

Association of British  
Science Writers  
(ABSW)  
Media Fellowships  
Scheme



ABSW Media Fellows 2025



# The ABSW Media Fellowships in a Nutshell

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The ABSW Media Fellowships provide a unique opportunity for practising scientists, clinicians, and engineers to spend two to six weeks working at the heart of a media outlet such as the Guardian, BBC Radio Science Unit or IFLScience.

The Fellowships:

- **Engage** – give scientists the confidence to engage with the media
- **Foster Trust** – tackle mistrust and misrepresentation
- **Bridge the Gap** – between journalists and scientists
- **Build Understanding** – between science and society

\*The British Science Association (BSA) ran the scheme from 1987 – 2020



# How does the scheme work?

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Scientists, clinicians, and engineers apply and are selected through their supporting institution, who fund their Fellowship.

The ABSW identifies media hosts and matches them to the Fellows.

The Fellows receive training from the ABSW prior to taking up their placements and are supported by the ABSW throughout their placement and beyond.

Placements normally take place for 2-6 weeks during the summer to fit with University teaching commitments. There is plenty of flexibility in the scheme to suit home and work commitments.



2024 Fellow, Elizabeth at the BBC Science Unit in Cardiff

# Real Impact for Fellows, Supporting Institutions and Media Hosts

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Many Fellows have become ambassadors in their supporting institutions, advocating to develop better relationships between science and the media. Some Fellows have gone on to lead institutions, and others have made the move into media. Behind almost every major science story, from black holes to giant squids, there's at least one article written by a Fellow.

*Through the Media Fellowships our members have helped develop the narrative of biomedical science news stories at national and regional level and their experience has ensured that more people are aware of our profession and the vital role our members play at the heart of healthcare.*

**Dan Nimmo, Head of Communications, Institute of Biomedical Science**

*So far ten academics from The University have participated in the scheme and each one has reaped the benefits of getting behind the scenes of a major media organisation – turning media sceptics into believers.*

**Lindsay Brooke, Press Officer (Faculty of Science) at the University of Nottingham**

*As the trustee of a charity, biotech board member or council member of the Medical Research Council, proficiency in science communication has consistently been regarded as an asset.*

**Dr Ruth McKernan CBE, 1992 Fellow and Former Chief Executive, Innovate UK**



# Fellowship Alumni

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Prof. Nick Petford (1995), Vice Chancellor, University of Northampton

Dr Ruth McKernan CBE (1992), Former Chief Executive, Innovate UK

Dr Helen Czerski (2005), physicist, UCL research fellow and TV presenter (pictured)

Hannah Devlin (2006), Science Correspondent, The Guardian

Prof. Tom Crick MBE (2011), computer scientist, Swansea University

Dr Suzi Gage (2013), psychologist, University of Liverpool

Vicky Forster (2014), TED Global Fellow

Prof. Clare Elwell (2018), medical physicist and charity leader, UCL



# Impact on Fellows

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- Better understanding of how the media work
- Understanding of how to get research across accurately with minimal 'spin'
- How to pitch a story to news editors
- Improved writing skills
- Ability to work to tight deadlines
- Taking part in press conferences
- Increased confidence
- Wider understanding and appreciation of science beyond personal field
- Network of media contacts
- Ability to match photos with stories
- Experience writing for different audiences
- Develop new technical skills in broadcasting
- Wider appreciation of new media (video content, social media, podcasts etc)



2023 Fellow, Kristina, with new friends and colleagues at the BBC Science Unit, Cardiff

# Impact on Fellow's supporting institution

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Better promotion of institution through the media; greater links press office and academics, new contacts, greater understanding of the media process

Increase in science communication activity

Higher quality teaching

Improved writing of funding applications

Opportunities for cross-disciplinary work

# Impact on media hosts

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Kept up to date  
with the work of  
practising  
researchers

Fellows find a new  
angle and ask  
original questions  
about stories

Access to new  
science and health  
story news

Access to academic  
contacts

Help researching  
stories, finding  
pictures and  
writing copy

# What does it cost?

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Media Fellowships are paid for by the supporting organisation/employer and cost £5,000 plus VAT per Fellow. This covers all expenses necessary for the Fellow (relocation/travel/accommodation), training and the administration of the scheme.

The supporting organisation/employer must also agree to release the Fellow on full pay for the duration of the Fellowship (2-6 weeks). Annual leave may be used for part of the placement.

The ABSW provides full support to institutions/employers in all aspects of advertising the Fellowships, and the application and selection process.

There are no costs for the Media Host or for the individual Fellow.



# How do I become a Fellow?

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Media Fellowships cannot be offered to freelancers, undergraduate students, PhD students, those who work in PR or communications, those who are based outside the UK, or those who want to change career full time into science communication.

You must apply for the scheme via your employer/funder and cannot apply for the scheme individually as you need the support and funding of your organisation to become a Fellow. Speak to your employer/funder and inform them of the scheme and if they are interested suggest they contact the ABSW.

Media Fellowships eligibility:

- practising scientist, social scientist, clinician or engineer with a minimum of 2 years' experience following highest degree. PhD students are not eligible.
- employed, and based part or full time in the UK
- work at any level in an academic or research institution, industry, civil service, or any other similar organisation

Media Fellowships requirements:

- employer's/funder's support both financially and consent to be released on full pay for the period of the Fellowships
- agree to all the terms and conditions of the Fellowship, including mandatory attendance at the training/development days
- write a short report about the Fellowship



2025 Fellow, Cini, placed with BBC Science Unit

# Diversity and Inclusion

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The ABSW is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and want Media Fellowships to be open to all. There are several ways we are working to support participation in the scheme:

- We collect anonymised diversity data as part of the Media Fellow application process
- We provide guidance for our partners to reduce bias in the promotion, application and shortlisting process
- We work with Fellows to accommodate requests for part-time, remote, and flexible working
- We offer placements in a range of UK locations
- We try to find a varied source of funding for the Fellowships



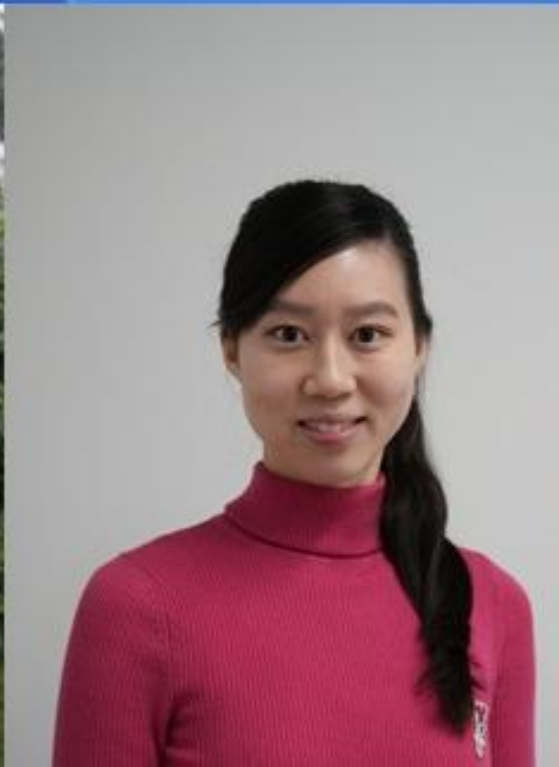
# The Class of 2025


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Each year the ABSW Media Fellows make real contributions to the media outlets in which they are placed.

Read all about the 2025 ABSW Media Fellows and review their work

<https://www.absw.org.uk/articles/class-of-2025-meet-this-year-s-absw-media-fellows>





For further details of the Fellowships  
please contact Sallie Robins,  
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