

UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: Fellowship Opportunity Description

Fellowship Title: DCMS Future of Online Regulation Fellowship

Host Organisation: [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport](#) (DCMS)

Host Team: The fellow would work embedded into both the Security and Online Harms' Team and/or Cyber Team and the central Chief Scientific Adviser team. They will engage with teams across DCMS that deal with online regulation and tech.

Summary: Opportunity to use economic and social research methods to help DCMS better understand future online regulation and DCMS' role in Governance of new technologies.

Fellowship Theme: Building a Secure and Resilient World. *Please see the full call text 'What We Are Looking For' for a detailed summary of the research themes targeted in this call.*

Policy Topic: *Digital regulation, behavioural and/or economic insights into the impact of online regulations and possible risks/harms in the future.*

Research Council: ESRC

Academic Discipline/s: *Economists and social researchers. Researchers with an interest in or knowledge of DCMS' tech related sectors would be desirable.*

Research Career Stage: *Open to early or mid-career researchers*

Fellowship Structure

Inception Phase:

Estimated Start Date: October 2023. *Exact date to be confirmed by the host depending on onboarding and security clearance requirements*

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Main Placement Phase:

Duration: 12 months

FTE: 0.6-1 FTE (flexible – to be agreed with the Fellow)

Knowledge Exchange Phase:

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work Arrangements

Location Requirements: This role will be based in one of the following DCMS regional hubs: London and Manchester. Travel to and from the fellow's base will not be funded by DCMS. Eligible travel and subsistence (T&S) costs are supported in the main UKRI grant and should therefore be factored into your application. Please see full call text and guidance for more details.

Hybrid Working: The successful candidate will have the flexibility to work remotely, with the expectation that they attend their hub location no less than twice a week in accordance with DCMS's hybrid working policy.

Security Clearance: Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is expected to take 4-6 weeks from submission. We expect the successful applicant to start the security clearance application process, with support from the host team, as soon as their Fellowship has been confirmed by ESRC. Ideally the security clearance process would be completed before the inception phase begins. See [National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) (www.gov.uk).

Fellowship Opportunity Description

Research Area:

DCMS is interested in looking beyond our current activities in online safety and security to understand the digital governance challenges likely to arise in the future, taking into account the rapid development and adoption of technologies such as GPT-4, Web3, AI and the Metaverse. We are interested in behavioural insights into the reasons people use such new technologies and the impact they have on both them and the potential harms that could be the result of use. The department wishes to adopt a more proactive approach to the ethical, legal and economic challenges that come with such rapid development of technology. Given the potential for rapid change it is important to gain insights into both the potential economic impacts of new technologies and any subsequent governance interventions.

DCMS is interested particularly in a fellow taking a technological trend (GTP4, AI, Web3 and the Metaverse) and doing a deep dive into either economic impacts (value proposition and assessment of interventions) or behavioural trends and insights, depending on the home discipline and expertise of the researcher. Questions currently identified by the Department are included in our Areas of Research Interest. We would welcome research that addresses these but not confined to those highlighted below:

- What could the potential impact (including economic and social) of increased use of automation, machine learning/AI in regard to cyber security practices be to the UK?
 - Could it lead to a reduction or even increased demand for cyber security skills, products and services?
 - What would this mean for managing organisations level cyber security risk and thus the UK economy?
- The importance of inclusion for digital identity solutions:
 - What are the economic and social benefits and costs of creating an inclusive digital identity ecosystem and approach in the UK? Where possible quantifying and monetising these benefits and costs.
 - What is the current state of the UK digital identity market place (thinking about supply, demand etc).
 - How can governance and standards frameworks encourage greater inclusion across the ecosystem and creation of a more inclusive digital identity market place?
 - How can we minimise risks within digital identity solutions?
- Mis/Disinformation:
 - How can digital tools (such as machine learning) be used to strengthen counter-disinformation efforts during UK elections or other events susceptible to mis/disinformation?
 - How would these impact individuals, wider society and the democratic process?

Activities

Activities will be agreed during the inception phase of the fellowship and could include:

- Undertaking original research to support DCMS' needs and aligned with your expertise. This will be designed and prepared for with the Department during the inception phase
- Creating evidence summaries, reviews and conducting analysis to support policy development;
- Conducting horizon scanning to help identify and inform future policy priorities;
- Organising workshops for policy colleagues to share research findings and provide academic challenges.
- 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

Fellowship Benefits

Fellowships offer an exciting opportunity to enhance your understanding of applying research in Government policy contexts. Fellows can expect to benefit from:

- Experience of Government ways of working and how policy is made;
- Access to a network of policy and analyst teams across Government departments, as well as external stakeholders in relevant sectors;
- Access to national datasets and information (subject to security clearance and for use while in post only);
- Part of a cohort of policy fellows working across Government departments.

Person Specification

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

Essential Criteria:

- Relevant subject matter expertise such as expertise in analysing and researching technology related impacts, ethical aspects of new technology and harms that are generated from them.
- Working experience of conducting qualitative and/or quantitative research

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to translate complex and technical information into meaningful narrative that is accessible to a non-academic audience
- Excellent stakeholder engagement and collaboration skills
- The ability to design and lead on knowledge exchange activity between academic, policy and research communities
- Experience of programme or project management, with the ability to work effectively at pace to deliver expected outcomes

Desirable Criteria:

- Insight into working in a public policy context
- Experience working with colleagues from different specialisms, professions, or Government departments