

UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: Fellowship Opportunity Description

Fellowship Title: FCDO Building a secure and resilient world, arms control and non proliferation fellowship

Host Organisation: [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#)

Host Team: Arms Control and Disarmament Research Unit

Summary: Opportunity to use life sciences expertise and skills to support maintenance of prohibitions against the use of chemical and biological weapons.

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: Arms control and non-proliferation

Research Council: BBSRC

Academic Discipline/s: Life Sciences, Social scientists, particularly bioscience innovation scholars, capable of demonstrating significant life science knowledge are also encouraged to apply.

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: 0.6-1.0 FTE

Knowledge Exchange Phase:

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work Arrangements

Location Requirements: As well as remote working, Fellows will be required to spend time physically in the FCDO building in central London. Ways and patterns of working will be established in the inception phase. Many FCDO staff work flexibly

Hybrid Working: 40%-60% attendance pro rata in the FCDO's London office is expected.

Security Clearance: Security Check level. See national security vetting [clearance levels](#). We ask successful candidates to start the SC application process as soon as their fellowship offer has been confirmed by ESRC/AHRC, before the inception phase begins, because the process is likely to take several weeks.

Fellowship Opportunity Description

Prohibitions against the possession and use of chemical and biological weapons are facing increased pressure. On the chemical side, chemical weapons have been used in Syria and there have been recent high-profile assassination attempts in Malaysia and the UK with VX and Novichok nerve agents. On the biological side, there is rising concern about the potential development by both states and state-sponsored actors of biological and/or toxin weapons.

A number of factors contribute to this increasing pressure, including, as the Integrated Review notes, a deteriorating global security environment, the changing nature of warfare and the accelerating pace at which significant advances

and convergence in the life sciences and associated emerging technological fields are happening. Together, these factors create tension between maximising the social (health, economic etc) benefits of new advances and safeguarding against new forms of chemical and biological weapons development.

We seek a scholar with deep scientific expertise to support our efforts at understanding current and future dynamics within the biosciences, including as they relate to research trends, scientific and technological advancements, ethical and normative questions. Communicating their understandings, the fellow will be at the heart of conversations supporting the UK's diplomatic efforts towards countering development of chemical and biological weapons, including through international engagement, multilateral negotiation, and development of other measures such as export controls.

The fellow will be attached to the FCDO's Arms Control and Disarmament Research Unit (ACDRU). ACDRU sits within the FCDO element of government's Counter-Proliferation and Arms Control Centre (CPACC). CPACC consolidates FCDO, Ministry of Defence (MOD), Department for International Trade (DIT), and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) expertise and policy-making.

The fellow's role will combine provision of support and advice to policymakers, Ministers and senior officials from FCDO and across government, with independent project work, interacting with the established cross government scientific community in this area and forging stronger links with relevant external scientific experts. Projects will be agreed between the FCDO and the fellow, shaped by two broad themes:

1. *A changing scientific landscape*: work in this area could include monitoring contemporary and longer-term scientific and technological trends, evaluating trends in convergence and emerging technologies with relevance to chemical and biological weapons, considering potential implications for arms control and disarmament efforts.
2. *Scientific co-operation and collaboration in the 21st century*: one aspect of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is to facilitate, and participate in, "the fullest possible exchange" of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes and "to further the development and application of scientific discoveries" to prevent, amongst other things, disease. Because the Convention was negotiated in the 1970s, there are embedded assumptions about how scientists, particularly in the biosciences, collaborate and co-operate with one another. A project in this area might include mapping and assessing current practices of scientific co-operation and collaboration and exploring whether these practices are/can be reflected in work that is associated with this aspect of the Convention.

The fellow will have the opportunity to co-design clear research tasks in collaboration with officials in government based on policy needs and the fellow's interests/skills during the inception phase of the fellowship.

Person Specification

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

Essential Criteria:

- interest in and aptitude for thinking about politics and international affairs.
- Excellent science communications skills are essential, as much of the role will involve explaining the key concepts and salient points from complex, technical subjects to non-specialists in order to support the policy-making process.
- Applicant must also demonstrate an ability for teamwork.
- The candidate must have a PhD [or equivalent research experience as a minimum] and show familiarity with the driving forces relating to scientific and technological change.

Desirable Criteria:

- Demonstrable experience of science-diplomacy and/or policy related activities.
- Demonstrable previous experience of teaching or briefing non-specialist audiences.
- Knowledge of UK Government policy about countering chemical and biological weapons.
- Evidence of working in transdisciplinary settings

Additional information

About the FCDO. Uniting diplomacy and development in one Government Department the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) makes a real difference to the world. It was created in 2020 from the merger of the

Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development and is at the heart of an unrivalled global network of economic, diplomatic and security partnerships.

The FCDO pursues our UK national interests and projects the UK's role in the world. We promote the interests of British citizens, safeguard the UK's security, defend our values, reduce poverty and tackle global challenges, positioning the UK as a responsible, reliable and effective international actor and partner and investing in the global relationships we need for the long term.

We employ over 17,000 staff in our diplomatic and development offices worldwide, including in 280 overseas embassies and high commissions. Our UK-based staff work in King Charles Street, London, and Abercrombie House, East Kilbride. We also have staff based in Milton Keynes. Relevant ACDRU staff work in King Charles St.

Working in the FCDO. The FCDO unites development and diplomacy in one department. We have highly specialised and unique research requirements and operate in a world where having access to high-quality evidence-based analysis can mean the difference between success and failure. But we also operate in a world of nuance and subtlety where exerting influence, negotiating and leveraging others' power at precisely the right moment is at a premium. Timing is key. This makes it difficult for academics operating outside to have a significant impact. Academics often have the best ideas; but these ideas are not always injected into policy at the right moment. Working in close proximity to and in tight interaction with FCDO policymakers can help change this, providing opportunities to influence and to challenge. Whilst no one can guarantee that the approaches and recommendations made by academics will shape UK foreign policy, bringing academic expertise directly into the heart of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office through this scheme enhances the chances of creating meaningful impact on British diplomacy.

The FCDO is a friendly and supportive place to work and many staff have flexible working patterns. Fellows are fully integrated into the FCDO's structure and are placed within a policy team which could be geographic or thematic as well as within a research and analysis focussed team, for example the Research Analysts Cadre whose analysts are usually in place for years, or even decades. Fellows have a line manager and additional support and mentoring will be provided. This [blog](#) by a former Fellow and a former Head of Research Analysts gives a sense of some of the challenges of straddling the FCDO and academic work. Work-planning is a mixture of demand and self-tasking based on evolving FCDO needs. An indicative list of tasks includes: writing papers and shorter notes, oral briefings for senior officials and ministers, meeting external and cross-Whitehall partners, research visits overseas as well as organising and running masterclasses. The ability to communicate clearly and succinctly, highlighting policy relevance to non-experts is of importance to all FCDO work. So too is the ability to work collaboratively with others and to do so at pace, sometimes delivering to tight deadlines. For all Fellowships we seek a 12-month placement period.

Security clearance. For security reasons, and in line with FCDO policy, successful applicants have to be security cleared before the offer of the fellowship placement can be confirmed. The level of security clearance required for these fellowships is Security Check. While UK nationality is not essential, applicants need to have a minimum of two years residence, including 12 months of continuous residence in the UK in the preceding five years. Dual nationality is not in itself a barrier but potential applicants who have close ties to the area(s) on which they would be working, or who are not UK nationals, must contact the FCDO (Personnel Security Team, ESD.PST@fcdo.gov.uk) before applying since there may be security limitations which would prevent them from accessing the necessary material, making a successful fellowship impossible. Loss of clearance during the fellowship period, for example, due to personal conduct, will risk termination of the secondment. All security clearance decisions are personal to the applicant and depend on a range of factors.

Code of conduct. As an additional condition to the standard fellowship terms and conditions, the fellows will need to agree to respect the FCDO's values and standards of behaviour; failure to do so may result in the termination of the fellowship. Fellows will also be obliged to respect the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and observe the duties of propriety and confidentiality during and after the fellowship period. This means consulting the FCDO before undertaking activities involving: (a) the disclosure of UK Government official information; and (b) the publication or disclosure of material liable to affect the Government's relations with other countries. An FCDO-nominated contact will be responsible for the sensitivity review of all publications prior to their submission for publication. However, the fellows will not be obliged to make amendments to the content unless publications contain information that it is in breach of the Official Secrets Act (as laid out in the Civil Service Code), or a confidentiality agreement, or which could disclose sensitive, classified and/or personal information, or which could affect the Government's relations with other countries. The agreement to be signed by Fellows, their research organisations, the FCDO and the relevant UKRI Research Council(s) will include the above matters

