

Jennie Evans, Communications Manager British Society for Immunology



'We will make sure we stay in touch over the course of her PhD and have said that we welcome Julia contacting us at any time in the future.'

Julia undertook the following projects for us:

- Wrote an information booklet about vaccinations aimed at new parents. This is a key resource from a wider project we are running around training immunologists to speak about vaccines at mother and baby groups. The booklet is currently with the designer and will be published shortly.
- Julia also helped with organising some of the logistics of this project, including designing activities for the events, and attending training sessions and mother and baby sessions to help evaluate the success of the overall project.
- Wrote a briefing statement for us on transplant immunology (examples of similar projects can be found [here](#)). This statement is currently being reviewed by our expert panel and will be put up on our website in due course.
- Wrote several blogs for our website highlighting recent research (e.g. [May blog](#) and [June blog](#)) and also detailing her trip with us to [Parliamentary Links Day](#)
- Carried out interviews with BSI members as part of our work to highlight women in immunology. These interviews are currently being collated and will be published as part of a wider project later in the year.
- Worked with our policy team to research candidates in the recent general election, highlighting those who had a science background.
- Assisted with social media activities, in particular our work highlighting relevant 'World Days'. This included producing infographics on various topics (e.g. [rheumatoid arthritis](#), [malaria](#)) and drafting posts for our social media channels.

Our aims of the placement were two-fold:

1. For the intern to gain an accurate experience of the wide variety of work that we undertake in order to build their skill sets and awareness of future career options.
2. For our organisation to gain a motivated and talented intern who has a good background science knowledge.

Our aims and expectations with this placement were exceeded. Julia proved to be an extremely capable intern. She was pleasure to work with, learning quickly and became an integrated member of our team. During our time with us, Julia said that she particularly wanted to gain experience of writing for different types of audience and we tried to provide her with this through the projects she worked on. She showed a meticulous approach to her work and showed initiative and good problem solving skills to follow through a project to completion. It was a credit to our organisation to have her working with us.

I think that the placement worked well and I can't immediately think of any way it could be improved.

Future placement opportunities:

1. Would you be willing to take on PIPS students, if yes/no, why?

Yes, we would be very keen to host future PIPS students. We feel that the placements are mutually beneficial. Our organisation benefits from having a highly motivated intern with a skill set that matches our requirements and with good science knowledge who can bring real added value to our activities. We hope that interns benefit from gaining experience of the wide variety of work that we undertake in order to build their skill sets and they gain awareness of possible future career options if they decide not to pursue research.

2. What were you looking for in your placement student?

We were looking for someone who had:

- Good organisational skills
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good written communication skills, with an ability to communicate effectively to a wide range of audiences
- Time management skills, with the ability to multitask and prioritise work as needed
- A strong work ethic and willingness to learn new skills
- A 'can do' attitude

3. Does your organisation typically recruit people with a PhD background?

It depends on the role being recruited for. However (speaking as someone with a PhD background, so I may be slightly biased!) I would say that having an employee with a PhD is incredibly beneficial to a science organisation such as ours. The many skills gained through completing a PhD are very transferable into our sector and the ability to work independently with creativity and to problem solve issues are real benefits to our small organisation. Additionally, the knowledge that former PhD employees bring with them regarding the higher education sector and the realities of working as a researcher are very valuable to our day-to-day work.