



# PUBLIC PRACTICE

## AUTHORITY FAQs

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# ELIGIBILITY

## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO HOST A PLACEMENT?

Public Practice invites Expressions of Interest from public organisations that are:

- Local or city governments, combined authorities, groups of more than one authority, development corporations, or publicly-led delivery vehicles.
- Located in London, the South East or the East of England (for authorities outside of these regions, please see below).
- Able to host a placement from 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020. Authorities will need to secure funding and HR approvals for the full 12 month period.
- In a position to offer the selected Associate a formal job offer by 1 February 2019 and an employment contract by 22 February 2019.

## CAN WE APPLY TO HOST MORE THAN ONE PLACEMENT?

Yes, Authorities are welcome to apply to host more than one placement. A separate Expression of Interest form should be submitted for each different post.

## CAN WE APPLY TO HOST A PLACEMENT IF WE ARE LOCATED OUTSIDE OF LONDON, THE SOUTH EAST AND EAST OF ENGLAND?

The second cohort of placements will be focused on Authorities in London, the South East and East of England, as all placements need to be within commuting distance of each other. Public Practice is open to expanding to a wider geography, subject to demand, and encourage Authorities in other regions to get in contact to express any interest.

## CAN WE APPLY TO HOST A PLACEMENT STARTING ON A DIFFERENT DATE?

All placements for the second cohort start on 1 April 2019. Public Practice is working towards two intakes for placements each year, as well as developing alternative recruitment offers. Authorities, for whom the programme dates are not workable, are encouraged to contact Public Practice with any interest.

# EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

## HOW CAN MY AUTHORITY EXPRESS AN INTEREST IN HOSTING A PLACEMENT?

All Expressions of Interest are made using the template Expression of Interest form available on our [website](#).

## HOW ARE EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ASSESSED?

Expressions of Interest are assessed based on the following four criteria:

- **Fit:** The extent to which the placement role and ambitions of the Authority are aligned with the mission of Public Practice.
- **Impact:** The extent to which the placement is likely to make a quantitative and qualitative difference to the delivery of homes, public realm, infrastructure, and public engagement.
- **Additionality:** The extent to which the placement role will allow the Authority to build planning capacity within the organisation and explore new ways of working.
- **Deliverability:** The likelihood that the placement will be successfully delivered in time to onboard the selected Associate for the start of the programme.

We also consider the skills and experience available in our Applicant pool before shortlisting Expressions of Interest. This is to ensure that any Expression of Interest that is shortlisted has a good chance of being matched with a suitable Associate.

## WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST?

For placements beginning 1 April 2019, Authorities must submit an Expression of Interest by 29 November 2018.

## WHEN WILL WE KNOW IF OUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

For placements beginning 1 April 2019, Authorities will be informed if their Expression of Interest has been successful on the week commencing 10 December 2018.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS IF OUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IS SUCCESSFUL?

Upon your Expression of Interest being shortlisted for matching with an Associate the next steps are as follows:

- **Sign a placement agreement with Public Practice:** To be eligible for matching with an Associate, you will be required to sign a placement agreement with Public Practice. The agreement sets out the terms of the relationship between your Authority and Public Practice, once an Associate is successfully matched and placed with you. You will be required to return a signed copy of the placement agreement, by 7 January 2019, to be eligible for matching. If Public Practice is not able to successfully match you with an Associate, the terms of the

contract will not apply. Please contact Public Practice at [info@publicpractice.org.uk](mailto:info@publicpractice.org.uk) if you would like to review our placement agreement.

- Arrange a call with your named HR officer: On the Expression of Interest form, you are asked to provide the details of the HR officer who is supporting the placement. Upon being shortlisted, Public Practice will contact the HR officer to discuss the programme and our selection process to support the recruitment of the Associate internally.
- Further define your role (where appropriate): In some cases, you may be asked to further define the role put forward in the Expression of Interest. Public Practice will provide feedback to guide any further definition of the role as necessary.
- Attend a placement workshop: All shortlisted Authorities are asked to participate in a day long placement workshop to contribute to the assessment and matching of Associates. We expect that one placement workshop is attended by either the officer submitting the Expression of Interest or the placement line manager. Placement workshops will be held on the 8 and 9 January 2019.

# SELECTION OF ASSOCIATES

## HOW DOES THE ASSOCIATE SELECTION PROCESS WORK?

Associates undergo a rigorous two stage selection process before being matched to Authorities:

- Online applications: To apply for an Associate position with Public Practice, Applicants must first submit an online application. The application focuses on the skills they will bring to the Authority they are placed in, the track record of Applicants and their motivation and ambitions for working in local government.
- Placement workshop: The second round of the selection process is an all-day placement workshop, focussed on further testing the skills and experience of the Applicants, whilst also considering the most suitable roles for each. Applicants have a 45 minute panel interview and complete a range of activities, including a presentation and a group exercise.

## WHO ASSESSES APPLICATIONS FOR ASSOCIATE POSITIONS?

The assessment of Applicants at the online application stage is supported by a group of around 30 expert assessors. Our expert assessors are experienced public sector planning and placemaking practitioners. At placement workshops, you will contribute to the assessment of Applicants. At least one officer from all shortlisted Authorities will be expected to participate in one of the placement workshops.

# MATCHING

## HOW DOES MATCHING WORK?

Public Practice takes the skills, experience, personal qualities and preferences of Associates into account when matching Associates and Authorities. Following the placement workshops, Public Practice will recommend a match with the Associate we feel is most suitable for the role.

## WILL WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE ASSOCIATE WE ARE MATCHED WITH?

When you receive a proposed match, you will be provided with an Associate Pack containing information on the proposed Associate, including: a bio, CV and statement on why the Associate is suitable for the role. You will also have the opportunity to meet your proposed Associate before confirming whether you would like them to be placed with you.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PROPOSED MATCH IS NOT SUITABLE?

Where a proposed Associate is felt not to fit the role or organisation after meeting them, you will have the opportunity to decline the Associate. In this case, Public Practice will endeavour to rematch you with another Associate based on your feedback. Last year, we successfully matched over 80% of shortlisted Authorities with an Associate.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF AN ASSOCIATE DOES NOT WANT TO BE PLACED WITH US?

Where an Associate does not feel the placement is suitable, Public Practice will endeavour to find another suitable Associate. Last year, 5% of Associates declined the placement they were matched with.

# ONBOARDING

## HOW ARE ASSOCIATES EMPLOYED?

Associates are employed by their host Authorities. You will be expected to provide the Associate with an employment contract in the same way you would any other employee. Most Associates are employed by Authorities on year-long fixed-term contracts, though some Associates may wish to join you as a secondment from their existing employer.

## WHAT ARE THE PAY ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSOCIATES?

As the Associate's employer or secondment host, your organisation will pay the Associate directly or through their existing employer. The Expression of Interest form asks for an expected salary range, and Associates will also provide their current salary in their applications to Public Practice. When matches are proposed, Public Practice will share salary information with both parties. The final pay arrangements are to be negotiated between you and the Associate.

## WHAT ARE THE ARRANGEMENTS AROUND WORKING HOURS FOR ASSOCIATES?

As the Associate's employer, you will need to discuss and decide on the Associate's working arrangements with them. Public Practice is open to Associates being full-time or part-time, or having other flexible working arrangements, such as compressed hours. The only stipulations from Public Practice are that Associates spend 90% of their time in-post and 10% on a Research and Development programme led by Public Practice, and that the Associate's overall time commitment is a minimum of 2.5 days per week.

## WHAT PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS DO WE HAVE TO CARRY OUT FOR ASSOCIATES?

You should follow your normal procedures with regards to pre-employment checks when taking on an Associate. Public Practice does not conduct pre-employment checks on behalf of Authorities.

## WHAT WILL OUR RELATIONSHIP BE WITH PUBLIC PRACTICE?

Public Practice acts as a broker, finding Associates to fulfill roles within host Authorities. Public Practice also delivers a Research & Development programme to Associates, the outputs of which are shared with host Authorities. Upon agreeing to host an Associate, Authorities will be required to sign a placement agreement with Public Practice which will outline the terms of the relationship between the two organisations. Please contact Public Practice at [info@publicpractice.org.uk](mailto:info@publicpractice.org.uk) if you would like to review our placement agreement.

# PLACEMENT PROGRAMME

## WHAT PERFORMANCE REVIEW MECHANISMS DOES PUBLIC PRACTICE USE FOR ASSOCIATES?

You will be expected to use your own internal performance review processes to monitor the performance of Associates whilst they are on placement. Public Practice will schedule quarterly on-site visits in order to meet both the Associate and their line manager. Visits are an opportunity to discuss the performance of Associates where necessary.

Public Practice also monitors the performance and attendance of Associates on the Research & Development programme. Each Associate is expected to attend and fully participate in at least 80% of the Research & Development programme sessions. If attendance falls below this threshold or performance becomes an issue, Public Practice will inform you of the situation.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF WE WANT TO TERMINATE THE CONTRACT OF THE ASSOCIATE BEFORE THE END OF THE PLACEMENT?

If, for any reason, you conclude that the performance of the Associate is unacceptable, we ask that you let us know as soon as possible before taking any action. Public Practice will work with you to attempt to address any problems. If it is not possible to resolve the issue and you terminate the Associate's contract, we will look to find a replacement Associate, or provide you with a partial refund of the placement fee.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE ASSOCIATE CANNOT OR DOES NOT WISH TO COMPLETE THE YEAR?

In the unlikely event that an Associate cannot complete the full year, Public Practice will seek to replace the Associate within 4 weeks with another suitable candidate. If no suitable replacement can be found, Public Practice will refund the placement fee on a pro rata basis for any months of the year long placement that have not been completed.

# RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

## HOW DOES THE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WORK?

Associates will spend 10% of their time on the Research & Development programme. In practice, they will spend every other Friday taking part in R&D days, with breaks in August and December. The programme aims to build public planning capacity by developing a new generation of planners, supporting existing staff, and sharing collective knowledge. These aims will be achieved through two core components:

- Research: Associates will conduct collective research into current issues relating to the practice of public planning. Research topics will be guided by issues most relevant to host Authorities. You will also have the opportunity to collaborate on developing the research. Outputs of the all Associate research will be shared at Forum events throughout the year and in final reports that will be distributed amongst all host Authorities.
- Development: Associates will participate in a programme of talks, workshops and peer-led sessions. The course will develop their knowledge and understanding of public planning today, and prepare them for how it will change in the future. Each Friday session will be held at one of the host Authorities, and offer opportunities for you and your staff to be involved.

## CAN MY TEAM PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME?

Authority officers are invited to participate in the Research & Development programme in two ways:

- Research: Associate led research projects are embedded in current practice. Officers will have the opportunity to contribute to scoping topics at the beginning of the programme, steering the shortlist of research questions through an online survey and informing research projects through interviews, roundtables and focus groups.
- R&D days: All R&D sessions will involve public planning practitioners. Members of your team may be invited to contribute their knowledge and experience on specific topics. Each Friday session will be hosted at a different host Authority. You and your colleagues will be invited to join relevant sessions hosted at your Authority.

## OTHER

### HOW MUCH IS THE PLACEMENT FEE?

Upon accepting the proposed Associate, your Authority will be asked to pay a placement fee of £5,000 (+VAT) to Public Practice.

### IS THERE AN ADDITIONAL FEE IF WE WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THE ASSOCIATE ON BEYOND THE END OF THE PROGRAMME?

There is no additional fee to Authorities who wish to offer Associates a permanent contract when their placement has come to an end. If you would like to use Public Practice to extend the Associate's placement, there will be a basic administration fee associated with this service.