily remotely and is in line with Government guidance to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

As a result, internships are being conducted largely “remotely” although opportunities to come to the office and in-person events may be possible as the pandemic and relevant guidance evolves.

The Academy is confident that our remote internship programme continues to offer a highly rewarding experience for interns and that the level of support and supervision provided by AMS staff remains high.

Interviews for this opportunity will be conducted remotely. Successful candidates will be kept closely informed on any potential impacts on their internship period, and how these can be mitigated or managed.

Experience of PhD students on the Academy’s internship scheme:

‘The internship at the Academy was one of the best experiences linked to my PhD. This is such a unique opportunity, I would encourage all PhD students to apply for these limited positions.’
I really enjoyed my time at the Academy, and it has definitely highlighted to me the importance of scientists and clinicians engaging in policy. I really hope in the future I will have the opportunity to contribute to policy as an academic or clinician. I would definitely recommend the scheme to others.

Despite conducting my internship entirely remotely, I was made me feel incredibly welcome and really felt like part of the team, which is a testament to how kind and supportive everyone was.

The internship programme has exceeded all my expectations – both in terms of responsibilities and the opportunities made available to me. The staff have all gone out of their way to welcome us, and I hope I can stay in touch long after my three months has expired.

I think the main strength of the scheme is the opportunity to engage with so many people, from Academy staff from different teams to the Fellows as well as stakeholders from other organisations.

I haven’t had exposure to so many high profile researchers in such a short space of time before.

Former interns planning an academic career have found their experience valuable; for others it has helped them to secure jobs in science policy and science communication.

**What the scheme provides**

The scheme will:

- Provide future researchers and academic leaders with a deeper understanding of medical science policy.
- Contribute to the exploration of medical science in its wider cultural context by helping to build bridges between the scientific community and policymakers.
- Develop a cadre of people able to work at the interface between medical science and policymaking.
- Allow students to build valuable contacts with senior scientists and policymakers, and expose them to the wide range of public, charitable and commercial organisations involved in UK medical science.
- Provide opportunities for PhD students to develop valuable transferable skills and to enhance their CVs.

**Eligibility**

The scheme is open to all UK-based PhD students (based in a university or institute), including clinicians undertaking a PhD as part of their Clinical Research Training.

The scheme can also be undertaken in the three month period immediately following the end of a student’s PhD-funding coming to an end. For example, if your funding ends in April, May or June 2022, you would be able to participate in
the July 2022 to September 2022 placement. However, you would not be able to participate in any subsequent placements.

Information about the candidate’s PhD-funding period and agreement to provide a three-month extension to the candidate’s PhD maintenance stipend, or ongoing stipend provision during his/her internship must also be provided by the appropriate administration office with signed approval of the budget holder.

For internships run in person, this should be an extension at the at the funder’s minimum level for London. Remote internships should be continued at the candidate’s current rate.

**Placements on the scheme are allocated on a competitive basis so withdrawal from the scheme once a place is accepted is likely to result in another potential intern being denied the opportunity to participate.**

**About the Academy of Medical Sciences**

The Academy of Medical Sciences is the independent body in the UK representing the diversity of medical science. Our mission is to promote medical science and its translation into benefits for society. The Academy’s elected Fellows are the United Kingdom’s leading medical scientists from hospitals, academia, industry and the public service. We work with them to promote excellence, influence policy to improve health and wealth, nurture the next generation of medical researchers, link academia, industry and the NHS, seize international opportunities and encourage dialogue about the medical sciences.

**Activity of interns**

The Academy’s policy work addresses issues of medical science, healthcare and biomedical careers. Areas of policy work originate from within the Academy Council and wider Fellowship, as well as in response to issues raised by Government, Parliament and other relevant bodies, including stakeholders such as industry, medical research charities, medical Royal Colleges and regulators.

This work can take many forms: major reports, shorter position papers, seminars and workshops, correspondence, representation on Government and external panels, evidence to Parliamentary committees, private meetings and roundtables with key decision makers. Recent major policy studies have tackled COVID-19: Preparing for a challenging winter 2020-21; Public involvement and engagement in research during the COVID-19 pandemic; healthy ageing; ‘Team Science’ and a wide range of other topics.

During the 12-week internship, students will be involved in a variety of activities that will give them experience of many aspects of medical science policy and related activities. This will include one or more discrete projects led by the intern. The range of activities will include:

- Writing, editing, proofreading and referencing policy papers, e.g. responses to public consultations, papers and summaries for working groups, Council or Officers meetings.
• Desk-based research and scoping, e.g. preparing project proposals or undertaking literature reviews.
• Evidence gathering and preparation, e.g. preparation of contacts lists, drafting calls for evidence, collating and summarising evidence.
• Events organisation, e.g. preparing conference materials, helping to co-ordinate activities on the day.
• Communications activities, including the use of new media.
• Attending (virtual) internal and external events, e.g. Parliamentary Select Committees, working group meetings, PolicyNet and other lectures.
• Opportunities to observe meet policy professionals in other organisations.

Structure of the scheme

The 12-week internships will be full-time positions.

Whilst the Academy is operating remotely, we have taken a number of steps to ensure that interns continue to receive the necessary support. Each intern will be allocated a supervisor from amongst the Academy staff who will:
• Provide line management and guidance.
• Conduct entry and exit interviews.
• Co-ordinate office review of the documents produced by the intern.
• Carry out relevant administration in accordance with the Academy’s Human Resources policies.

In addition, interns will meet regularly with members of the Policy team and the Academy’s wider staff.

Internships will be offered in 12-week time blocks from April 2022 to March 2023. Candidates are invited to indicate their preferred time to undertake the placement, although we cannot guarantee the timing of placements.

Application procedure

Candidates are asked to supply:
• A completed application form, including an endorsement and a supporting statement from their supervisor and relevant institutional administration office.
• A short covering letter briefly describing their reasons for application.
• A CV.
• A short article, no more than 800 words in length, on a medical science policy topic. Students may choose a topic related to their PhD, an area of personal interest or select from the options below.
  o Medical research in the NHS
  o Government support for science and research
  o Translating research into policy and practice
  o Scientific education and training (including women in science)
  o Interdisciplinarity and ‘team science’
  o Research reproducibility
  o Use of animals in medical research
  o Research regulation and governance
The article should highlight the main policy issues of the chosen topic and the implications for the key stakeholders who are required to make decisions in the area, which may include government, industry and/or funding organisations. The article should demonstrate the candidate’s ability to write in a style suitable for a policy (rather than academic) audience.

Short-listed applicants will be invited to an interview with a selection panel of Academy staff.

Applications will be welcomed from Monday 19 January 2022 and must be received by midnight on Monday 21 February 2022. Interviews will be conducted in the week commencing 28 February 2022.

Queries should be directed to Applications should be submitted electronically to Dr Tom Livermore, Head of Science Base and Careers Policy at the Academy of Medical Sciences: tom.livermore@acmedsci.ac.uk.
Policy internship scheme summary: FAQs for applicants

Eligibility
Who is eligible for the scheme?
The scheme is open to all UK-based PhD students (based in a university or institute), including clinicians undertaking a PhD as part of their Clinical Research Training.

Can I choose the timing of the internship?
The 2022/23 internship scheme will run four times: from April 2022 – June 2022, July 2022 – September 2022, October 2022 – December 2022, and January 2023 – March 2023. 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.

Am I able to participate after my PhD funding has finished?
The scheme can also be undertaken in the three month period immediately after your funding comes to an end. For example, if your funding ends in April, May or June 2022, you would be able to participate in the July 2022 to September 2022 placement. However, you would not be able to participate in any subsequent placements.

COVID-19
Will the internship take place if the Academy is working remotely?
The Academy of Medical Sciences is currently working primarily remotely and is in line with Government guidance to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

As a result, internships are being conducted largely “remotely” although opportunities to come to the office and in-person events may be possible as the pandemic and relevant guidance evolves.

Application process
What happens after I submit my application?
Candidates whose applications are shortlisted will be invited for a virtual interview in week commencing 14 March 2022. If, due to exceptional circumstances, you are unable to attend during this week, 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 supervisor. There is a section on the application form for your supervisor to complete. Your institution’s appropriate administration office must also provide information about your PhD funding period and, if you are successful, agree to either:
- provide a three-month extension to your PhD stipend, or
- ongoing stipend payments for a three-month placement if this is an integral to your programme.

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 policymakers. 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. We are particularly interested in the relevance to the Academy 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, MRC, 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 financial arrangements need to be in place for me to participate in the scheme?**
If you are successful in your application, you will need to demonstrate that you will be provided with ongoing stipend payments from your funder, institution or Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP).

If you require a three-month extension to your PhD stipend from your institution, we will require confirmation from your institution's appropriate administration office that it is willing to do so as part of your application (see 'Application process' above). The stipend extension could be supported through the DTP supplement, or through other sources if appropriate.

For interns who are required to complete a three-month placement during their PhD (for example Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS)), you should be able to demonstrate that you will receive ongoing stipend payments from your funder, institution or DTP.

You should discuss this with your institution prior to submitting your application.

**What if I live outside of London and need to travel or temporarily relocate in order to take part in the scheme?**
For interns who are normally based outside London, we ask that funders confirm that they can contribute up to £2400 for travel or relocation to London in the event that the internship takes place in the Academy’s central London office or interns are able to attend events at the AMS office. We anticipate that this could also be used for hotel accommodation for short stays in London if required.

These amounts will be agreed in principle once all placements have been confirmed and will be paid to the student through the Academy of Medical Sciences.

Successful applicants should contact the Academy for confirmation of their eligibility for a travel grant and information on how to access it.