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**Nuffield Council on Bioethics POST Fellowship**

**Application pack**

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) is offering a three month fellowship to a PhD student from a UK university studying a bioethics-related subject. This opportunity is funded by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, which will fund one Fellow each year from 2014 to 2016. The Fellow will contribute to the activities of POST by producing a short briefing note (a ‘POSTnote’) on an area of public policy that raises bioethical issues. The Fellow will be based at the offices of POST at Parliament in London.

1. **Background**

**The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)** is a Parliamentary office set up in 1989 that provides independent, balanced and accessible analysis of public policy issues related to science and technology. POST is funded by Parliament, serves both Houses and is apolitical. The POST Board, which is comprised of MPs, Peers and some non-Parliamentarians from the science and technology community, sets the work programme.

The main activity of POST is producing [POSTnotes](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/post/publications/), which are four-page summaries of public policy issues with a basis in science and technology (including social science). POSTnotes are widely used as briefing material by Parliamentarians, particularly around the time of relevant discussions in Parliament. POSTnotes are produced by full-time staff and Fellows, who are usually PhD students based at POST for a three-month period. POST also aims to inform Parliamentary debate by:

* Supporting Select Committees with informal advice, oral briefings, data analyses, background papers or follow-up research.
* Informing both Houses on public dialogue activities in science and technology.
* Organising events to stimulate debate on a wide range of topical issues.
* Horizon-scanning to anticipate issues of science and technology that are likely to impact on policy.

**The Nuffield Council on Bioethics** is an independent body that examines and reports on ethical issues in biology and medicine. It was established by the Trustees of the Nuffield Foundation in 1991, and since 1994 it has been funded jointly by the Foundation, the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council.

The Council has achieved an international reputation for advising policy makers and stimulating debate in bioethics. It has published 25 major reports on issues ranging from GM crops and biofuels to dementia, public health and the use of human bodies in medicine and research.

1. **Eligibility**

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics Fellowship is open to postgraduate students registered for a PhD in a bioethics-related subject at a UK University. Applicants must be in their penultimate or final year of part- or full-time study in 2014/2015.

1. **Details of the placement**

**3.1 Nature of work**

The overall work programme of POST is determined by its Parliamentary Board and successful applicants may be asked to work on a subject which is notdirectly related to their doctoral thesis.

During the placement, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Fellow will be expected to produce a POSTnote. This will involve:

* Identifying and liaising with a wide range of interested parties which may include industry, academia, regulatory bodies, non-governmental organisations and government.
* Drafting concise briefing material.
* Responding to comments from internal and external peer review.

There may also be opportunities for the Fellow to organise a seminar to inform or disseminate their work.

POST is a strictly non-partisan organisation; Fellows are expected to abstain from any Party political activity and generally to uphold the principles of Parliamentary service, including a commitment to confidentiality, during their time with the Office.

In all cases, Fellows are encouraged to interact closely with people and activities in the two Houses of Parliament, including Select committees, MPs and Peers, their support services, 'All-Party Parliamentary Group' meetings and the very wide range of other activities at the Palace of Westminster. Access to conferences, workshops and seminars can be arranged. The Fellow will also be invited to visit and spend some time with the Nuffield Council on Bioethics at their offices in London.

At the end of the placement the Fellow will be asked to write a short end-of-project report for the Nuffield Council.

A blog post which describes the experiences of the 2014 Fellow, Clare Wenham, is available to read at: <http://nuffieldbioethics.org/blog/2014/biobanks-bioethics-months-parliament/>

* 1. **Funding and working arrangements**

The successful applicant will receive a three month extension to their PhD maintenance stipend from their University at a rate equivalent to their current PhD stipend (subject to a cap, see below). The Nuffield Council on Bioethics will make arrangements to reimburse the University to ensure that the Fellow’s stipend is paid while they are based at POST. This Fellowship is also open to self-funded PhD students, who will receive a three-month PhD maintenance stipend equivalent to the rate set by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The Fellow is expected to be based at POST’s offices in Westminster. As the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and POST are keen to encourage applicants from all over the UK, additional financial support is available to cover travel or accommodation costs if the successful applicant is usually based outside of London. Please note that the amount that any one student will receive over the 3-month period, including PhD stipend extension and any travel and accommodation costs, will be capped at £6,000. Please contact the Nuffield Council on Bioethics or POST for further details.

While the candidate is based at POST, computing, email and other facilities necessary for the project will be supplied by POST.

The Fellow will be responsible for suspending her/his university registration for the duration of the Fellowship. University fees will not be covered by this award.

1. **How to apply**

**4.1 Applications**

Applicants should submit:

1. A completed application form, which has been approved by their PhD Supervisor and Head of Department or Studentship Grant Holder.
2. A two page CV (no referees are required).
3. A two-page POSTnote-style briefing that you think could be the subject of an actual POSTnote, which addresses an area of public policy that raises bioethical issues. The briefing should be in 12 pt font on A4 paper and should not include your name or any identifying details as it will be assessed blind. You may want to use text boxes and graphs to highlight key facts. References should be included. The briefing does not have to look like a POSTnote, but it should be written in the same style. You should:
* Summarise relevant current research and developments in this field.
* Highlight the main policy issues.
* Demonstrate your ability to write in a style suitable for a Parliamentary (rather than academic) audience.

Before preparing your briefing you should examine the 'POST style' of writing, and the type of policy issues that are raised and discussed. POST publications can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/post/>

Please send an **electronic copy** of the completed application form, including all signatures and your CV and briefing to postfellowships@parliament.uk

* 1. **Assessment**

The fellowship will be awarded competitively and applications will be assessed by POST and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.

The criteria for assessment of the POSTnote-style briefing are:

* Content (topic choice, policy relevance and breadth of research)
* Writing style and clarity
* Structure
* Impartiality

Applicants that are successful at this stage will be invited for interview in London.

Reasonable travel costs to attend an interview at POST’s Westminster offices will be covered.

* 1. **Timetable**

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| **Activity** | **Date** |
| Deadline for applications  | ~~5~~~~th~~ ~~January 2015, 5pm~~**Extended to 5pm on Friday 23rd January 2015** |
| Interviews (at POST)  | ~~26 or 27~~~~th~~ ~~January 2015~~**Thursday 12 February 2014** |
| Final decision  | ~~28~~~~th~~ ~~January 2015~~**Friday 13th February 2014** |
| Start date for successful applicant  | Between March and October 2015 |

* 1. **Start date and length of placement**

The fellowship is for three months and can be undertaken between March and December 2015, but candidates should try to avoiding starting in the period from late July to the end of September, when Parliament is in its summer recess and no activities occur. The start date is to be agreed between the applicant, POST, the applicant's supervisor and University and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.

The offer is conditional on obtaining parliamentary security clearance.

1. **Contacts**

For more information please contact:

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