1. **What is the benefit of doing a SGSSS Internship?**

An internship is the opportunity to step outside of your PhD and academia to experience working in a professional organisation. It affords the chance to build transferable and employability skills. Not only will it enhance your CV, it will provide the scope to help build your career and provide fresh perspective on your PhD studies.

Our Interns say:

*The internship has changed my perspective on future career plans. I now understand that there are other environments where you can utilise your research skills outside academia. I’ve really enjoyed working in government and would now definitely consider this as a good option for a future career.*

– PhD Intern with Scottish Government

2. **Are Internships paid positions?**

All students undertaking an internship are paid a stipend. The amount is commensurate with [Research Council doctoral stipend levels](#).

For ESRC-funded students, there will be no interruption to your funding – instead you will receive an additional three months funding when your studentship is complete.

For non-ESRC funded students, your regular funding will pause for three months and your institution will administer three monthly payments. Once the internship is complete, your normal funding arrangements will resume.

3. **Who is eligible to do a SGSSS Internship?**

You must be a PhD student registered at a Scottish university in any social science discipline. You must be in 2nd or 3rd year at the date of the start of the internship and with more than 6 months left of your PhD. You must be eligible to work in the UK on a full time basis (those on Tier 4 Visas are currently not eligible to apply).

4. **I hold a Tier 4 Visa, am I eligible to apply?**

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the scheme and UKBA regulations, students on a Tier 4 visa are not eligible to apply for internships through our open call, however there may be some bespoke opportunities. Please contact your university’s international office for advice on opportunities for international students studying in Scotland.

5. **Why am I not eligible for the scheme if I am in my 1st / 4th year?**

It is expected that a student completing an internship will have the requisite experience and skill set in order to complete the work. It is felt that students in their first year will benefit more from focusing exclusively on their PhD studies and building up the requisite core skills. For students in the final six months of their PhD and their 4th year and beyond – it is normally envisaged that this period will facilitate the writing up portion of the PhD and it would not be advisable to interrupt this or impede progress.

6. **How do I apply for a SGSSS internship?**

We advertise several internship calls throughout the year. Our biggest call is our public sector internships scheme, where we advertise opportunities with partners including the Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, NHS Healthcare Scotland and Healthcare Improvement.
Scotland. These calls are advertised in June and October each year. We may have other opportunities at different times of the year so make sure you have signed up for internship alerts.

7. Can I apply for more than one internship?

You can apply for up to five internships in any one call, however you will have to complete a separate application form for each. You may apply to our scheme multiple times provided you still fit eligibility criteria, but please note preference will be given to applicants who have not already completed an internship through SGSSS.

8. None of the internship projects advertised are connected to my academic research, should I apply?

We strongly encourage students to choose opportunities to work outside the area of their PhD topic in order to gain wider experience. Students are encouraged to carefully consider the information requested in the application form and pay particular attention to setting out their expertise in particular research methods to address the desired skills listed. Applicants are usually not required to have academic experience in the policy area of the internship unless specified in the project description.

9. Can I work on my PhD at the same time as doing an internship?

It is expected that a student will focus on the internship and take a break from PhD work. Previous interns have felt the benefit of stepping back from their PhD for three months and gaining new perspectives.

10. I am a part-time student, can I undertake an internship on a part-time basis?

Yes, provided the internship is advertised as a part time option. Part time internships also last three months (at 17.5 hours per week) and you would be paid the stipend pro-rata. Part time opportunities will be clearly marked on the internship advert.

If you are a part time student you must be in your 4th/5th year of part time study (equivalent to 2nd or 3rd year full time). You would not be expected to work on your PhD during a part time internship and the most amount of time you can take a break from your PhD is three months (pro rated).

11. What type of expenses can I claim during my internship?

The SGSSS wants to ensure that students are not subject to greater expense by undertaking the internship; for example - by having to pay rent in two places at the same time.

Students can claim up to a maximum of £2,400 (for a three month internship) to cover all reasonable travel and accommodation costs for the period of the internship. For example, commuting or relocation costs.

For those who have children it is reasonable for them to be able to claim for costs related to childcare that is additional as a result of participating in the scheme (i.e. additional costs directly related to scheme participation, not costs that they would have carried anyway). Costs will be reimbursed as long as childcare is booked with a registered scheme/ care supplier etc. and on provision of receipts or invoices etc.

For full details of what can be claimed, please see our Travel and Expense Policy.
All expense claims relating to internships must be claimed from your institution. For further information on how to claim at your institution, contact your local HEI Admin Lead.

Any travel expenses incurred during the course of business should be negotiated with the host.

12. I am based more than 30 miles from my internship location. Can SGSSS support me to commute or relocate for the duration?

The SGSSS wants to ensure that students are not subject to greater expense by undertaking the internship; for example - by having to pay rent in two places at the same time. You can claim up to a maximum of £2,400 (for a three month internship) to cover reasonable additional travel and accommodation for the period of the internship.

For full details of what can be claimed, please see our Travel and Expense Policy.

All expense claims relating to internships must be claimed from your institution. For further information on how to claim at your institution, contact your local HEI Admin Lead.

13. I need to relocate and rent a property for the duration of the internship – can I receive funds in advance?

Yes, you will need to provide a signed tenancy agreement stating the property’s address, the duration of the lease and the price per month. Students are to ensure that rental amounts are not excessive. We will not pay for students staying with family.

For full details of what can be claimed, please see our Travel and Expense Policy.

All expense claims relating to internships must be claimed from your institution. For further information on how to claim at your institution, contact your local HEI Admin Lead.

14. I need to book travel and a season ticket is very expensive – can I receive funds in advance?

Yes - you will need to send a price projection/a link to the stated cost on the travel website.

Please purchase weekly or monthly season tickets for public transport wherever possible in order to claim back for travel.

You will need to provide receipts to your institution for the travel you have purchased in order to claim for these expenses.

Students are expected to use the most economical method of travel.

For full details of what can be claimed, please see our Travel and Expense Policy.

All expense claims relating to internships must be claimed from your institution. For further information on how to claim at your institution, contact your local HEI Admin Lead.

15. I have children and taking up an internship would entail increased childcare costs – will this be taken into account?

Yes – a student may claim up to a maximum of £2,400 for reasonable travel/accommodation and additional childcare costs. For those who have children it is reasonable for them to be able to claim for costs related to childcare that is additional as a result of participating in the scheme (i.e. additional costs directly related to scheme participation, not costs that they would have carried
anyway). Costs will be reimbursed as long as childcare is booked with a registered scheme/ care supplier etc. and on provision of receipts or invoices etc.

For full details of what can be claimed, please see our Travel and Expense Policy.

All expense claims relating to internships must be claimed from your institution. For further information on how to claim at your institution, contact your local HEI Admin Lead.

16. My internship host requires me to apply for Disclosure Scotland – can I recover this cost?

Yes, your host should reimburse you for this cost if it is necessary for the internship.

17. Am I entitled to annual leave during my internship?

Interns normally work 37 hours per week, Monday-Friday over a three-month internship. They are entitled to six days leave plus any Public Holidays that arise during the internship. Flexi-time working can be discussed and agreed with the local line manager. Leave and flexi-time working are at the discretion of the local line manager.

Resources

- SGSSS Travel and Expense Policy: https://gradhub.sgsss.ac.uk/docs/48/SGSSS-Travel-and-Expenses-Policy.pdf
- HEI Admin Leads: https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/about-us/#HEI-Admins
- Current Internship Opportunities: https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/internships/current-opportunities/