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4 January 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

British Science Association
Media Fellowships 2011

I am writing to inform you that one of your employees has expressed an interest in the British Science Association's Media Fellowships scheme.

The Media Fellowships are intended to create greater awareness and understanding of the workings of the media among practising scientists, social scientists, clinicians and engineers and improve their communication skills.

At a time when communicating science to the public has never been so important, the Fellowships provide an outstanding opportunity for the holder to experience the media from within by spending 3 to 8 weeks with a national print, online or broadcast journalist such as the Guardian, Nature or BBC. Fellows gain valuable insights into issues such as what constitutes 'news' and the deadline and space/time constraints within which journalists operate.

You will see from the following pages that past Fellows have found the experience to be especially valuable. Participants return to their organisations better equipped to handle enquiries from the media, with many taking a proactive role in teaching colleagues about promoting their research and institution to the media. Many Fellows maintain links with their media host long after the Fellowship has ended. Many too report that the skills learned during the Fellowship help to improve their research and enable them to write more persuasive grant applications!

I do hope you feel this scheme will be of benefit to your employee and that you will agree to release them on full pay to participate in the scheme should their application be successful. If you wish to discuss the scheme further please do not hesitate to contact me or Amy Lothian (amy.lothian@britishscienceassociation.org) who runs the scheme.

Yours sincerely

Sir Roland Jackson
Chief Executive

The Media Fellowships scheme – facilitated by the British Science Association

Aim: to offer practising scientists the opportunity to undertake a placement at a top media organisation to see how the media work and to gain valuable communication skills.

Subjects covered: the Media Fellowships have been running since 1987 and are intended to create greater awareness and understanding of the workings of the media among practising scientists, social scientists, clinicians and engineers. Fellows learn to work within the conditions and constraints of the media to produce accurate and well informed stories about developments and technical breakthroughs, as well as becoming better equipped to communicate their expertise to the public and their colleagues.

Eligibility: you are eligible to apply for the scheme if you fulfil the following criteria:

- Are a professional scientist, clinician, social scientist or engineer employed full or part time in the UK and have a contract until December 2011. If you are not a UK citizen we require you to have a UK work contract until June 2012.
- have a minimum of 2 years postgraduate experience in your field
- work at any level in an academic or research institution, industry, civil service or any other similar organisation
- have your employer's/funder's consent to be released on full pay for the period of the Fellowship (annual leave may be used for part of the placement).

Applications will *not* be considered from those currently self-employed/freelance, those employed in full time PR positions, those who want to move full time into a science communication career, or those who have previously undertaken a Media Fellowship.

Length of fellowships: Fellowships will be held in the second half of the year at a date to be mutually arranged with the media hosts. It is expected that most of the placements will be completed between July and the end of October.

Number Offered: 10-12 Fellowships (subject to funding)

Application closing date: 1 March 2011

Location of Fellowships: hosts are mainly based in London but are also offered in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Dublin. The Fellowships cover reasonable travel and accommodation costs.

In the past placements have been offered at:

The Times, ResearchResearch, BBC Radio Science Unit, BBC Countryfile, New Scientist, BBC Factual/Innovation Nation, BBC Look North, BBC News and Current Affairs, BBC News Interactive, BBCi, BBC Horizon, Channel 4 News, Einstein.tv, Focus, Nature/Nature online, The Daily Telegraph, The Express, The Financial Times, The Guardian, The Independent, The Irish Times, The Observer, Times Higher Education, Daily Mirror, the Science Media Centre and Yorkshire TV.

How to apply: the application form is available online at www.britishecienceassociation.org/mediafellows

Contact details:

Amy Lothian: amy.lothian@britishecienceassociation.org Tel: +44 (0)20 7019 4938 Fax: +44 (0)20 7581 6587. British Science Association, Wellcome Wolfson Building, 165 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5HD

British Science Association Media Fellows 2010

Dr Jean Adams <i>Lecturer in Public Health, Newcastle University</i>	The Times
Dr Katie Alcock <i>Lecturer in Neuropsychology, Lancaster University</i>	BBC Radio and Online
Mrs Catherine Davies <i>PhD student in Linguistics, Cambridge University</i>	Time Higher Education
Dr Monica Desai <i>Specialist Registrar in Public Health, London</i>	The Guardian
Dr Howard Falcon-Lang <i>NERC Advanced Postdoctoral Fellow and Senior Lecturer at Royal Holloway</i>	BBC Radio and Online
Dr Felix Greaves <i>Public Health doctor, NHS, London</i>	Financial Times
Dr Becky Hothersall <i>Post doc in Animal Behaviour, University of Bristol</i>	BBC Countryfile
Dr Kate Larkin <i>Oceanography post doc, National Oceanographic Centre</i>	Nature
Dr Alison Jones <i>Biomedical Engineer, University of Leeds</i>	Irish Times
Dr Colette Jones <i>Rural land use researcher, University of Aberdeen</i>	The Scotsman

What the 2010 Media Fellows said:

"Almost all of my assumptions about newspapers and journalists were wrong"

"I learnt that the interaction between scientists and journalist can be manipulated by both sides"

"I've already fed my experiences back into my work. I've launched a departmental blog and Twitter feed and I blew my students' minds by using a "write an article in an hour" exercise"

"I've learned a lot about how to make things interesting and readable.

"I learnt skills not only in writing, but also in interviews and use of different forms of media-blogs, podcast and Twitter"

"The placement has been invaluable for my future career"

"With the ever-growing role of impact and outreach, and as my work moves towards issues of interest to the press, I'm finding these two worlds bumping against each other more and more frequently"

"A real learning experience should make you uneasy. It should ask you to do things you have not done before, and push your limits. This experience did that"

"The response of my colleagues to my experience has been great. They've been excited to read my articles"

Further details, reports and evaluations can be found on our website

www.britishtscienceassociation.org/mediafellows