



Political Studies Association

PSA/House of Commons Committee Office Placement (2024/25)

Person Specification

The person we are looking for will be able to demonstrate:

- An excellent command of the English language both verbally and written
- Academic knowledge in a field related to politics, parliament, public policy, social science or public expenditure
- An ability to research and prepare written briefing suitable for non-expert audiences and to tight deadlines
- High level drafting skills
- Good general IT skills
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work as part of a team

A demonstrable interest or experience of the context in which policy is made would be an advantage but detailed knowledge of Westminster's parliamentary procedures is not required.

The successful candidate must:

- Be an ECN member of the PSA
- Be studying part-time or full-time for a PhD
- Be prepared to submit to and clear security checks to Counter Terrorist Check level before taking up the placement - the Scrutiny Unit will arrange this. Please note that you must have lived in the UK for 3 of the last 5 years (the minimum to gain security clearance)
- Sign and adhere to a confidentiality agreement governing the use that can be made of information gained during the placement
- At all times during the placement work and act with tact, discretion and absolute political impartiality
- Have the right to work in the UK full-time

Role Description

We are ideally looking for an intern who can join us for **four months between January 2025 and the Summer Recess (August 2025)**. Consideration will be given to tailoring the allocated hours and duration of the placement to fit around academic or other commitments.

This is a paid internship, offering a stipend of £6000, payable at £1,500 per month, which we expect to be used in addition to any regular research council or university funding that you may receive. You will also be able to claim up to a maximum of £1,000 towards necessary travel costs over the course of the four month placement.

You will be working in the Select Committee Team (SCT), supporting the work of the House of Commons' Select Committees. Select Committees are cross-party committees of MPs who examine government policy and spending. You can find out more about the Select Committees on [this website](#).

Those undertaking work placements are placed either within a team of staff supporting a specific select committee or in the Scrutiny Unit. The Scrutiny Unit provides select and joint committees, and their secretariats, with expert advice and guidance on Government expenditure, performance and draft legislation in a range of policy areas as required.

The House of Commons has a hybrid working policy and a balance between onsite and home working can be agreed with your line manager. You would need to attend committee meetings (normally once or twice a week) and events in person. You may also be required to physically attend team meetings, events or 'anchor days'. Permanent employees are required to spend a minimum of 40% of their annualised working time working on the Parliamentary Estate. You would not be formally required to meet this minimum, but it is a useful guide as to what the minimum expectations for on-site attendance are.

Tasks undertaken by staff on Committee teams can vary in length between a few hours work to several weeks' commitment. You will contribute to the full range of their team's activities whilst being likely to be assigned to at least one longer work-stream.

Whether placed with a Select Committee or in the Scrutiny Unit, you will be assigned to a specific project, which is likely to involve one or more of the following:

- Policy and evidence analysis
- Research using both primary and secondary sources
- Preparation of written briefing materials for Members Serving on a Committee
- Briefing MPs orally, and responding to their questions

Following, or toward the end of, the placement, successful candidates will be asked to report on their experience, in a variety of formats e.g. report (3,000 words), magazine article, blog post.

Examples of work undertaken by interns include Identifying specialist witnesses who could offer insightful oral evidence for reports on devolution across the UK

- Organising committee visits to Welsh Prisons for research purposes during an ongoing inquiry
- Drafting questions for Members to ask during oral evidence sessions
- Collating oral and written evidence and drafting Committee reports
- Arranging evidence sessions for the Scottish Affairs Committee's inquiry into Blacklisting in Employment
- Researching and writing briefing notes for Committee Members on the Impact of the Bedroom Tax in Scotland
- Analysing evidence obtained and drafting Committee reports on the Referendum on Separation for Scotland (Pensions and Benefits)
- Suggesting changes to policies within the Department of Chamber and Committee Services at the House of Commons
- Researching procedural issues shaping Parliament's legislative and scrutiny activities
- Analysing policy options for the 'HS2 and the environment' report
- Attending a diverse range of activities in order to get a feel for how parliament works: debates, meetings of other committees - even Prime Minister's Questions.