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## In the POST

Swapping your campus for Westminster's corridors of power may sound like a leap into the unknown but it's a leap that Oliver Tearne has obviously enjoyed. Having reached the final stage of his mathematics PhD at the University of Warwick, Oliver got the chance to spend three months at the **Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)** thanks to the Joint EPSRC and POST Postgraduate Initiative.

POST is an office of both Houses of Parliament that provides independent analysis of science and technology based issues relevant to Parliament. Much of its work involves producing briefings – or 'postnotes' – and reports as well as assisting select committees with science-related inquiries.

Oliver has worked on a postnote on 'The 24 Hour Society' covering how long hours and unusual working practices can affect people's health and safety and impact on society. "My background is in maths but the 24 Hour Society has a lot of biology in it," comments Oliver. "Before I started my EPSRC/POST Fellowship I went to a conference at Imperial College on fatigue, sleep and biological clocks which gave me a real head start."

To compile the note he had to talk to scientists and experts about everything from new licensing laws to research into accidents caused by sleep deprivation. "If you've ever had jet lag then you know what can happen when your body clock gets out of synch," he tells us. For many people doing shift work this sort of disturbance is all too familiar and can have some serious consequences.



Oliver Tearne and Dr Chandrika Nath from POST

month placement at POST working on issues of public policy interest. The next closing date for applications is 5 September 2005.



EPSRC student Oliver Tearne learnt about policy making as an EPSRC-POST Fellow

Oliver feels that his time at POST has been very valuable. "I learnt lots of transferable skills and enjoyed engaging with all the academics. I think my analytical skills helped me to get to the heart of the matter fast." He looks forward to returning to academia but says he has also become interested in science policy. "It was a thrill to interview important people and to get to attend House of Commons debates and the Queen's speech."

The **Joint EPSRC and POST Postgraduate Initiative** gives an EPSRC PhD award holder in their second or third year the opportunity to undertake a three