Funding opportunity

UKRI policy fellowships 2025

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	UK Research and Innovation, **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**
Funding type:	Fellowship
Award range:	£180,000 - £280,000
Publication date:	14 April 2025
Opening date:	22 April 2025 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	15 July 2025 4:00pm UK time

Spend 18 months as a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) core policy fellow, a Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellow or a What Works Innovation fellow to inform policy to address pressing national and global challenges.

You will:

- co-design research with the host organisation to inform policy on a priority area
- help improve the exchange of knowledge between policy and academic institutions

You must:

- be based at a UK based employing organisation eligible for UKRI funding
- have a PhD or equivalent experience
- be a researcher in an eligible discipline in accordance with the specific position applied for

Who can apply

To lead a project, you must be based at an eligible organisation. **Check if your employing organisation is eligible**.

Who is eligible to apply

This funding opportunity is open to academics who hold a PhD or equivalent research experience as well as relevant subject matter or methodological expertise.

Policy fellowship opportunities with a UK or devolved government host are aimed at early to mid-career academics with an interest in learning more about connecting academic research with policymaking. Fellowships with a What Works Network host are open to applicants of all career stages.

Please see the full list of host specific fellowship positions in the 'Additional information' section. These include an overview of the proposed research areas and policy challenges that the fellowship will focus on, the person specification for each fellowship and any relevant eligibility criteria including any security clearance requirements. You must ensure that you are able to meet these requirements before submitting an application.

Who is not eligible to apply

Academics who have already undertaken or are currently undertaking a UKRI policy fellowship.

Person specification

You must:

- be a researcher in the remits relevant to the specific position applied for or be able to demonstrate how you could generate interdisciplinary insights through combining these disciplines with other recognised academic disciplines. Please see each host specific fellowship positions for more details on eligibility
- be based at an eligible **UKRI research organisation**
- hold a PhD or equivalent research experience
- meet any additional eligibility and person specification criteria for the fellowship you are applying for (see 'Additional information')
- have subject matter and analytical expertise and skills relevant to the specific fellowship position you are applying for (see 'Additional information')
- be able to work effectively at pace to deliver expected outcomes, including working as part of a team on shared goals
- have the ability to communicate complex information and analysis

- have the ability to demonstrate the use of expertise in a non-academic context
- have excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to translate complex information into meaningful narrative that is accessible to a non-academic audience
- possess excellent stakeholder engagement and collaboration skills
- be interested in working in a governmental context
- have the ability to design and lead on knowledge exchange activity between research, policy and funder communities

Fellows will be required to:

- sign a fellowship agreement between the government or What Works Network host (the partner) and the relevant employing research organisation (the employer)
- meet the security checks and other clearance and declaration of interest processes required by the host (see specific fellowship positions)
- observe the provisions of the **Civil Service code** and the Official Secrets Act 1989 when hosted by a government department or other public body

It is a condition of the funding opportunity that host organisations, fellows and their employers will need to have a fellowship agreement in place for the start of the fellowship. This will be provided by the host organisation in line with their specific policies and procedures. A model agreement developed by UKRI is provided to potential applicants for information only.

Attendance and location requirements are set out in the work arrangement section of each specific fellowship positions in 'Additional information'. By applying for the fellowship, you are acknowledging and agreeing to the attendance and location requirements. In addition, fellows will be expected to undertake, and travel for, knowledge exchange activities and will be asked to attend events with the wider UKRI policy fellow cohort. Not all these activities can be planned in advance of starting the fellowship. By applying for the fellowship, you are acknowledging and agreeing to this possibility of additional travel.

The applicant's employing organisation must provide mentorship support for early career researchers, including but not limited to:

- generic project development
- engagement and dissemination support
- project-specific thematic, methodological or data support (if necessary). See 'What we are looking for' for more information

Please note that applicants are required to demonstrate that they hold a PhD or equivalent experience. This is to extend eligibility to individuals who have been in a research focused role for a substantial period but have not obtained a PhD. Being enrolled in a PhD programme or close to finalising one is not sufficient on

its own to demonstrate equivalence. Applicants who wish to make a case for equivalency will need to demonstrate that they have achieved a postdoctoral level of research expertise and experience while working in a professional research role, whether or not they are also engaged in a PhD programme. They should demonstrate this as part of the 'Career development' question.

We recognise that career stages are not linear and we support people from a diversity of career paths and trajectories. For appropriate assessment of this funding opportunity, you should determine your suitability to the scheme as either an early or mid-career researcher (unless applying for a What Works innovation fellowship which is open to all career stages), using the following guidelines:

- an early career researcher is somebody who has yet to establish or transition to independence (where an independent researcher has submitted their own proposal and taken on the role of project lead); there are no eligibility rules based on years since PhD or whether you currently hold a permanent or open-ended job role
- a mid-career researcher is somebody who has established independence, having, for example, taken on the role of project lead, published works of intellectual distinction, or established a significant track record as a 'champion' within their field. This would not ordinarily include professors but may include assistant or associate professors, where the applicant can make the justification that they meet the mid-career descriptor

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.

We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances. The scheme supports those returning from a career break or following time in other roles and, during the fellowship, award holders benefit from a flexible scheme that allows part-time working and alternative working patterns and support for people with caring responsibilities.

UKRI can offer disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders during the application and assessment process.

What we're looking for

Aim

Apply for funding for 18 months as a UKRI policy fellow to:

- be embedded in a UK or devolved government host organisation or What Works Network member
- collaborate on research activity to address pressing national and global challenges

Scope

Addressing the challenges and opportunities facing citizens, society and the economy requires an integrated, thriving and inclusive research-policy system that can act as a catalyst for innovation, social and institutional change. Central to this is enabling researchers and policymakers to collaborate and build relationships that are rich, deep and can be sustained.

Opportunities that help people move between research and policy communities to share and develop their knowledge and capabilities are a key mechanism to help develop this collaborative, connected system.

UKRI fund a cohort of policy fellows. Fellows will provide research and expert advice on the host's policy priority areas and support wider knowledge exchange between government, policy, and academia.

This high-profile initiative provides a route for you to bring your expertise to bear on critical policy challenges facing governments across the UK, as well as to generate new insights into how to best support effective collaboration and knowledge exchange that will shape your career as well as support wider change.

These fellowships are demanding and intellectually stimulating roles, providing an exciting opportunity to combine your specialist knowledge and research expertise with the opportunity to inform decision-makers at the heart of policymaking.

Three types of fellowship are offered:

Core policy fellows

Core policy fellows will be based within UK or devolved government, or an arm's length body focusing on key public policy priority areas. Where applicable for Whitehall and arm's length body hosts these will align to the government missions of:

- kickstarting economic growth
- an NHS fit for the future
- safer streets
- break down barriers to opportunity
- make Britain a clean energy superpower
- building strong foundations

Core policy fellowships are open to early and mid-career researchers.

Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellows

Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellows will be based within UK or devolved government, or an arm's length body. The Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellowships will enable early and mid-career researchers to work closely with policy makers to support preparedness for risks posed by natural hazards. For this opportunity Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellowships are defined as risks with a non-malicious cause. Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellows will work closely with policy makers to help build resilience against natural hazards, that is, extreme natural events or situations that could cause or threaten serious damage to human welfare. This would include a spectrum of potential natural hazards with a clear focus on human impact such as:

- health risks (including infectious disease)
- flooding
- loss of essential services like power, food, water, and telecoms

What Works Innovation fellowships

What Works Innovation fellowships are open to all career stages and fellows will be based within the What Works Network to increase the supply of and demand for evidence to address priorities in the hosts' policy areas of:

- educational achievement
- crime reduction
- children and families
- improving quality of life for older people
- higher education

In total this funding opportunity offers 42 fellowships across the three fellowship sub cohorts:

Hosts offering Core policy fellowships

- Cabinet Office
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
- Department for Business and Trade (DBT)
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- Department for Education (DfE)
- Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- Gambling Commission
- GO-Science

- HM Treasury (HMT)
- Home Office (HO)
- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Northern Ireland Executive
- Ofsted
- Scottish Government
- Welsh Government

Hosts offering Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellowships

- Cabinet Office
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)
- Environment Agency
- Scottish Government
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

Hosts offering What Works Innovation fellowships

- Centre for Ageing Better
- College of Policing What Works Centre for Crime Reduction
- Education Endowment Foundation
- Foundations: What Works Centre for Children and Families
- Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO)
- Wales Centre for Public Policy

We ask that you do not contact the host to discuss or endorse your application.

Fellows will be uniquely positioned to:

- provide research and expert advice on the host's policy priority areas, including co-designing and delivering research projects and activities
- engage in knowledge exchange (KE) activities across government and academia
- join a cohort of fellows to build longer-term networks across research and policy
- build lasting connections between the policymaking and research communities
- generate and share new knowledge and insights on effective policy collaboration with the wider research community and with funders of this funding opportunity

For full details about each fellowship available, see the documents in 'Additional information'.

The fellowship cohort will be organised around the key policy priority areas including, where applicable, the government missions.

Objectives and expectations of fellows

Fellows will:

- scope and lead research-related activity with the host
- work closely with hosts to ensure alignment of priorities and that analysis is as robust and useful as possible in driving decisions
- provide advice and peer review to other aspects of the host's work
- support capability building within host in your area of expertise
- support hosts and funders of this opportunity in the evaluation of the fellowship programme and improvement of future schemes
- actively participate in the UKRI policy fellow cohort, designed to facilitate greater knowledge exchange, capacity building and impact potential across the cohort' of investment. This will include attending approximately six policy training workshops

Fellows will also strengthen engagement between government and academia through activities such as:

- connecting with related UKRI research portfolios, acting as a pipeline for knowledge exchange between them and hosts
- publishing outputs from analysis produced, subject to clearance processes
- knowledge exchange activities with academic institutions and other analytical and policy teams within government and intermediaries

Benefits for fellows

The UKRI Policy Fellowship scheme offers an exciting opportunity to develop your career and enhance your understanding of applying research in government contexts.

Benefits for successful fellows will include:

- the opportunity to undertake cutting edge research, enhance knowledge and potentially access new and novel data
- the opportunity to inform decision-making on the most pressing policy problems of our time
- a better understanding of government analysis, operations, policymaking, data usage, and priority areas for research
- the ability to build your network of policy and analytical professionals within government and across the What Works Network

- actively participating in a cohort of policy fellows to enhance impact potential and further career development
- the opportunity to access a public policy focused mentoring offer
- the potential to influence future policy-academia collaborations
- the opportunity for publication across policy and academia, subject to clearance processes

During your placement you will have line management and support from the host organisation, and throughout your fellowship you will also regularly engage with and receive support from UKRI.

In addition, if you are an early career researcher you will benefit from funded mentorship support from a more senior researcher in your employing organisation.

Duration

The duration of this award is 18 months, comprising:

- three months inception phase for project set up
- 12 months main placement with host
- three months knowledge exchange phase

All fellowships within this funding opportunity are expected to start in February 2026.

Your start date should not be before 1 February 2026. Your grant should be a proposed duration of 18 months. Please make sure the start date and duration is in line with the required start of the inception phase and duration of the core placement for the fellowship you are applying for, as detailed in the specific fellowship positions.

What you will be doing

Fellows will co-design projects and activities with their host and produce analysis to inform government decision-making across a range of policy priorities.

During the inception stage of the fellowship, you will work with your host to refine the focus and priorities for your placement. Alongside these specific activities, during your placement you will also engage across the host organisation, building effective working relationships and supporting wider knowledge exchange with researchers.

You will also be supported to network and collaborate with fellows in other host departments and What Works Network members, and to connect with relevant research communities. You will have dedicated time within the placement with

the host reserved for activities that strengthen engagement between policy and academia, and for engagement with the UKRI's policy fellow cohort.

Fellows will also be supported for an additional period of three months, after the main placement, to complete agreed knowledge exchange, publication and impact activity.

For full details about each fellowship available, see the documents in 'Additional information'.

Data

Please note there is more linked administrative data securely accessible for research than ever before. Where relevant we would encourage applicants and hosts to consider whether the use of these research resources could add value to the project. Please find more details in the **ADR UK Data Catalogue**, an accessible document to understand what data is currently available and the potential of this data.

Similarly, **Smart Data Research UK** (SDR UK) is a national programme with a mission to unlock the power of data generated through everyday interactions with digital devices. Researchers will be able access and use this data safely to understand and address social, economic and environmental challenges. Currently the SDR UK programme is establishing six new data services which will provide secure access to a wealth of smart data. For now, smart data can be accessed through existing data centres; **Access CDRC dataset catalogue**, **Access UBDC dataset catalogue**.

ESRC's Data Strategy and Infrastructure programme manages approximately 30 resources that are free at the point of use, and we would encourage you to consider where their usage would be relevant and add value to the project. Further information on some of the resources supported within the Data Strategy and Infrastructure portfolio can be found on the **ESRC Facilities and Resources** page.

Inception phase

The inception phase is expected to commence in February 2026 and be used:

- to co-produce your final fellowship scope, project and planned activities with your host
- for other preliminary activity required to support this, such as data access
- for induction into the policy fellows' cohort and training programme
- for completing any necessary onboarding and induction process with your host department and finalising security clearance

Your expected time commitment during this period is 0.4 full-time equivalent (FTE). During this period, you will remain based at your employing institution but will join in-person or virtual inception meetings with your host and UKRI.

Placement with hosts

All fellows are expected to start the main placement with their host after the 3-month inception phase and once the project scope has been agreed. You can undertake this placement full or part time (0.6 FTE minimum) for 12 months. See 'Additional Information' for FTE expectations in relation to each specific fellowship position.

During the main placement phase your activities might include:

- scoping and leading research-related activity with the host
- providing advice and peer review to other aspects of the host's work
- supporting capability building within host department in your area of expertise
- strengthening engagement between government and academia

Line management and support will be provided by the host and each host will have their specific requirements regarding place of work (see specific fellowship position).

During this period, you will also be expected to take up opportunities for connection with UKRI and the wider cohort of fellows.

Knowledge exchange phase

After the placement completes you will return to your employing institution and will be supported for three months to:

- maximise knowledge exchange and impact through agreed wider engagement and publication activity
- share learnings about engaging and influencing policymakers with the wider academic community

Your expected time commitment during this period is 0.4 FTE. Your plan for activities for this period will be further defined and agreed with your host and UKRI.

During this period, you will continue to be expected to take up opportunities for connection with UKRI and the wider cohort of fellows. After your fellowship award completes, you will join an alumni network to support ongoing opportunities for networking and knowledge exchange.

Outputs and reporting

You will be expected to produce outputs for academic and non-academic audiences based on your work as agreed during the inception phase.

Please note that in some cases published outputs will be subject to clearance by your host, but that all hosts are committed to supporting opportunities for fellows to publish as part of this fellowship.

In addition to standard UKRI reporting requirements, you may also be asked to submit additional information to support wider UKRI strategic objectives and scheme evaluation.

Funding available

Core policy fellowships

The full economic cost (FEC) of your fellowship can be up to £180,000.

UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC.

Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellowships

The FEC of your project can be up to £280,000 (inclusive of an additional £100,000 budget for research and collaboration costs).

UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC.

What Works Innovation fellowships

The FEC of your project can be up to £220,000 (inclusive of an additional £40,000 budget for research and collaboration costs).

UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC.

All fellowships

With the fellowships being co-designed at inception phase all applications must include a mandatory budget of £15,000 flexible funding to support:

- additional placement-specific travel and subsistence costs
- placement-specific mentorship
- specific training requirements or that are identified during the fellowship (inc. the inception phase)

In addition to the £15,000 flexible funding, applications to the What Works Innovation fellows must include a research and collaboration budget of £40,000 and applications to the Natural Hazards and Resilience Fellows must include a research and collaboration budget of £100,000.

This additional research and collaboration budget for What Works Innovation and Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellows must be used for additional co-production, collaboration and research needs within the fellowship. Expenditure plans for the research and collaboration budget will be determined during the inception phase and should be co-designed with the host. These plans should be shared with UKRI by the end of the fellowship inception phase. Please note:

- this budget could be used to cover directly incurred staff costs (that is, research assistants), or other directly incurred costs for research and

collaboration such as surveys, interviews, secondary data analysis, participation in steering groups and so on

- expenditure of this budget should be in line with UKRI Terms and Conditions and directly support the objectives of the UKRI Policy Fellowships programme
- the research and collaboration budget cannot be used to support the core costs of the fellowship. For example, fellow's salary costs

All fellowships are available on either a full-time or part-time basis. Please see the description in each specific fellowship position for full details.

Supporting skills and talent

We encourage you to follow the principles of the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers** and the **Technician Commitment**.

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

UKRI is committed in ensuring that effective international collaboration in research and innovation takes place with integrity and within strong ethical frameworks. Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I) is a UKRI work programme designed to help protect all those working in our thriving and collaborative international sector by enabling partnerships to be as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Our **TR&I Principles** set out UKRI's expectations of organisations funded by UKRI in relation to due diligence for international collaboration.

As such, applicants for UKRI funding may be asked to demonstrate how their proposed projects will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help proportionately reduce these risks.

Further guidance and information about TR&I, including where you can find additional support.

How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service so please ensure that your employing organisation is registered. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The Fellow is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service.

Only the lead employing research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

To apply

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding Finder page.

1. Confirm you are the Fellow.
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your employing organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your employing organisation is not listed, email **support@funding-service.ukri.org**
   Please allow at least 10 working days for your employing organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your employing organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this opportunity, you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
3. Your Project title must be the Specific Position Title, indicated at the top of the specific fellowship position, for example, DBT Economy Growth and Productivity Analytical Fellowship.
4. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.
5. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.
6. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
7. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant.

When including images, you must:

- provide a descriptive caption or legend for each image immediately underneath it in the text box (this must be outside the image and counts towards your word limit)
- insert each new image on a new line
- use files smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Images should only be used to convey important visual information that cannot easily be put into words. The following are not permitted, and your application may be rejected if you include:

- sentences or paragraphs of text
- tables
- excessive quantities of images

A few words are permitted where the image would lack clarity without the contextual words, such as a diagram, where text labels are required for an axis or graph column.

For more guidance on the Funding Service, see:

- [**how applicants use the Funding Service**](#)
- [**how research offices use the Funding Service**](#)
- [**how reviewers use the Funding Service**](#)

References

References should be included within the word count of the appropriate question section. You should use your discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

Hyperlinks can be used in reference information. When including references, you should consider how your references will be viewed and used by the assessors, ensuring that:

- references are easily identifiable by the assessors
- references are formatted as appropriate to your research
- persistent identifiers are used where possible

General use of hyperlinks

Applications should be self-contained. You should only use hyperlinks to link directly to reference information. You must not include links to web resources to extend your application. Assessors are not required to access links to conduct assessment or recommend a funding decision.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Use of generative AI tools to prepare funding applications is permitted, however, caution should be applied.

For more information see our policy on the [**use of generative AI in application and assessment**](#).

Deadline

UKRI must receive your application by 15 July 2025 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time.

Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

Personal data

Processing personal data

UKRI will need to collect some personal information to manage your Funding Service account and the registration of your funding applications.

We will handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read our **privacy notice**.

UKRI will need to share the application and any personal information that it contains with the hosts so that they can participate in the assessment process. For more information on how the host uses personal information please see the specific fellowship position.

Personal data provided in applications may be shared with any Grant Co-funders for the purpose of awarding, administration and evaluation of grants.

Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email **fellows@ukri.org**

Include in the subject line: the funding opportunity title; sensitive information; your Funding Service application number.

Typical examples of confidential information include:

- individual is unavailable until a certain date (for example due to parental leave)
- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the 'Applicant and team capability' section
- conflict of interest for UKRI to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection
- the application is an invited resubmission

For information about how UKRI handles personal data, read **UKRI's privacy notice**.

Publication of outcomes

The outcomes of this funding opportunity will be published on the UKRI website.

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the **UKRI Gateway to Research**.

Summary

Word limit: 550

Copy and paste the title and the summary stated in the specific fellowship position that you are applying to.

Core team

List the key members of your team and assign them roles from the following:

- fellow
- professional enabling staff

Only list one individual as fellow for each proposal, to whom correspondence will be addressed. Enter the name of the fellow and details of the fellow's employing research organisation and department.

Early career researchers should include the name of a more senior researcher (mentor) from the fellow's employing organisation and assign them the role of professional enabling staff.

On submission of the proposal the fellow does not necessarily have to be located at the employing organisation that will administer the grant, however the administering employing organisation will be required to submit the fellowship proposal. The fellow will take intellectual leadership of the project and manage the fellowship; this individual will be the contact person for UKRI correspondence. The named fellow is responsible for ensuring that successful proposals are undertaken and completed in the manner specified.

Find out more about **UKRI's core team roles in funding applications**.

Application questions

Vision

Word limit: 1,100

What are you hoping to achieve with your proposed fellowship?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how your proposed fellowship will:

- meet the objectives of the fellowship opportunity applied for; this should include the specific position applied for, demonstrating a clear understanding of the analytical needs of the host partner
- be timely, given current trends, context, and needs
- facilitate more effective engagement and collaboration with policymakers, enabling the use of research by policymakers to inform government decision-making across a range of policy priorities
- enhance the relationship and improve the flow of evidence and insights between government, academia and other relevant stakeholder organisations, maximising knowledge exchange

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the 'How to apply' section.

References may be included within this section.

Applicant capability to deliver

Word limit: 1,650

Why are you the right individual to deliver the objectives of this opportunity?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of how you have the right balance of skills and aptitude to deliver the fellowship, including:

- the subject matter, methodological expertise relevant to the requirements of the specific position applied for, or both
- the ability to design and lead activities that support effective knowledge exchange between research, policy and funder communities, recognising the opportunities and challenges that present
- the ability to work collaboratively and effectively at pace to deliver shared goals
- the ability to communicate complex information and analysis to a non-academic audience

You also need to show evidence of how you have:

- the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to make best use of the benefits presented by this funding opportunity to develop your career
- contributed to the development of a positive research environment and wider community

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the 'How to apply' section.

The word count for this section is 1,650 words, 1,150 words to be used for R4RI modules (including references) and, if necessary, a further 500 words for

Additions.

Use the Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) format to showcase the range of relevant skills you have and how this will help to deliver the proposed work. You can include specific achievements and choose past contributions that best evidence your ability to deliver this work.

Complete this section using the following R4RI module headings. You should use each heading once, see the **UKRI guidance on R4RI**. You should consider how to balance your answer, and emphasise where appropriate the key skills you bring:

- contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge
- the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
- contributions to the wider research and innovation community
- contributions to broader research or innovation, users and audiences, and towards wider societal benefit

Additions: Provide any further details relevant to your application. This section is optional and can be up to 500 words. You should not use it to describe additional skills, experiences, or outputs, but you can use it to describe any factors that provide context for the rest of your R4RI (for example, details of career breaks if you wish to disclose them).

You should complete this section as a narrative. Do not format it like a CV.

Approach

Word limit: 1,100

How are you going to approach the co-design of the fellowship?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you will approach the co-design of the fellowship so that you:

- engage your host partner effectively and ensure meaningful collaboration
- can effectively achieve the fellowship objectives and ensure mutual benefit
- capitalise on the added value of co-designing the fellowship with a host partner
- comprehensively identify any risks to the success of the fellowship and outline how you will manage them

References may be included within this section.

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Impact, knowledge exchange, outcomes and outputs

Word limit: 1,000

What will you do to ensure that you achieve the objectives of the fellowship, effectively generating and tracking impact, knowledge exchange, outcomes and outputs?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Describe how you will design your approach to generate and track impact so that it uses proven mechanisms or processes for embedding and tracking the progression of:

- developing impact, knowledge exchange, outputs and outcomes
- embedding and developing impact and knowledge exchange after the funding has ended
- communicating and disseminating impact, knowledge exchange, outcomes and outputs

We also expect you to describe how you will:

- realise the added value of co-designing the project with a host partner in achieving broader impact, knowledge exchange, outputs and outcomes and the potential benefit on both the research community and the capabilities of the host partner you will be co-designing the fellowship with
- utilise participation in the cohort of Policy Fellows to enhance impact potential

Please note that personal impact should be described within the Career Development question.

Career development

Word limit: 1,000

Why is this fellowship the right way to develop your career and how will you use it to benefit others?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Ensure that you have identified:

- your motivation for applying to the funding opportunity and the specific position selected
- how the fellowship will provide a feasible and appropriate trajectory for you to acquire additional skills
- career development goals appropriate to the fellowship funding opportunity
- how the fellowship will provide a feasible and appropriate trajectory for your personal development and to achieve your stated career development goals (as appropriate to your career stage and field); reflect on the value that the

ability to co-design the fellowship with a host partner will offer your career development

- how you will instigate positive change in the wider research and innovation community, for example through Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), advocacy or advisory roles, stakeholder engagement, participation in peer review, influencing policy, public engagement, knowledge exchange or outreach
- how you will utilise participation in the cohort of Policy Fellows to benefit your career development

Within the Career development section we also expect you to describe:

- your suitability to the scheme as either an early or mid-career researcher (unless applying for a What Works Innovation fellowship which is open to all career stages)
- that you hold a PhD or can demonstrate equivalent experience

Organisation support

Word limit: 1,000

How will your employing organisation support your fellowship?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide a support statement including:

- how the proposed fellowship fits with your department's wider research programme
- how your employing organisation will ensure your time commitment to the fellowship is protected
- the names of any mentors and describe the mentorship support being provided, where applicable
- what financial or practical support, such as access to the appropriate services, facilities, infrastructure, or equipment, is being provided by the employing organisation and how does this strengthen your application, if applicable
- how your employing organisation will support you to disseminate learnings, maximise knowledge exchange and impact, and ensure continuing commitment to the Policy Fellows alumni network

Within the Organisation support section we also expect you to:

- name the head of department supporting the application from the employing organisation and, if you are not currently employed at the organisation, confirm that you will be accepted into the department for the purpose of undertaking the fellowship

Resources and cost justification

Word limit: 1,000

What will you need to deliver your fellowship and how much will it cost?

Justify the application's known resources, in particular:

- project staff
- travel costs, to include travel to the host office (in line with the requirements outlined in the host specification), one UKRI cohort induction event (likely to be held in Manchester or London) and two UKRI cohort training events (likely to be held in Manchester or London)

You can request costs associated with reasonable adjustments where they increase as a direct result of working on the project. For further information see **Disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders**.

Flexible funding, as detailed in the funding opportunity, must be included in the fellowship costs for all applicants to this funding opportunity, however due to the nature of the fellowship being co-designed at the inception phase, it does not need to be justified here.

The additional research and collaboration budget should also be included where applicable (for example, for What Works Innovation fellowships and Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellowships) but again, due to the nature of the fellowship being co-designed at the inception phase, does not need to be justified here.

Assessors are not looking for detailed costs or a line-by-line breakdown of all project resources. Overall, they want you to demonstrate how the resources you anticipate needing for your proposed work:

- are comprehensive, appropriate, and justified
- represent the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes
- maximise potential outcomes and impacts

Further information for completing this section can be found in the Resources and Costs Justification Guidance document in the 'Additional Information' section.

Alternate fellowship positions

Word limit: 250

Provide the details of potential alternate positions you may wish to be considered for.

If not successful at obtaining the specific position you are applying to, there may be opportunity to be considered for up to two alternative positions

advertised within the Policy Fellowships scheme. If you wish to be considered for potential alternative positions, please state the titles of these in your response.

Declaration of interest

Word limit: 500

Declare any conflicts of interest or previous interaction with the host departments you are applying to work with.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide details of any conflicts of interest or previous interaction with the host departments you are applying to work with. If this is not applicable, enter 'N/A' in the text box.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

Panel

We will invite a panel of academic and non-academic experts to assess the quality of your application.

You will be informed of shortlisting outcomes during the week commencing 6 October 2025.

Interview

For shortlisted applications, representatives of the relevant host department will conduct interviews with applicants, before making funding recommendations to UKRI. UKRI will make the final funding decisions.

Interviews are expected to take place in the week commencing 3 November 2025 and will be managed by the host departments or What Works Networks.

Timescale

We expect the funding decision will be communicated by January 2026.

Feedback

If your application was discussed by a panel we will give feedback with the outcome of your application.

Principles of assessment

We support the San Francisco **declaration on research assessment** and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about **the UKRI principles of assessment and decision making**.

Using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in peer review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UKRI to safeguard.

For more detail see our **policy on the use of generative AI**.

Sharing data with co-funders

We will need to share the application (including any personal information that it contains) with the host departments so that they can participate in the assessment process.

For more information on how host departments use personal information, please refer to the specific fellowship position.

We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use are:

- vision
- applicant capability to deliver
- approach
- impact, outcomes and outputs
- career development
- organisation support
- resources and cost justification

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

Contact details

Get help with your application

If you have a question and the answers aren't provided on this page

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Helpdesk is committed to helping users of the UKRI Funding Service as effectively and as quickly as possible. In order to manage cases at peak volume times, the Helpdesk will triage and prioritise those queries with an imminent opportunity deadline or a technical issue. Enquiries raised where information is available on the Funding Finder opportunity page and should be understood early in the application process (for example, regarding eligibility or content/remit of an opportunity) will not constitute a priority case and will be addressed as soon as possible.

Contact details

For help and advice on costings and writing your application please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your employing organisation's submission process.

For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact: **fellows@ukri.org**

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.

Email: **support@funding-service.ukri.org**

Phone: 01793 547490

Our phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

To help us process queries quicker, we request that users highlight the council and opportunity name in the subject title of their email query, include the application reference number, and refrain from contacting more than one mailbox at a time.

For further information on submitting an application read **How applicants use the Funding Service**.

Additional info

Research and innovation impact

Impact can be defined as the long-term intended or unintended effect research and innovation has on society, economy and the environment; to individuals, organisations, and the wider global population.

Webinar for potential applicants

We will hold a webinar on 20 May 2025 at 11:00 am UK time. This will provide more information about the funding opportunity and a chance to ask questions.

Register for the webinar.

Research disruption due to COVID-19

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities. We are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career, such as:

- breaks and delays
- disruptive working patterns and conditions
- the loss of ongoing work
- role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the capability to deliver and career development of those individuals included in the application. They will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing.

Where disruptions have occurred, you can highlight this within your application if you wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

Fellowship opportunity description documents

The fellowship positions are detailed by fellowship type and aligned to Core policy fellowships, Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellowships and What Works Innovation fellowships.

We ask that you do not contact the host to discuss or endorse your application.

Core Policy Fellowships

Cabinet Office

Cabinet Office Clean Energy Mission fellowship (PDF, 137KB)

Opportunity to work at the heart of government supporting evaluation and delivery of the Clean Energy Mission, to drive a step change in evidence-based decision-making and public sector reform. Work will cover the breadth of the Clean Energy Mission, including how we deliver clean power by 2030 and accelerate to net zero through decarbonisation of our buildings, industry, transport and agriculture.

[Cabinet Office Economic Growth Mission fellowship (PDF, 213KB)](#)

Opportunity to work at the heart of government supporting evaluation and delivery of the Economic Growth Mission, to drive a step change in evidence-based decision making and public sector reform. Work may cover a range of topics across the breadth of the Economic Growth Mission, including economic and fiscal stability, investment and infrastructure, skills and labour market participation, regional growth, housing, innovation, industrial strategy and trade and the net zero transition.

[Cabinet Office NHS Fit for the Future Mission fellowship (PDF, 214KB)](#)

Opportunity to work at the heart of government supporting evaluation and delivery of the Health Mission, to drive a step change in evidence-based decision-making and public sector reform. Work will cover the breadth of the Health Mission, which is focused on building a health and social care system Fit for the Future.

[Cabinet Office Opportunity Mission fellowship (PDF, 216KB)](#)

Opportunity to work at the heart of government supporting evaluation and delivery of the Opportunity Mission, to drive a step change in evidence-based decision-making and public sector reform. Work will cover the breadth of the Opportunity Mission, with a particular focus on delivery of the government's 'Plan for Change' milestone for 75% of children to reach a good level of development at age five by 2028.

[Cabinet Office Safer Streets Mission fellowship (PDF, 136KB)](#)

Opportunity to work at the heart of government supporting evaluation and delivery of the Safer Streets Mission, to drive a step change in evidence-based decision-making and public sector reform. Work will cover the breadth of the Safer Streets Mission, including ambitious targets to: halve Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in the next decade, halve knife crime in the next decade and restore trust and confidence in the Criminal Justice System.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

[CMA competition and growth economics fellowship (PDF, 131KB)](#)

Opportunity to use economics skills to improve evidence on and policymaking in relation to competition and economic growth.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

[DCMS economic growth impacts of European Research & Development (R&D) partnerships fellowship (PDF, 140KB)](#)

Explore and analyse the economic growth benefits and opportunities of the UK's European R&D partnerships for DCMS sectors, in particular its Associate

Membership of Horizon Europe (HEU).

[DCMS gambling advertising fellowship (PDF, 137KB)](#)

Opportunity to conduct a piece of research on novel developments in online gambling advertising with content creators now marketing gambling products, including unlicensed products, through platforms popular with children and young people.

[DCMS land-based gambling fellowship (PDF, 142KB)](#)

Opportunity to conduct a piece of research on the value of land-based gambling and an analysis of motivations behind people's choices to gamble in physical premises in an increasingly online world.

Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

[DBT economy growth and productivity analytical fellowship (PDF, 134KB)](#)

Opportunity to work on key drivers of economic growth and productivity, including innovation diffusion, competition and scale-up of innovative companies.

Department for Education (DfE)

[DfE Children and Young People Thriving analytical fellowship (PDF, 162KB)](#)

Opportunity to further develop the evidence base on children and young people thriving to improve policymaking in government.

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

[DHSC empowering the government to use health and care data fellowship (PDF, 137KB)](#)

Opportunity to unlock the potential of data within the DHSC and arm's length bodies to support vital reform and help people live longer, healthier lives.

[DHSC securing better health through the prevention of gambling-related harms fellowship (PDF, 111KB)](#)

Opportunity to use behavioural science knowledge and research skills to evaluate DHSC delivery of activity to prevent and reduce gambling-related harms and improve future policy. The fellowship will focus on understanding and innovating for the prevention, early identification and early intervention for gambling-related harms, to improve health and economic outcomes.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

[**DSIT: building growth enhancing research and development (R&D) and innovation systems economics fellowship (PDF, 214KB)**](#)

Opportunity to influence the structure of the UK R&D and innovation system to deliver stronger productivity, growth and welfare outcomes for the UK.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

[**DWP labour market analysis fellowship (PDF, 160KB)**](#)

Opportunity to improve understanding of the labour market to inform both national policy and activity at more local level, as set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper, utilising a range of data sources including some newly available, or available only within DWP.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

[**FCDO Growth Mission economics fellowship (PDF, 166KB)**](#)

Opportunity for an academic economist to work with the FCDO analytical and policy community on international aspects of the Growth Mission and questions on the UK growth's security and resilience.

Gambling Commission

[**Gambling Commission Research and Statistics secondary analysis fellowship (PDF, 99KB)**](#)

Opportunity to conduct a piece of research using secondary analysis of the Gambling Survey for Great Britain (GSGB), and in alignment with the Gambling Commission's evidence gaps and priorities.

Government Office for Science (GO-Science)

[**GO-Science behavioural science and sociotechnical futures fellowship (PDF, 198KB)**](#)

Opportunity to use behavioural science to advise on sociotechnical futures working on high profile policies and strategies across government, focusing on the impact of current and future technologies on the UK society, economy and people.

[**GO-Science emerging technologies and Safer Streets fellowship (PDF, 203KB)**](#)

Opportunity to advise on how emerging technologies can be used to improve the UK Government's Safer Streets Mission.

HM Treasury (HMT)

[**HMT economy macroeconomic and growth fellowship (PDF, 135KB)**](#)

Opportunity to improve macroeconomic policymaking, through strengthened understanding of the impact of demand-side policies on long-term supply in the context of the Growth Mission.

Home Office

[Home Office Criminal Justice System strategy analysis fellowship (PDF, 145KB)](#)

Effective detectives: examining the relationship between changes in investigative resources and crime outcomes.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

[MHCLG Growth and Opportunity 1.5 million homes fellowship (PDF, 143KB)](#)

How MHCLG can harness evidence and innovative thinking to meet the challenge of building 1.5 million homes during this parliament. Embedded within the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), the fellow will have the opportunity to work on multiple projects that contribute to this key milestone.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

[MoJ improving outcomes fellowship (PDF, 129KB)](#)

Improving justice system outcomes using innovative social science research and methods.

Northern Ireland (NI) Executive

[Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) One Health and climate change fellowship (PDF, 152KB)](#)

Opportunity to develop a framework for integrating scientific evidence into One Health policymaking in the context of climate change, ensuring that policy decisions are evidence-based, cross-sectoral and resilient.

[Department for the Economy post-school Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy fellowship (PDF, 146KB)](#)

Opportunity to undertake research using the novel LEO NI dataset (which will link schools' data with training, apprenticeships, further and higher education data) to inform the development of post-school SEN policy in Northern Ireland

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

[Ofsted inspection improvement evaluation fellowship (PDF, 147KB)](#)

Ofsted has launched proposals for a significant reform programme to change how we inspect early years, state-funded schools, non-association independent

schools, further education and skills, and Initial Teacher Education (ITE). The reforms will be evaluated, in line with the standards and expectations set by the Cabinet Office and the HM Treasury Evaluation Task Force. The fellow's work will contribute to ensuring Ofsted's reform programme has a positive impact on those we inspect and regulate, and, on children and learners.

Scottish Government

[Scottish Government housing, systems thinking and evidence fellowship (PDF, 193KB)](#)

Opportunity to use systems thinking approaches to improve policymaking, monitoring and evaluation related to housing topics within the Scottish Government.

[Scottish Government Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls (TFVAWG) analytical policy fellowship (PDF, 172KB)](#)

Opportunity to use a range of social research methods to contribute to the delivery of the Equally Safe Strategy with a focus on preventing Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls (TFVAWG).

Welsh Government

[Welsh Government defining and measuring quality in childcare research fellowship (PDF, 135KB)](#)

Opportunity to review the evidence about quality in early years childcare provision in Wales to support key drivers of opportunity, health, economic growth and productivity.

[Welsh Government using behavioural science to inform successful climate policies fellowship (PDF, 142KB)](#)

Opportunity to research and recommend approaches to embedding social and behavioural science evidence across Welsh Government policy in areas linked to tackling climate change, nature recovery and the environment.

Natural Hazards and Resilience policy fellowships

Cabinet Office

[Cabinet Office resilience communications and citizen preparedness fellowship (PDF, 128KB)](#)

A unique opportunity to use behavioural and social science skills and evidence to design and test resilience communications, with the aim of improving citizen preparedness for national risks such as: health risks (including infectious disease) and extreme weather events.

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

[Defra oceanic climate risks fellowship (PDF, 140KB)](#)

Opportunity to build a robust evidence base on future oceanic climate chronic risks to inform resilience strategies and policies, helping the UK reduce shocks and maximise opportunities arising from long-term marine climate-related hazards.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)

[DESNZ climate science fellowship (PDF, 123KB)](#)

Opportunity to develop and apply scientific expertise to enhance the evidence base and inform policymaking for a climate-resilient transition to net zero.

Environment Agency (EA)

[Environment Agency (EA) resilience and response to natural hazards fellowship (PDF, 138KB)](#)

Opportunity to apply social and behavioural sciences to improve the effectiveness of delivery of emergency response for diverse communities to a range of natural hazards.

Scottish Government

[Scottish Government coastal change fellowship (PDF, 136KB)](#)

The development of Scotland's National Coastal Change Monitoring Programme: appraisal, evidence and guidance. This fellowship will develop approaches for coastal change monitoring and assessment in Scotland to support the Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3) and other related policy areas (such as planning, transport, flooding and biodiversity).

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

[UKHSA social and behavioural science for health security and the changing climate fellowship (PDF, 128KB)](#)

Working across the UKHSA's Behavioural Science and Insights Unit (BSIU) and Centre for Climate and Health Security (CCHS) to apply social and behavioural science to mitigate the health security impacts of climate change.

What Works Innovation fellowships

Centre for Ageing Better

[Centre for Ageing Better bridging the evidence gap in age-friendly environments fellowship (PDF, 141KB)](#)

Opportunity to use social science skills to improve policy and decision making on healthy ageing or age-friendly environments across government. A pressing need to better serve an ageing population.

College of Policing

[College of Policing behavioural systems mapping fellowship (PDF, 134KB)](#)

Behavioural systems mapping to improve data sharing for crime prevention.

Education Endowment Foundation

[Education Endowment Foundation post-16 education and training fellowship (PDF, 136KB)](#)

Opportunity to enhance the understanding and evaluation of effective strategies to narrow the attainment gap for socioeconomically disadvantaged 16-19 year old learners.

Foundations What Works Centre for Children and Families

[Foundations What Works Centre for Children and Families domestic violence and evidence-based interventions fellowship (PDF, 138KB)](#)

Opportunity to leverage social and behavioural sciences to identify and address barriers that hinder practitioners' participation in impact evaluations randomised controlled trials (RCTs), while also enhancing their overall experience with the process of evaluation.

Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education

[Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education contextualised admissions in higher education fellowship (PDF, 131KB)](#)

Opportunity to improve evaluation of activities to address inequalities in higher education.

Wales Centre for Public Policy

[Wales Centre for Public Policy: knowledge brokering and trialling tools to increase and capture the impact of What Works centres (PDF, 143KB)](#)

Opportunity to test and share learning on innovative approaches to creating and capturing the impact of What Works Centres (WWCs).

Fellowship agreements

The conditions of this funding opportunity require that a fellowship or secondment agreement be agreed between the host organisation, the fellow and the fellow's employing research organisation.

The fellowship agreement shared under 'Supporting documents' is an exemplar that can be used by host organisations and the fellow's employer as a basis for their agreement. This exemplar has been developed in consultation with UKRI Legal, central government departments and functions, and the university sector.

We advise potential applicants and their employing research organisations to review the exemplar in advance of submitting an application to this funding opportunity as it is representative of the type of agreement that will need to be signed by the fellow, the fellow's employing research organisation and the host before the fellowship can commence.

While the agreement has been made available for use by all hosts some hosts may amend the fellowship agreement in accordance with the conditions and requirements specific to the host and the specific position or may have their own specific secondment agreement that they are required to use.

Supporting documents

[Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – UKRI Policy Fellowships 2025 (PDF, 239KB)](#)

[Resources and Cost Justification Guidance (PDF, 132KB)](#)

[UKRI Policy Fellowships 2025 Exemplar Fellowship Agreement (PDF, 179KB)](#)

Timeline

○ **22 April 2025 9:00am**
Opening date

○ **20 May 2025 11:00am**
Webinar

○ **15 July 2025 4:00pm**
Closing date

○ **September 2025**
Shortlisting panel

○ **October 2025**
Invitations to interview

○ **November 2025**
Interviews

○ **November 2025 to January 2026**

Decisions communicated

◯ **February 2026**
Start date

Guidance on good research

Good research resource hub

https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ukri-policy-fellowships-2025