Brunel Public Policy-OIT PhD Studentship 2024

Brunel Public Policy
December 2023

Brunel Public Policy-OIT PhD Studentship 2024 – Full details

The Public Policy unit of Brunel University (BPP) is partnering with the Open Innovation Team at Whitehall (OIT), to launch a novel and exciting new "Brunel Public Policy" PhD studentship opportunity. This is a 4-year funded PhD studentship, with an integrated and guaranteed (subject to security clearance) 12 months of placement with OIT. This placement may be implemented as one 12-month placement or two shorter ones.

1. The studentship will be funded for 4 years by Brunel Public Policy, covering home student fees, a living cost stipend at the UKRI rate, and expenses for research training and dissemination.

2. The studentship is open to any PhD topic, and the OIT placement(s) is unlikely to be directly related to the subject matter of the PhD, but instead provides the student with a chance to build skills in policy engagement.

3. The Open Innovation Team is a cross-government team of civil servants who work with academics to generate analysis and ideas for policy. OIT help other officials work with evidence and expertise, and help academics understand how they can work more effectively with government. OIT works on a wide range of policies, including health, justice, education, housing, foreign policy, digital transformation and many others.

4. Successful applicants can expect to work on a diverse range of policy projects and are not expected to have prior experience of policy or knowledge of the policy area they are asked to work on.

5. During the OIT placement(s), the student should expect to make significant contributions to the policy work the team carries out, by bringing together academic experts and policymakers to work through policy problems, assessing and synthesising expert evidence and research, presenting this for policymaking audiences, and planning and delivering events.

6. The OIT will invest in the development of the student on placement with them, ensuring that they gain skills and experiences that they can apply in academia or the next stage of their career, whether that is in the public, private or third sector.

7. The 4 funded years comprises 3 years actively engaging in the main PhD research project and 12 months (as one or 2 blocks) where the main research project is paused to undertake the internship and associated training.

8. This studentship is only open to those students eligible for home fees (see eligibility criteria below).

9. The OIT placement component of this studentship is dependent upon passing Baseline.

10. Personnel Security Standard pre-employment screening (BPSS screening – further details at end of document).

Find out what previous PhD placement students thought of their time with the Open Innovation Team here.

If you have any questions about this studentship, please contact the Brunel Public Policy Team on bpp@brunel.ac.uk.

Brunel Public Policy Studentship Application and Selection Process

Note that this is the application process for the studentship funding. Once a candidate has been selected for funding, they should submit a formal application for acceptance on a PhD programme in the relevant section of the university (as advised by their lead supervisor). Offer of studentship funding will be conditional upon being accepted onto the PhD programme of study.

To apply for this studentship, please submit the following documents to bpp@brunel.ac.uk under email subject "BPP-OIT PhD studentship application" by 31st January 2024.

1. 1-page personal statement, making the case why you would benefit from the integrated policy placement. From this statement, we want to see your understanding and motivation for making the link between evidence and policy and how this ties in with your research or career aspirations.

2. PhD research proposal countersigned by the proposed PhD supervisor – maximum 2 pages. Note that you should reach out to potential PhD supervisors at least 2 weeks before the studentship application deadline.

3. CV maximum 2 pages

4. Proof of qualifications

The shortlist for interview will be selected primarily on the basis of the personal statement (following checks that the PhD proposal is viable, academic background is robust, and a supervisory panel has indicated willingness to accept you as a student). The shortlisting and interview panels will comprise:

- A representative from OIT

- Brunel Public Policy Director/ Manager

- Representatives from each of the 3 Brunel Colleges

We expect to hold interviews in March 2024 for a 1st October 2024 start date.

Instructions for securing PhD research proposal and supervisory team ahead of submitting application (item 2 of application materials).

Guidance on finding a supervisor, searching topics proposed by supervisors, or writing your own PhD research proposal/ statement can be found at How to apply for a research degree | Brunel University London.

Applicants should consider which research area they wish to pursue, then approach an academic with relevant expertise to find out whether they would be interested in supervising an applicant to this scheme and whether (a) they have existing research projects you could apply to (you can also search a list of existing proposed projects here), or (b) you would need to generate your own research proposal (see guidance on the PhD application advice page).

If the academic is open to being involved in this scheme, then you should proceed to either:

(a) If you are applying for an existing PhD research project proposal, check with the supervisor how you can apply for their backing to include this proposal in your application. Note that you may need to submit application materials, attend an interview, and/ or work with the academic to refine the existing proposal in order to prove your suitability for their research project.

(b) For an academic requiring you to generate your own proposal, you should initially check that their area of interest maps with your proposed area of research, and then submit a research proposal/ statement for them to consider and potentially refine with you.

Note that for this funding scheme, there is flexibility on the amount of input in developing the proposal from the proposed supervisor, as funding selection will be based primarily on the basis of the personal statement and interview performance. However, entry onto the PhD programme and agreement from an academic to form a supervisory panel for the PhD will be more closely dependent upon development of this proposal and your academic record.

If you have any questions about this studentship or the application process, please contact the Brunel Public Policy Team on bpp@brunel.ac.uk.

Home Fee eligibility

To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or

- Have settled status, or

- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or

- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter.

BPSS screening for undertaking the placement at OIT

In order to take up the placement at OIT, candidates will need to pass Baseline Personnel Security Standard pre-employment screening. We ask that all applicants to this studentship be ready to provide (at a later date, once selected for the studentship) the following documents, with confidence that none would raise a security issue:

- Proof of name, date of birth and address (see pp13-14 here for a list of documents that can provide proof)

- National insurance number.

- Full details of previous employers (name, address and dates) over the past 3 years

- A reasonable account of any significant periods (6 months or more in the past 3 years).of time spend abroad

- Confirmation of permission to work in the UK

In addition, candidates will need proof that they quality under Civil Service Nationality Rules.

Students would need to meet the requirements for a non-reserved post according to This flowchart.