



Scottish Parliament Academic Fellowship Scheme 2020/21

The purpose of the Scottish Parliament is to hold the Scottish Government to account, to scrutinise legislation and to represent the people of Scotland by debating issues of national importance. The [Academic Fellowship Scheme](#) enables academics to work on projects with the Parliament in support of this purpose.

The scheme aims to:

1. Provide the Parliament with specialised resources which allow it to undertake and communicate analysis which would otherwise not be possible
2. Increase the use of academic knowledge, skills and research within the Parliament
3. Promote knowledge and understanding of the Parliament within the academic sector.

The scheme, which has been in place since 2017, is managed by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe). Parliamentary fellowships will usually be hosted by SPICe.

Key points

- Fellows may apply to work on a project specified by Parliament staff (a stream 1 project) or a project they propose (a stream 2 project).
- The scheme is open to academics from all disciplines, including those at an early stage in their career.
- Candidates without a PhD and post-doctoral experience will, however, only be taken on in exceptional cases where they can demonstrate significant experience in their field.
- Given the current situation with COVID-19, we do not expect fellows to carry out their work based in the Parliament building. Work will be carried out remotely through e-mail, video-

conferencing etc. Visiting the Parliament building may become viable later in 2020, subject to social distancing guidelines.

- **The deadline for applications in 5pm on 14 August 2020**
- Details of how to apply can be found on our [Academic Engagement webpages](#)
- If you have any queries, please email academia@parliament.scot

What do academic fellows do?

Academic fellows are hosted in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe). SPICe provides impartial analysis and information to MSPs of all political parties and to parliamentary committees, often to short deadlines.

SPICe will agree the general focus of your work at the outset – this will include work on a specific project. In particular, we would expect you to:

1. Produce a SPICe output (normally a short – maximum 20 page - written briefing) separate to any academic publication(s) which you may produce based on your work with us
2. Present your work internally in the Parliament (e.g. to a parliamentary committee or at a seminar or other event). For the time being, you should assume that any presentations will be virtual ones
3. Write up your experience in SPICe in our blog, and be part of a community of academics we could tap into in the future

However, as parliamentary business can be varied and fast changing, we would also expect you to take a flexible approach to ensure your work has the greatest impact. SPICe researchers may also ask for advice within your area of expertise for example in producing committee papers or answering enquiries.

Working within SPICe, you would be expected to operate in an impartial manner in partnership with a SPICe researcher. Overall, we aim to give you a rich and rounded experience of the parliamentary environment.

Frequently asked questions

What are the eligibility guidelines?

- a) Applicants will normally have completed a PhD in a relevant area of study. There are no eligibility rules based on years of post-doctoral

experience, however, the level of experience will be a factor taken into account in our assessment of your application.

- b) Candidates without a PhD and post-doctoral experience will only be taken on in exceptional cases where they can demonstrate significant experience in their field.
- c) The scheme is open to academics from all subject areas and disciplines.
- d) Applicants must, in principle, be working within an academic institution. You must seek permission from your academic institution and/or employer before applying.

What is the maximum time over which a project can be carried out?

Unless otherwise indicated on our website, we have not specified a maximum time – timescales will be discussed and agreed on with the successful applicant and their academic institution. It is, however, important that the timescale for the project takes into account the needs of the Scottish Parliament as some research may lose its relevance if not completed within a certain period. On that point, we would normally expect work to be completed before the Scottish Parliament election in May 2021.

What is the policy on flexible working?

We are aware that many academics will not be situated near the Parliament and welcome people working remotely from their own institution.

In previous years, we expected fellows to spend at least some time at Holyrood (particularly when starting their project or if involved in work with Committees). However, given the current situation with COVID-19, we do not expect fellows to work in the Parliament building. For the time being, work will be carried out remotely through e-mail, video-conferencing etc.

Candidates who cannot receive funding from their institutions are asked to indicate the amount of funding required. Can you clarify on what basis, please?

It is up to the prospective fellow and their academic institution to set out the basis upon which their costs are determined and the sources of their funding.

However, the Parliament does have a limited budget which it can use to fund or part-fund fellows (funding provided is typically in the range of £3-4,000).

Parliamentary funding can, however, not be guaranteed and, when applying, we would encourage applicants to also consider funding sources from within their institutions or from other sources. The sources of funding and amount needed (if any) should be noted in the application form.

Re project proposal – I'm not entirely sure what types of projects will be considered.

It is up to the applicant to persuade us that the project they submit provides us with information, analysis and expertise that the Scottish Parliament needs. We will consider any project that meets the requirements set out in the documentation on our website.

I would be keen to run by some ideas for projects with someone before submitting an application – would that be possible?

We are keen to keep the process open and transparent. Therefore, we are not able to discuss submissions with applicants in advance of the deadline.