

Guidance for internship candidates applying to the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is the devolved government for Scotland and has a range of responsibilities that include: the economy, education, health, justice, rural affairs, housing, environment, equal opportunities, consumer advocacy and advice, transport and taxation.

Government social science research aims to provide high quality evidence and advice for Ministers and Scottish Government officials to inform policy development, implementation and evaluation. Analysts in government help generate new ideas and open debate, challenge assumptions, beliefs and attitudes, test policy ideas and develop a deeper understanding of issues as they affect Scotland.

The core functions of researchers in government include:

- the interpretation of evidence and the provision of research based advice
- engaging with the academic and wider research community to bring expert knowledge into the policy making process
- commissioning external research projects
- undertaking research such as reviews of the existing evidence base
- disseminating research findings and encouraging their wider use

There are internships available with social research, economist, statistician or mixed teams. All tend to work alongside each other in 'Analytical Services Divisions' in the Scottish Government.

The Office of the Chief Researcher (OCR) in the Scottish Government is responsible for central co-ordination of this internship scheme.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND HOW TO APPLY

What is an Internship?

An internship is a non-salaried but paid work placement. The SGSSS-Scottish Government Internship Competition gives current SGSSS students (all students registered for a PhD degree in Scotland, however funded) the opportunity to apply to undertake an internship within an external organisation.

Please note that these internships present opportunities to work outside the topic area of a student's PhD to develop a range of transferable skills, enhance employability and provide the experience of working within a public sector organisation. Please do not apply if you are only seeking to have experience in your own PhD topic. You are better to organise your own internship in this case.

Working arrangements

All internships are on a full-time working basis for **three months** (13 weeks or the equivalent part-time) where the applicant is expected to suspend study for that period. A monthly stipend equivalent to the ESRC standard maintenance stipend will be paid to students on internships. For the most up to date figures, please see [here](#).

All internships will be based in core Scottish Government Directorates or their agencies and be based in Edinburgh or Glasgow unless indicated by the project. Please see the separate SGSSS “Additional Information” document which provides guidance on travel and accommodation reimbursement.

Successful applicants and their University supervisor will be asked to sign an agreement document prior to commencing their internship, covering administrative details such as procedures for annual leave, etc.

Please note, internships taking place remotely will still require that you are located within the United Kingdom. If you will not be residing in the UK at the time of placement, please ensure that you discuss this with the SGSSS team prior to submitting an application.

Eligibility

All SGSSS postgraduate students registered for a PhD in Scotland (however funded) are invited to apply for the projects described below provided they:

- meet civil service nationality criteria (see below for further details);
- are undertaking their PhD in a social science discipline¹;
- are in the second or third year of their PhD;
- are, at the time of application, in full time study (or part time but able to commit to a full-time internship).

If successful, all students will take an interruption of studies so that they are not eligible for fees during the internship. Research supervisors need to give permission for students to apply for these opportunities. Successful applicants will receive the equivalent of a standard ESRC maintenance stipend for the three months while on internship (please see link above).

All provisionally selected candidates will be required to receive security clearance as a condition of taking up the Internship. This requires having a valid Disclosure Certificate. Obtaining a Disclosure Certificate can take several weeks. Successful candidates should apply for a certificate as soon as possible. The cost of a certificate can later be claimed back as part of Travel and Subsistence expenses.

In order to work for the civil service, including as part of an internship, an individual must meet **nationality criteria** set out in the Civil Service Nationality Rules. Broadly, the following groups will be able to work in the non-reserved posts within the Civil Service:

¹ Please check the SGSSS website for [Pathway information](#) which specifies the disciplines we cover. Students studying on health pathway can apply even if funded by MRC/CSO as health is one of our interdisciplinary pathways

- UK nationals
- Nationals of Commonwealth countries
- Nationals of the Republic of Ireland
- EEA nationals with (or eligible for) status under the EUSS
- Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service
- Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service
- Certain family members of the relevant EU & Turkish nationals

Detailed guidance is available on the Civil Service web pages [here](#). All applicants must ensure that they can meet these criteria in order to be eligible to undertake internships with the Scottish Government.

How to apply

Applicants should submit an **online application form** available via [Apply](#), the SGSSS electronic application system. Please, read the below information before applying.

The online process involves:

- Inputting information such as personal details, Period of PhD study, Pathway or discipline,
- Selecting the chosen internship host and title
- Providing a description of the skills and experience you can bring to this internship (max 1000 words)
- Providing a short statement on your reasons for applying, what you'd hope to gain from an internship and how this fits with your PhD or career plans (max 500 words)
- Upload your CV (2 pages max)
- Uploading a Statement of Support from your Supervisor. Your supervisor will need to be aware of the timeline in order to contribute meaningfully to your application within the deadlines.

We strongly advise applicants to complete the application process at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline. If you have any questions about this process please contact us on team@sgsss.ac.uk.

Applicants are free to apply for up to 4 preferred project choices with the Scottish Government. A separate application form will need to be submitted for each preference.

Students may also apply (in a separate application form) for inclusion in a **'general pool'** if they wish to be considered for other unfilled advertised projects or others which may later arise in any area of the Scottish Government, to maximise chances of obtaining an internship. Including as much information as possible about their social science skills set will help to match those students unsuccessful with their initial choices with possible alternative placements.

You should clearly indicate whether the application is for a specific project and/or for inclusion in the general pool. Although you can apply for more than one internship, candidates can only undertake one internship. Past SGSSS interns may still be eligible to undertake a further internship.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their applications and areas of interest with the Scottish Government contact (listed under each internship) in advance of submitting their application. If there are questions about the scheme as a whole, please contact team@sgsss.ac.uk.

Students are encouraged to carefully consider the information requested in the application form and pay particular attention to setting out their expertise in particular research methods to address the desired skills listed. Applicants are usually not required to have academic experience in the policy area of the internship unless specified in the project description. As stated above, SGSSS strongly encourages students to choose opportunities to work *outside* the area of their PhD topic in order to gain wider experience.

Selection process

Interns will be initially screened by the SGSSS on the basis of their written application and then passed to the Scottish Government. An informal video call discussion with applicants may also be held before final allocation of internships by the Scottish Government. It can take some time to work with the Scottish Government hosts to place applicants so we may not be in touch for approximately 4 weeks after the deadline. Sometimes the SGSSS will inform you of the success of your application and sometimes the Scottish Government host will contact you to offer you a place or to seek further information from you. If you have not heard back from us within 6 weeks of the deadline then please contact the SGSSS team on the email below.

Additional information

The Scottish Government Internship Scheme contact at the Office of the Chief Researcher is Alana Scott who can be contacted by email SocialResearchInterns@gov.scot

For more information about analytical services in the Scottish Government see:

<https://www.gov.scot/topics/>

See also the UK Government sites for the analytical professions: [Government Economic Service](#), [Government Statistical Service](#) and [Government Social Research](#).

Reporting Requirements

Upon completion of the internship, SGSSS will send a unique link to the intern and sponsor (separately) asking them to fill out the online evaluation **within 2 weeks** of the internship completing. We also expect that interns are willing to take up opportunities to speak to other students about their experience e.g. at the SGSSS Summer School.