

*Think*  
*new things*  
*Make*  
*new connections*

# Ditchley Internship Programme 2024

*Ditchley works with people from across the world to  
help sustain peace, freedom and the rule of law.*

## **Background**

The renewal of democratic societies, states, markets and alliances is an urgent priority and action to protect our planet is needed from us all. The Ditchley Foundation aims to build new common ground so that we can move toward solutions to complex problems. We believe that change is driven, and managed, by personal relationships, not reports or declarations. We engage local and global communities over time rather than chase headlines. We are not tied to the agenda of any government, political party or commercial interest.

In recent years, Ditchley has invested significantly in its work on research, technology and networks, as well as its heritage. In addition to our gold-standard conferences, which have taken place since the 1960s and have regularly engaged decision-makers across government, finance, technology, academia and civil society, we regularly engage individuals across political stripes, expertise, generations and geographies in a series of small to medium-scale discussions. Approximately 1,000 individuals participate in Ditchley discussions each year, and we are constantly working to build meaningful connection within this community and with other individuals and organisations. Post-graduates and young professionals are an important part of this engagement.

**DITCHLEY**

# Application details & logistics

For the past four years we have run a very successful internship programme and are again looking to recruit a team of research interns to help us achieve the aims of the foundation. We are offering a number of roles across the projects outlined below. These projects provide a great opportunity for enthusiastic undergraduate- or masters-level researchers to become immersed in the ethos of Ditchley and to contribute to its goals, developing skills that will prove valuable across a range of future career paths. In addition to the work outlined in the individual projects, there will be sessions focussing on the skills needed to take on effective leadership roles. Students will become a part of the Ditchley family, becoming part of a vibrant alumni network and attending some of the Ditchley events, witnessing the important work that the Foundation undertakes.

First and foremost we are looking for applicants with a curious mind who share Ditchley's philosophy. The specific mix of skills that we are looking for will depend on the project undertaken, for example an interest in understanding networks (Project 1), historical archives (Project 2) or history and conservation (Project 3). These requirements should be clear from the project descriptions, but if there are any questions please contact us. Note that these projects will be carried out remotely, with close supervision from members of the Ditchley team. For those interns who are interested in visiting Ditchley Park in person, we will invite everybody to a celebration day, scheduled for the 7th August. This is not mandatory and so we welcome applications regardless of your ability to attend this event. There may be the opportunity to arrange additional on-site visits, if these would be beneficial to the project undertaken.

Successful interns can choose to start on either the 24th June or 8th July and the programme will last for six weeks. During this period you will be expected to commit 21 hrs per week to this programme and we ask that interns do not undertake any other full-time work outside of the placement. For Project 2 & 3 there may be flexibility in these logistics, which you can mention in your application. For all projects a stipend will be paid at a rate equivalent to the Oxford Living Wage (12.49 GBP/hr). Hours can be worked flexibly, although you will be expected to attend a number of calls spread throughout the week. Successful applicants will receive considerable research training and support throughout the duration of these projects.

Applications should be made using the form at <https://tinyurl.com/ditchley-intern-form-2024> and any questions can be addressed to Dr. Martin Smith at [internships@ditchley.com](mailto:internships@ditchley.com). **Applications received by 9am on 8th May will receive full consideration**, although later applications may be considered. We anticipate that interviews will be conducted w/c 20th May. Ditchley is an equal opportunities employer that values diversity and does not discriminate. If you are to be successful in your application, we can only accept people who have UK right to work status at the time the internship commences. International students at UK universities should have this automatically, but if you think this will be a problem please let us know as soon as possible.

# Projects

## Project 1 - Networks

Over the course of its history and in recent years, Ditchley has developed an extensive network of contacts. Each year we engage with around 1,000 people from over 50 different countries. For Ditchley to be successful, it needs a deep understanding of the networks around a given theme, both from within its own network and the world outside. This project revolves around the understanding of people and their networks across areas such as politics, education and climate.

You will be expected to perform research on individuals, learning about their attributes and background, as well as the communities of which they are a part. The list of individuals to be researched will be informed by our programme of small and large group discussions and phone calls. In some cases you may be asked to determine a list of individuals yourself, given a particular thematic direction and/or expanding into new regional domains. All of this information will be managed using a knowledge graph that will allow you to visualise and reflect on the person's network, so that you can understand how they fit into the overall network of all individuals. You will be given a detailed set of guidelines setting out what we are looking for and we will provide constant supervision as you and your teammates undertake this research. Most of the research will be done through open-source (i.e. online) materials. Statistically-minded applicants will be able to apply their quantitative skills to gain deeper insights into this dataset, learning about graph databases and statistical analyses. If this is of interest, it should be noted in the application. We welcome applicants from a wide range of background, including (but not limited to) politics and international relations, sociology, human geography, and social sciences in general, or for those interested in the quantitative work any scientific/computational degree.

## Project 2 - Archives

Since it was founded in 1962, Ditchley's 800 conferences have covered a variety of themes from social issues to international relations, with particular topics revisited many times over the years. The history of these discussions is housed in the Ditchley archives of conference papers. For this project the intern will collaborate with Ditchley team members to explore past conference discussions on particular themes of interest. Given the historical context, these topic reviews will look at the conference participants, with a view to including profiles of particularly notable people who were present for Ditchley conferences, and could include short timelines to highlight relevant moments of historical context. This year we are likely to focus on topics broadly related to climate and energy, for example looking at the discussions surrounding the 1973 oil crisis and the parallels with Russia's current invasion of Ukraine, or at the intersection of economic and national security interests. This project will require an initial research phase to identify the Ditchley conferences relevant to this theme. These will then be studied to understand contemporary approaches to the topic and how discussions have evolved over the years. Examples of work carried out by last year's interns can be found in our "From the archives series": <<https://www.ditchley.com/programme/archives>>. Applicants should have an interest in history, but we are not prescriptive on the nature of the degree being studied.

### Project 3 - Heritage

For centuries, Ditchley has been a place of connection and inspiration. The richness of Ditchley's history is reflected in the procession of extraordinary people who have passed through the house. Sir Henry Lee, the first owner of the Ditchley estate, was a champion of Elizabeth I and one of her most eminent and powerful courtiers. The famous Ditchley portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, once at the house and now at the National Portrait Gallery, commemorates Elizabeth's visit to Ditchley in 1592. When Winston Churchill became wartime prime minister, he asked to use Ditchley as a secret alternate weekend retreat to Chequers and, amongst a range of significant meetings here, hosted US Presidential envoy Harry Hopkins in his efforts to win American support.

We continue to expand the creation of a digital story for visitors to Ditchley, through our website and related platforms. In the past interns have produced a range of content around Ditchley's history, which can be viewed at <<https://smartify.org/venues/ditchley-park>>. This year we have not yet pinned down the specifics of project but it could revolve around researching Churchill's activities at Ditchley or the connection between the Lee family of Virginia and Ditchley. We welcome applications from students with any relevant background. In the personal statement section of the application form please include the type of project you would be interested in and your relevant skills.

# Testimonials

*“Both my time at Ditchley, and the Q-Step placement as a whole, was more than I could ever have hoped for and far exceeded my expectations. In regards to the actual placement, I felt it was admirably run - being both thoughtful and insightful, with the interns at the heart of the project. The work was catered to the interns, which was especially significant as we were allowed full access to experience different areas and always had the freedom to continue exploring. I did not expect to be trusted to do such insightful work, being at the commonly ‘lower end’ of a company hierarchy, but I am so happy that we were. I felt highly valued as an individual and my efforts were always appreciated and praised. The working environment at Ditchley is something I will strive to experience again in any future career path of mine. It was a great opportunity to see what environment I worked best in, and a fluid, accommodating workplace definitely enabled me to thrive. Constantly working with other interns and members of the Ditchley team really suited my means of learning and producing high quality work. The only aspect I wish was different was the length of the placement. I enjoyed it so much that I would find it difficult to suggest an end date, however the work never felt rushed and the subsequent effort to keep the alumni network active is a testament to the generosity and merit of the Ditchley Foundation. The skills I acquired from the work are invaluable; my confidence has grown significantly, I am now able to create strong networks, my professionalism has been improved and I have also learnt many new specific data analysis skills that have changed my perspective on my future career. I am so grateful to have been a part of this opportunity and think my future has become exceptionally promising due to the kindness and effort put in by all those involved. Thank you!”*

Jade Parker, University of Leeds (Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods)

*“It has been an amazing experience and I have learnt so much, both from the Ditchley team along with all the other interns. I think the overall structure of the internship worked really well and gave everyone the best experience that will definitely help towards future studies and careers.”*

Ruth Boardman, University of Exeter (Politics & International Relations)

*“I am extremely happy with how much I learnt throughout the internship, and with how many great people I have met - both other interns and Ditchley staff. Outside of the work calls, we also held non-work related debate calls on interesting and hot topics such as populism or the legality of marijuana, but also strictly socialising calls without pre-planned topics to get to know other interns. It really felt like the organisers wanted us to both learn from and enjoy our experience. My experience has confirmed my career ambitions of getting involved in politics.”*

Jacek Sagatowski, University of Oxford (Geography)

*"I wish to emphasise is how hospitable, helpful and enthusiastic the Ditchley team were. They created a genuinely warm environment (in spite of it being over Zoom). Throughout the internship I felt a mutual respect and understanding between the staff and the interns, something that is not always evident in working relationships between senior staff and their underlings. Notably, Ditchley organised weekly 'Leadership Calls' whereby members of staff offered career advice (including from a former staffer to David Cameron!), took questions on political matters of their expertise and created a forum for debate and discussion. Needless to say, I would highly recommend the Ditchley Summer Research placement. Academically it has been beneficial. Career-wise it has given me skills and, perhaps more importantly, insights. Socially I have networked with many like-minded individuals. Finally, it has certainly been a better way to earn money over summer than working late night shifts at the pub!"*

Michael O'Connell, University of Leeds (Philosophy & Politics)

*"Amazing experience and am so grateful for being able to take part in this. I learnt so much and became used to the world of work and a working environment, particularly in the virtual realm and in the times of Covid. I met and connected with many lovely other interns with similar aspirations and values so I am, again, very grateful to have been surrounded by these people. I was able to work in a team which is not only beneficial for my team-working skills but also because it has been difficult/not possible to do so throughout the pandemic. I particularly enjoyed being able to do this again, especially since it is not really a feature of my degree/course."*

Anonymous, University of Nottingham

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