

## Are you interested in science, the media, and the role that young researchers can play in public debates?

***This is an opportunity for an MIT PhD student or postdoc to spend two weeks in London working with a UK-based charitable trust, Sense About Science, that equips people to make sense of scientific and medical claims in public discussion.*** We are in the initial stages of setting up Sense About Science US in collaboration with the MIT Museum, and are planning to run “Standing up for Science” media workshops in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, area. The two-weeks in England will provide the necessary introduction to Sense About Science’s work and the opportunity to be involved in organising and running one of these workshops. On returning to the US, the successful candidate will work with Sense About Science’s International Science and Policy Manager to run two workshops in Cambridge and help establish a group for early-career researchers called “Voice of Young Science” in the US.

It would suit someone who is interested in science communication or science policy and wants to experience first-hand some public engagement initiatives in the UK with a view to helping us become established in the US. You will gain hands-on experience supporting one of our core areas of work - our growing international Voice of Young Science network, which engages hundreds of early career researchers in public debates about research and evidence. You will also have a chance to meet people working in this field in the UK: from heads of learned societies, to politicians, patient group representatives, science journalists and many others.

**Joining our London office for a two-week placement in November 2011, you will work closely with [staff members](#) and a visiting researcher from Harvard to:**

- Organise our next Standing up for Science media workshop in Glasgow, Scotland. This will involve working closely with the workshop organizer to select the attendees, brief some of the workshop speakers, and organise the logistics. The Sense About Science staff will also brief the visiting volunteers on how to chair a session.
- Attend the workshop and be involved in the discussions that the attending UK PhD students and postdocs will have about how to get involved in public debates about science and evidence.
- Write an article/record a podcast about the workshop.
- Draft a guide to running such a workshop. This will be prepared for publication to be used internationally, to support others who wish to run similar sessions.
- Shadow members of the team to meetings and talks.
- Work with our Voice of Young Science volunteers to run the Sense About Science Annual Reception, jointly held with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. This will be a chance to meet leading scientists, journalists, science communicators and policy makers. This year’s guest speaker will be performer and broadcaster Robin Ince.

The successful applicant will spend two weeks with our small but busy team, from **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November**. It’s a lively and friendly office where we all muck in and no two days are the same.

You will:

- Be a PhD student or postdoc that wants to gain experience in public engagement work in science.
- Have a broad understanding of debates about science and medicine.
- Have good writing skills.
- Be confident about public speaking.
- Be able to take initiative and work in a team.

**\*\*\* CLOSING DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS 9am ET Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October\*\*\***

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to [lsierra@senseaboutscience.org](mailto:lsierra@senseaboutscience.org) indicating any experience giving talks or writing articles for a wider, non-specialist audience and with organising and chairing events.

If you have any questions please contact Leonor Sierra, International Science and Policy Manager at Sense About Science.

Flights and accommodation for the duration of your visit will be covered, as will travel to and from the media workshop in Glasgow, Scotland. A daily subsistence allowance will also be provided.

## **Further information**

### **The VoYS network**

Initially formed following the launch of our Standing up for Science media workshops in 2005, the Voice of Young Science (VoYS) network now consists of hundreds of early career researchers who want to stand up for science in public discussions.

Through their work tackling misconceptions, challenging pseudoscientific product claims and responding to misinformation in all kinds of media, VoYS members send the message that you don't need to wait until the end of your career to make a difference.

***"Early career scientists don't get many opportunities to speak about science and yet they are often the ones who feel most passionately about it. VoYS offered us not only a voice, but the chance to confront the bogus science head-on."***

***"Beyond outreach in schools, the research community does not always encourage young scientists to engage with science in the public domain, but I firmly believe that they have an important voice. Being a VoYS member gave me the confidence and support to act on that belief."***

***"The great thing about VoYS is that if there is something that concerns you, you won't be on your own. There'll be a whole team of people you can discuss and act with, so together you have a stronger voice."***

### **Sense About Science**

Sense About Science is a charitable trust that equips people to make sense of scientific and medical claims in public discussion. With a database of over 5,000 scientists, from Nobel prize winners to post-docs and PhD students, we work in partnership with scientific bodies, research publishers, policy makers, the public and the media, to change public discussions about science and evidence. Through award-winning public campaigns, we share the tools of scientific thinking and scrutiny. Our activities and publications are used and shaped by community groups, civic bodies, patient organisations, information services, writers, publishers, educators, health services and many others.

For more on Sense About Science, visit our website: <http://www.senseaboutscience.org>