ESRC Policy Fellowships 2021: Opportunity description

Fellowship Title: BEIS Net Zero Digital or Data Social Science

Host department: Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Host team: Energy Social Research & Analysis Team and net zero policy teams

Summary: Net zero digital or data social scientist working closely with net zero policy teams and social research.

Policy topic: Net Zero

Potentially relevant academic disciplines: Social Science expertise, Data Science or Digital Methods expertise.

Relevant research career stage: No preference – open to early or mid-career

Practical details

Start of 3-month inception phase: December 2021 – February 2022 (Please note that fellowship needs to commence before 14 February)

Length of core placement: 9-12 months

FTE for core placement (range): 0.5 - 1

Location requirements: Highly flexible – no specific requirements

Necessary level of security clearance Disclosure and barring security check. These can take up to 28 days.

Any additional requirements: PhD in relevant subject (or substantial relevant, practical experience).

Detailed description

This an exciting opportunity to be at the forefront of innovative government social research. In particular, the secondee will work at the interface of social research and data science and/or digital methods on the issue of net zero. The role is purposefully kept open for the secondee to scope out clear tasks in conjunction with policy and researchers in the department based on policy needs and the secondee's interests/skills. A key role of the secondee will be to work across and bridge different analytical techniques to identify how these can be support the effective delivery of net zero.

Examples of tasks could include:

- A cross-cutting review of how digital or data social science can add value across departments to the delivery of net zero.

- Supporting the researching, development and testing of effective digital tools on net zero that could be potentially be rolled out.

- Exploring how social science and data science can combine to provide extensive or closer to real-time insight into public attitudes and behaviours

- Exploring how digital behavioural and/or engagement approaches could be used to support low carbon choices or public engagement.

- Using innovative techniques (e.g. agent-based modelling) to improve the representation of social and behavioural factors in energy/climate modelling and pathways to net zero.

These examples are purposefully highly varied to indicate the breadth of the opportunity available. Research funds (e.g. to commission research or testing) will be available to support the successful secondee.

The secondee will work at the interface between the Energy Social Research & Analysis Team and net zero policy teams. This will provide a unique opportunity to gain in-depth understanding around net zero policy making, learn how government works and the important role that evidence plays in shaping policy making. The secondee will also work closely with a wide range of analysts in the department and across government.

Opportunity-specific person specification

Applications will be assessed against the following opportunity-specific requirements in addition to the generic eligibility and call criteria.

Skills/ expertise:

- Expertise in digital or data science approaches
- Expertise/knowledge of using digital/data science in combination with social/behavioural science
- Knowledge of energy/climate policy areas (desirable)