

**The John Vane - Ryszard Gryglewski  
Anglo-Polish Scientific Exchange Scheme**

**A Proposal by The John Vane Academy  
in association with  
the William Harvey Research Foundation**

## Background

One of John Vane's most valued collaborators and scientific colleagues was Prof Ryszard (Richard) Gryglewski, Professor of pharmacology at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Their combined efforts led to many scientific breakthroughs and Richard was one of the principal investigators whose work led to the discovery of prostacyclin.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, Richard (and later other Polish colleagues) made frequent visits to the Vane lab in London. In return, he organised scientific meetings in Poland which members of John's lab invariably attended. Considering the political situation in Eastern Europe at the time, this type of scientific cooperation was a major achievement.



*John (L) and Richard (R) in 1980.*

This tradition of informal scientific exchange continued when Vane's lab moved to The Wellcome Foundation in 1973 and subsequently to the William Harvey in 1985. During these years, many Polish scientists visited the Vane lab and scientists from the UK lab also worked in Poland. In 2003, John Vane received a unique honour for a UK scientist, when he was awarded the Polish Order of Merit.

Richard was acclaimed as one of Poland's most significant scientists and although he sadly passed away in 2023, links between Kraków and the William Harvey have continued on a sporadic basis with Prof Stefan Chłopicki's lab at the Jagiellonian Centre Experimental Therapeutics being the principal collaborator (Stefan was one of Richard's pupils).

The overall objective of this scheme is to place this relationship between the William Harvey and Poland on a more formal basis. The John Vane Academy would like to thank Prof Rod Flower and Prof Stefan Chłopicki for their initiative in proposing this scheme and setting it in motion.

## The Proposal

### Aims

Initially, to promote and further foster scientific collaboration between The William Harvey Research Institute (WHRI) and Research Institutes in Poland, particularly in the field of vascular pharmacology and endothelial research.

If the scheme is successful, then the field of research and applicants from other centres or departments within QMUL/JU could be considered.

Ultimately, it is hoped that this cooperation could lead to joint grants and possibly a joint PhD or MD program.

### Proposed approach

Initially, to test out the viability of the scheme, the field of research will be restricted to vascular pharmacology. An existing project(s) will be identified by the participating institutions and agreed by both parties to be suitable for the first exchange visitor.

### Exchange

It is envisaged that the visits would alternate, with a Polish researcher attending the William Harvey Research Institute one year and a UK researcher visiting a laboratory in Poland the following year. However, if the budget permits or more money is raised, two exchanges could be considered each year.

Initially, the exchanges would cover a 3-month period.

### Potential time frame

It is suggested that the first exchange should start in January 2025. The details of the first transfer will be finalised as soon as a suitable project is identified.

### Eligibility

To enter this year's competition, an applicant must:

- be a resident of Poland
- be an early-career researcher\* **AND**
- be primarily involved in medical research within the field of vascular pharmacology.

*\* The John Vane Academy defines 'early-career researchers' as PhD students or postdoctoral scientists within five years of the award of their PhD or within eight years of their primary medical degree (exclusive of significant career breaks). Please note that PhD students will need to provide a statement of support from their supervisor confirming that this would not interfere with their completion and submission of their thesis.*

## Application process

This would be by competition. Applications from individuals in Poland would be in the form of a short letter and would be judged by a small panel from the Polish Pharmacological Society. A complete set of guidelines will be written if this initiative is approved.

## Benefits

For the chosen candidates, this scheme could provide the perfect opportunity to work with scientists in another country, to expand their vision, experience the practice of science in another culture and increase their repertoire of skills.

It is hoped that this scheme will strengthen scientific and cultural links between the two countries and foster a cross-fertilisation of ideas.

## Budgetary matters

To support the visitor from Poland, WHRI would provide up to £12,000 annually for 5 years to launch the scheme. Further funding may come from Polish or other sources if the scheme is a success.

A proposed budget for a Polish scientist visiting the William Harvey Research Institute in 2025, staying in the Academic Guest Flats near Mile End campus, would be as follows:

Travel (reasonable return airfare Kraków-London)	£400
Working visa, if required	£150
Cost of accommodation for 3 months	£7,500
Contribution to lab expenses to host	<u>£2,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,050</b>

Additional costs like meals, commuting and entertainment would not be covered by this grant. We envisage that any stipend or salary currently paid by the Polish institute would continue during the three-month visit so that the researcher will be able to afford these types of expenses.

