In this video we’ll look at the online application process as well as some useful tips and advice on how to best to fill in the application form.
To apply to be a participant on the programme, visit our website: johnsmithcentre.com

On the website you’ll find our application form, as well as

- the programme description which tells you about the features of the programme.

- And most importantly the essential and desirable criteria – the list of skills and experiences that are necessary to fulfil all the elements of the programme.
Getting started
Before starting your online application, read the programme description and the essential and desirable criteria thoroughly to make sure you understand the content.

You might also find it helpful to look at what previous interns have said about their experience on the Programme by reading their testimonials on our website.

Before you start filling anything in, read the full online application form and familiarise yourself with the questions – this will help you to plan out what research you need to do around the programme, and what examples you’re going to take from your own experience to evidence in your application form.

Plan which examples you are going to use for each of the relevant sections.
Making your motivations clear
Making your motivations clear

Opportunity to sell yourself

What attracts you to the programme?

Convey enthusiasm

As part of the application form, we'll ask you why you are applying for a position on the Parliamentary Internship Programme.

This is your opportunity to really sell yourself.

Think carefully about what attracts you to the programme and ensure you convey enthusiasm for both the programme and the values of the John Smith Centre.
One of the most common reasons for an application not being shortlisted is a generic motivational statement that is not specific to the programme.

A good motivational statement starts with research. It’s important to set yourself apart from other applicants and one of the best ways to do this is to take some time to thoroughly research the programme and the John Smith Centre.

What does the John Smith Centre do?
What are our values?
What does the Parliamentary Internship Programme involve?

Demonstrate your understanding of these things in your statement and why they’re motivating you to apply.

This will help you to convince us that you’re a great fit for the programme.
Making your motivations clear

Balance how the programme will benefit you with what you can bring to the programme.

In your motivational statement you should try to balance why the role will benefit you in terms of your personal development and career aspirations, and what you can bring to the programme.
Addressing the essential and desirable criteria
In order for your application to be shortlisted you must address all of the essential criteria.

These criteria represent the skills that you must possess to allow you to fulfil the role on the programme.

The application form has been designed to help you talk through a time when you’ve demonstrated each skill, showing you in action.

Our assumption is if you’ve been able to demonstrate this skill in the past, you’ll be able to keep doing it in the future.

In the application form, we’ll ask you to demonstrate your experience that directly corresponds to each of the essential criteria – it is vitally important that you fill in each of these sections.

You can only be shortlisted if you demonstrate all of the essential criteria.
Essential Criteria

Provide detailed and specific evidence and examples

These can be from any area of your experience - studies, part time work, clubs, societies and life experience

To satisfy each criterion you must provide detailed and specific evidence and examples from your experience.

The John Smith Centre doesn’t mind where you gained the skill from, just as long as you have it.

That means you can use examples from any area of your life – such as: your studies, part time jobs, voluntary work, caring responsibilities and other extracurricular activities, such as clubs and societies, or just general life experience.

Your evidence must be sufficiently detailed to clearly demonstrate that you possess the skills that are required.
Follow the STAR technique when answering the questions – Situation, Task, Action, Result.

This will ensure your answers are well structured and provide all the information that is required.
Essential Criteria

Brief details of the Situation

Brief details of the Task

Focus on the Action YOU took

and the Result YOU achieved

When providing evidence, this should be framed in a personal way.

We want to know the situation that you were faced with, what role you played, the action you personally took, and the outcome.
Desirable Criteria

Extra skills and qualities

Use STAR technique

The desirable criteria are used to highlight the extra skills and qualities we’re looking for in a candidate.

It’s important to try to provide evidence against these too using the STAR technique.

If you do not possess the desirable skills, it’s worth saying that you’re keen to learn rather than leaving it blank.
Striking the right tone
Striking the right tone in your application is important.

The use of abbreviations, emojis and unusual formatting do not convey professionalism, and therefore don't strike the right tone for an application to the programme.

It's important to try to convey your personality and one of the best ways to do this is by being genuine. Your genuine interest in the programme should shine through your writing.

This is why it's important to think carefully about your motivations for applying before getting started.

Your use of language is key to conveying your professionalism. It's important to ensure you do not come across as flippant, sarcastic or too conversational or causal.
Top tips for success
Top Tips

Plan ahead

Draft your application in an offline document

Stick to the word count

Check your spelling and grammar

Work in a Word document and save as you go along. Cut and paste into the application form. Complete offline so you have a copy of all your answers in case of a technical problem when submitting your application form on the website.

Stick to the word count.

Spelling and grammar need to be perfect. Your application is your opportunity to make a strong first impression so taking the time to ensure it’s error free is time well spent.
What happens next?

Applications reviewed after closing date

Shortlisted candidates invited to interview by email

Unsuccessful candidates informed by email

Once you’ve submitted your application, following the closing date the team at the John Smith Centre will review your application and make a decision on whether to shortlist you for an interview.

Watch our video on the interview process to find out what to expect if you’re invited for an interview.

If you are successfully shortlisted, we will be in touch by email to provide you with details of the interview.

If your application is not shortlisted, you’ll be informed by email that you have been unsuccessful on this occasion.
So what are you waiting for?
Just head over to our website at johnsmithcentre.com to apply.
Good luck! And if you have any questions about the online application process, please get in touch.