

Social Security Scotland Internship Opportunities

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| Placement titles | There are three placements available: A. What new methods can be developed to determine the value of fraud and error in benefits? (page 2) B. What are the main drivers behind overall client satisfaction? (page 3) C. Social Security Scotland Statistical Publication and Data Policy Internship (page 4) |
| Line Manager | Each internship will have a different line manager / mentor, outlined below |
| Payment | The internship will be paid at UKRI doctoral stipend levels |
| Based | Each internship is offered on a hybrid or remote basis. Social Security Scotland is headquartered in Dundee and has a major presence in Glasgow. PhD interns will be encouraged to spend time at the head office or in Glasgow. |
| Duration | 3 months (full-time) or 6 months (part-time), starting from October 2023 |
| To apply | Please apply via SGSSS Apply by 12pm (midday) on Friday 01 September |

About Social Security Scotland

Social Security Scotland is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government. It is responsible for managing the benefits that are devolved to Scotland. The mission of Social Security Scotland is to make sure that the people who need benefits get them correctly, and that the system is delivered with dignity, fairness and respect. The benefits administered by Social Security Scotland are designed to support people on low incomes, disabled people, carers, young people entering the workplace and help for people to heat their homes

Placement Information

Social Security Scotland are offering 3 placements. Full information about each placement can be found below. Applicants can apply for **one** of these projects only.

Please check information about eligibility (Page 5)

Project A - What new methods can be developed to determine the value of fraud and error in benefits?

Context

Social Security Scotland has various approaches to estimate how much money we incorrectly pay, either paying clients too much benefit (overpayments) or not paying them enough (underpayments). Error in our payments can be caused by various factors which the agency has a responsibility to understand. This in turn allows us to improve our processes and better meet our clients' needs. We have recently developed methods for estimating the value of fraud and error and are looking to expand this by exploring available data and/or expanding our methods for understanding, estimating and modelling the value of fraud and error in our benefits.

Scope

We want to understand the potential of our data and produce recommendations for how we might use it to build on our current capabilities in this area and to suggest innovative methods for how we can develop our approaches. You will produce a paper with the findings from your data analysis and recommendations for further analysis and/or future approaches and present these to Social Security Scotland analysts and fraud and error managers.

This project will give you the opportunity to use your coding and quantitative analytical knowledge and skills to demonstrate how our data can be used to complement existing methods.

The line manager / mentor for this project will be Iona Currie (Principal Operational Research Analyst).

Person specification

The successful applicant will need to evidence the following skills as part of your application.

| Essential | Desirable |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding (R, SAS, etc.) • Strong numeric skills (e.g. experience using statistics, econometrics, data analytics etc.) • Working knowledge of MS office, particularly Excel • Interest in mathematical modelling, statistics or data analytics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of Fraud and Error in benefits systems • Knowledge of sampling theory • Understanding of regression (linear and multivariate) • Experience of simulation modelling • Degree in a highly numerate subject (mathematics, statistics, operational research, physics, data science etc.) |

Project B - What are the main drivers behind overall client satisfaction?

Context

The client survey has a wealth of untapped potential. One of the areas we'd like to explore are the elements of a clients experience which influence their overall satisfaction with Social Security Scotland. Every client who receives a decision on an application or a payment from Social Security Scotland is invited to take part in the Client Survey.

Scope

The Client Survey asks about each stage of a clients experience with Social Security Scotland beginning with how they first heard about the agency right through to a decision and even potentially a payment. We want to understand which of those steps is most influential in a clients overall satisfaction. We expect there to be variation across sub-groups of the respondent population which could also be explored.

By the end of the project we hope to have:

- A research report outlining findings and potentially highlighting next steps where applicable;
- The results will also be presented across Social Security Scotland – particularly senior leaders.

The line manager / mentor for this project will be Will McKinnon (Head of Client and Staff Insights).

Person specification

The successful applicant will need to evidence the following skills as part of your application.

| Essential | Desirable |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative analysis • Excellent written communication • Independent research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regression analysis • Presentation skills (written and oral) • Experience of SPSS, SAS, and/or R |

Project C - Social Security Scotland Statistical Publication and Data Policy Internship

Context

This is an exciting opportunity to work within the statistics team of Social Security Scotland, who are responsible for producing official statistics publications and management information on Social Security Scotland benefits, its workforce, client diversity and equality, and legacy (DWP) benefits as well as producing ad-hoc analyses and providing statistical advice.

Scope

This project will give you the opportunity to shape the future publications and data processes of Social Security Scotland and gain experience working with a diverse team of experienced civil servants.

Depending on your skills, interests, and personal development goals, you will work on a project relating to the development of Social Security Scotland's data policies and statistical publications. Potential topics include:

- Development of reproducible analytical pipelines for disability benefits similar to that already developed for Low Income Benefits (R coding skills required)
- Development work on the operation performance reporting (R coding skills required)
- The presentation of narrative in statistical publications
- The data revision policy of statistical publications
- The statistics team's data retention policy

Your work will include understanding existing policies, researching industry best practice and the publications of other organisations, and producing a paper with recommendations for Social Security Scotland Statistics. Candidates must be able to work independently, have strong project management skills, and excellent communication skills.

The line manager / mentor for this project will be Elaine Drennan, Head of Statistics.

Person specification

The successful applicant will need to evidence the following skills as part of your application.

| Essential | Desirable |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work independently • Project management skills • Excellent communication skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience using R or other statistical software |

Eligibility for all placements

Before making an application, please ensure that you meet **all** of the eligibility criteria below:

- Registered at a university in Scotland, regardless of funding source;
- In the second or third year of PhD study only. Please note that if you are in your final year, you need to have more than 3 months left for your PhD when the internship starts;
- Eligible to work under the [UK Civil Service nationality rules](#);
- Eligible to work in the UK.

Please note that students holding a student visa will only be able to undertake a PhD internship part-time alongside full-time study. It is your responsibility to check that your funder and University will accept this before you make an application.

For further information, please consult the [SGSSS Internship FAQs](#). If this does not answer your questions, please contact Anna-Marie (Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Manager): team@sgsss.ac.uk.