**Institute of Food Science and Technology POST Fellowship Scheme 2024/25 Application Pack**

This document is the Application Pack for the 2024/25 Institute of Food Science and Technology POST Fellowship scheme. The application pack is made up of two parts:

* **Part 1**: Fellowship role information
* **Part 2**: Application guidance

**Fellowship Role Information**

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| **Job Title:** | **Institute of Food Science and Technology Fellow** |
| **Salary:** | N/A (Bursary of £7,999) |
| **Team:** | Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology |
| **Number of Posts:** | 1 |
| **Contract Type/Duration:** | Temporary (3 months FTE, applications for part-time fellowships are accepted) |

**Team Information**

**The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)** sits within the Commons Research and Information team although it works for both Houses of Parliament. It is overseen by a Board of MPs, Peers and external experts and provides research from across the biological, physical and social sciences, and engineering and technology.

POST provides balanced and accessible overviews of research, mainly in the form of '[POSTnotes](https://post.parliament.uk/category/analysis/)'. These POSTnotes are based on reviews of the research literature and interviews with stakeholders from across academia, industry, government and the third sector that are reviewed by external experts.

POST runs seminars, receptions and other events on science and technology topics. It also runs several fellowship schemes with Research Councils, learned societies and charities, through which PhD students are sponsored to spend three months working at POST.

POST (and the wider Research & Information team) is committed to increasing diversity and to maintaining an inclusive workplace culture. We welcome and encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

Further information about POST is available on [our website](https://post.parliament.uk/about/).

**The Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST)** is the UK’s leading professional body for those involved in all aspects of food science and technology. IFST is an internationally respected independent membership body, supporting food professionals through knowledge sharing and professional recognition. IFST membership comprises individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, from students to experts, working across a wide range of disciplines within the sector. Visit the [IFST website here](https://www.ifst.org/).

**Role Information**

POST and IFST are offering a three-month fellowship to students in the second or third year of their PhD, undertaking research studies related to Food Science and Technology at a UK university. Students who are writing up their theses but have not yet graduated are eligible to apply. Applicants do not have to be members of the IFST, although the IFST strongly encourages students to join and benefit from its [membership](https://www.ifst.org/membership).

The opportunity will be funded by IFST and successful candidates will receive a payment of £7,999 to cover a 3-month extension to their PhD award, maintenance (including caring costs) and accommodation (including travel costs for relocation).

A PhD Fellowship is an exciting opportunity to gain real-world experience of the how research evidence is communicated to decision makers.

PhD Fellows join POST (or a Select Committee, the House of Commons Library or the House of Lords Library) for short-term secondments. Their role is to support the use of research evidence in Parliament. Most PhD Fellows are based at POST and during their time they produce a POSTnote, which is a four-page summary on emerging science, technology or social science topic that is relevant and timely for Parliament. POSTnotes are widely used as briefing material by Parliamentarians. PhD Fellows may also contribute to a longer report, assist a Select Committee in a current inquiry, and/or carry out related activities on an area of public policy. The exact role will be determined by the POST Board or relevant host parliamentary team.

POST is a strictly non-partisan organisation; PhD Fellows are expected to abstain from any party-political activity and generally to uphold the principles of parliamentary service, including a commitment to confidentiality and impartiality, during their time in Parliament. In all cases, PhD 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 fellowship can be carried out full-time for three months or part-time over a longer period. Successful applicants will be expected to start their fellowship between September 2024 and April 2025. The exact start date is to be agreed between the applicant, POST, and the applicant's supervisor.

Following the placement, the Fellow will be asked to write a report/article on their time spent at POST. In this article the Fellow can describe their experience and/or talk about and explain the POSTnotes they worked on during their time. The article will be published in the monthly FS&T newsletter which is sent to all IFST members.

For more information on how to apply, please see the **application** **guidance in part 2 of this document**. For any further information about the POST and our fellowships, please see our [frequently asked questions](https://post.parliament.uk/post-fellowships/post-fellowships-faqs/) page on our website.

**Responsibilities**

PhD Fellows may be asked to complete a range of different activities. These typically include:

* Identifying and liaising with a wide range of interested parties including industry, academia, regulatory bodies, non-governmental organisations and government
* Analysing research evidence from a range of sources, most likely outside of your specialism
* Drafting concise, understandable and impartial briefing materials for a non-specialist audience
* Responding to comments from internal and external peer reviewers

**Security**

Successful candidates will be required to complete pre-employment checks. This includes security vetting to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level. All successful candidates are required to pass these checks before an offer can be confirmed. You should be aware that if you have resided outside of the UK for a total of more than two of the last five years, you are not eligible to receive security clearance to work on the Parliamentary Estate. [Click here](https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/bicameral/parliamentary-security-department/) for further information.

**Hours**

PhD Fellows can work full-time or part-time hours. Fellows can work in POST’s offices in Westminster or work remotely. If you are successful in your application, we will discuss the hours and location of the fellowship with you.

Net conditions full-time working hours for staff of the House are 36 hours per week. This   
excludes daily meal breaks of one hour. POST offers flexible hours and the exact daily times of attendance will be agreed with line management.

**Workplace Adjustments**

As an inclusive employer, the House of Commons supports individuals in need of workplace adjustments. The workplace adjustment process prevents, reduces or removes problems you might face at work. Adjustments can be requested to help with obstacles relating to mental health, and physical or non-physical requirements. You can request a workplace adjustment if you have a disability or suffer from a difficulty or disadvantage in your workplace.

**Application and Selection Process**

Below is a summary of the application and selection process. For more information on how to apply, and to access the relevant forms, please see the application guidance in part 2 of this document.

In the first instance, applicants should submit:

1. The application form word document, linked in this pack. This includes short questions on how you meet the fellowship criteria. This can be submitted as a word document or a PDF.
2. A two-page briefing on a topic that you think would be of current interest to Parliamentarians. The briefing should be completed using the briefing template and should not contain your name or any other identifying details. This can be submitted as a word document or a PDF.
3. An approval form, which has been completed by your PhD Supervisor and Head of Department. This can be submitted as a word document or a PDF.

Written applications will be assessed using:

* Your two-page briefing
* Application questions asking you to demonstrate the five criteria listed below under ‘skills and experience’

If you are invited to interview, we will ask you a combination of competency questions and role specific questions solely based on the criteria below.

As a Disability Confident Leader, it is important that we make appropriate arrangements or adjustments where necessary in order to create a full and equal participation in the selection process. If you require any reasonable adjustments, please indicate this in your application form and we get in touch with you to ensure these needs are met.

**The deadline for applications is 23:59 on 17th July 2024**. Interviews are expected to be held on the week commencing **5th August.**

**Submit your application to** [**postfellowships@parliament.uk**](mailto:postfellowships@parliament.uk)

**Our Values**

The House Service is proud of our organisational values, which will deliver our strategy.   
These are the values that we demonstrate at work:

**Inclusive:** We value everyone equally; We respect each other; We all have a voice.

**Courageous:** We try new things; We own our actions and decisions; We learn from   
our mistakes.

**Trusted:** We trust each other to do a good job; We are impartial; We build confidence   
in Parliament with our integrity.

**Collaborative:** We share our knowledge and experience; We work towards a shared   
vision; We know we work better in a partnership.

**Skills and Experience**

**Criterion 1: Researching**

You are currently completing a PhD at a UK university on a Food Science and Technology topic. You have excellent research and analytical skills and can gather and assess information from a range of sources. You also have the ability to work in new subject areas.

**Criterion 2: Communicating**

You can explain complex information clearly, impartially and succinctly to a non-specialist audience in writing. You are able to talk about research with a wide range of different people.

**Criterion 3: Working with people**

You are able to work successfully within a team, whilst upholding the values of equality, diversity and inclusion. As this role involves discussing research topics with various internal and external stakeholders, you are able to adapt personal and working styles to accommodate the needs of others.

**Criterion 4: Planning and organising**

You are able to work independently. You can plan, manage and prioritise your workload to meet changing demands and tight deadlines.

**Criterion 5: Interest in UK Parliament**

We are looking to offer this fellowship opportunity to people who are interested in UK Parliament and want to learn more. You have an interest in how UK Parliament works, its role in scrutiny and legislation, and how research evidence is used in its work. You understand how Parliament and Government are different. You may also have an interest in UK Government and policy in general.

**Fellowship Application Guidance**

**Details of placement**

For information about the role, working arrangements and the skills we are looking for, please see the **role information in part 1 of this document**.

**Eligibility**

The IFST POST Fellowship scheme is open to students in the second or third year of their PhD, undertaking research studies related to Food Science and Technology at a UK university. Students who are writing up their theses but have not yet graduated are eligible to apply. Students do not have to be an IFST member to apply.

Successful candidates will be required to complete pre-employment checks. This includes security vetting to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level. All successful candidates are required to pass these checks before an offer can be confirmed. You should be aware that if you have resided outside of the UK for a total of more than two of the last five years, you are not eligible to receive security clearance to work on the Parliamentary Estate. [Click here](https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/mps-lords--offices/offices/pass-office/psd-national-security-vetting-booklet.pdf) for further information.

Some international students may have working restrictions as part of their visa that will require undertaking the Fellowship part-time. We will discuss this with all successful applicants on a case-by-case basis.

**Funding arrangements**

IFST will make three equal payments for a total of £7,999 to the Fellow during the duration of the fellowship. The first payment will be made at least 2 weeks before the start of the placement.

This total payment is expected to cover a 3-month extension to the PhD award, maintenance (including caring costs) and accommodation (including travel costs for relocation).

Any additional costs incurred by the Fellow as part of their work at POST, for example for travel to relevant meetings or conference fees, will be covered by POST with prior agreement between the Fellow and their supervisor.

The Fellow will be responsible for suspending their university registration for the duration of the Fellowship. University fees will not be covered by this award. Parliament will provide computing, email and other facilities necessary for the project.

**Advice on applying**

The application process for the PhD Fellowship involves two stages: an initial application and an interview. Below you will find some advice for applicants about these two stages. We cannot offer further advice to individual candidates about applying to ensure fairness in the application process. The fellowship will be awarded competitively, and applications will be assessed by POST and IFST.

***Initial application***

The initial application involves submitting a short online form and writing a two-page briefing. Below are explanations of what you will be expected to submit, why we are asking for it, and how we will assess it. We also offer some advice on how to write your application.

*Application form*

In the application form we will assess the criteria from the fellowship role information. In responding to the questions that start ‘please tell us’, you may like to use [STAR format](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situation,_task,_action,_result) (where you explain the situation, task, action and results of an example) as a tool to structure your answers. This allows us to understand the context and outcome of your example and can improve readability.

If you would like to request an accessible copy of the application questions in an alternative format, please contact Natasha Mutebi at mutebin@parliament.uk

We also ask you to upload an approval form completed by your PhD Supervisor and Head of Department. We ask for this because we need to know that your supervisor and university would be willing to permit you to take some time away for your PhD to do a Fellowship with us.

*Two-page briefing*

We ask you to write a two-page briefing on a topic that you think would be of current interest to Parliamentarians. The briefing should be completed using the briefing template and **should not contain your name or any other identifying details**. We want you to use the briefing template and ensure your work is not identifiable in order to make the process as fair and unbiased as possible.

We ask for you to provide this briefing to demonstrate criteria 1 and 2 (researching and communicating). As crafting this briefing is similar to the sort of work PhD Fellows carry out, it shows us that you can write in the sort of impartial, concise, accurate and readable way we aim for. We do not expect you to have written similar briefings before or have had experience writing for policymakers. We are looking for potential, not perfection.

The criteria that we assess the briefing on are:

* *Content*: Briefings are designed to support the work of parliamentarians. Therefore, it is important to pick a topic that is likely to be timely and relevant to parliamentary discussion. Your briefing should draw on information from a wide range of relevant sources.
* *Writing style and clarity*: Briefings should be easily understood by a non-specialist audience, including people with no background in your chosen topic.
* *Structure*: Briefings are designed to have a clear structure and use headings and sub-headings to make them easy to navigate. They follow a logical order and do not introduce concepts without explaining them clearly.
* *Impartiality*: Briefings set out the relevant research and information about a topic in a balanced way, summarising the balance of opinion on issues, where applicable

We recommend that you look at our published [POSTnotes](https://post.parliament.uk/category/analysis/) to understand the type of topics they can cover and the writing style they use. In general, your two-page briefing 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

References should be included and can run on to a third page if required. You may use graphics and charts in your two-page briefing if you wish to.

We suggest that you read over your briefing carefully after you have written it and consider whether there is any language you can simplify, if there are concepts that need more explanation, and whether you have introduced any of your own opinions or recommendations into the briefing (which you should remove to ensure impartiality). You may also want to run spellcheck and proofread your briefing to ensure it is as polished as it can be before you submit it.

Applications will undergo an initial sift on the basis of two-page briefing.

***Interview***

Applicants that are successful at the initial application stage will be invited for interview. Interviews will take place remotely. If you are invited to interview, we will ask you a combination of competency questions and role-specific questions based on the criteria set out in the job description.

In advance of the interview, we recommend you familiarise yourself with the role of UK Parliament and the function of certain offices within it (POST, the House of Commons Library, the House of Lords Library, the House of Commons Select Committees and the House of Lords Select Committees). We also suggest that you think about how you would approach writing a POSTnote or similar briefing if you were successful in your application.

As a Disability Confident Leader, it is important that we make appropriate arrangements   
or adjustments where necessary in order to create a full and equal participation in the selection process. If you require any reasonable adjustments, please indicate this in your application and we will get in touch with you to ensure these needs are met. If you wish to discuss this prior to submitting your application, please contact Natasha Mutebi, Biological Sciences and Health Adviser, POST at [mutebin@parliament.uk](mailto:mutebin@parliament.uk)

**Application timetable**

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| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Date** |
| Advert released | 28th of May 2024 |
| Deadline for applications | 17th of July 2024 |
| Initial sift of applications | 22nd – 30th of July |
| Interviews | w/c 5th of August |
| Final decision | Within 2 weeks following the interviews |
| Start date for successful applicant | October 2024 – April 2025 |

**Data protection**

Your personal data is important to us and we will handle it in line with our responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). We are asking you to provide the following personal information

* Name
* Email address
* Phone number
* The name of your university and department
* Any adjustments or additional support you require to apply for or undertake the fellowship

We are asking you for this information for the purpose of assessing your suitability for a POST fellowship, contacting you in regard to your application and arranging your fellowship if successful. We will also share this with staff from the Institute of Food Science and Technology, and only for this purpose.

We will retain your information for up to three years, in line with our information retention policy, after which we will securely destroy it. We will process your personal data because it is in the legitimate interests of yourself, UK Parliament and the Institute of Food Science and Technology. However, you still have rights over your personal data; details of those and other information about how we will process your personal data can be found on our main Privacy Notices here:

POST <https://post.parliament.uk/privacy-policy/>

Institute of Food Science and Technology <https://www.ifst.org/privacy-statement>

**Contacts & further information**

If you would like more information about POST or our fellowships, please see our [frequently asked questions](https://post.parliament.uk/post-fellowships/post-fellowships-faqs/) page on our website.

If you have a question that is not answered in this guidance or our frequently asked questions page, please contact Natasha Mutebi at [mutebin@parliament.uk](mailto:mutebin@parliament.uk)