



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



Economic
and Social
Research Council



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: Fellowship Opportunity Description

Fellowship Title: FCDO Tackling Infections Epidemiology Fellowship

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

Host Team: Chief Scientific Adviser's Science Cell

Summary: Opportunity to use skills and expertise in epidemiology to improve FCDO's preparedness for disease outbreaks and to inform decision making during outbreak responses.

Fellowship Theme: Tackling Infections. *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: Global Health

Research Council: BBSRC

Academic Discipline/s: Epidemiology, Infectious disease

Research Career Stage: Early or mid-career researcher

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, the fellow will be required to spend time physically in the FCDO building in King Charles St, central London. Ways and patterns of working will be established in the inception phase. Many FCDO staff work flexibly. There is no requirement to travel.

Hybrid Working: 40% attendance pro rata in the FCDO's London office in King Charles St 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/BBSRC, before the inception phase begins, because the process is likely to take several weeks.

Fellowship Opportunity Description

This fellowship opportunity is based in the Chief Scientific Adviser's (CSA) Science Cell which is part of the Research & Evidence Directorate (RED). RED brings together several departments which deliver expert

analysis and advice informing decision-making across the FCDO, and harnesses UK science strengths to deliver R&D investments to enhance FCDO's development and diplomatic impact. The CSA is the Director of RED.

The CSA Science Cell provides support to the CSA, particularly in the use of science in response to crises and forms the secretariat for the cross government EpiThreats network. The EpiThreats network was established in 2016 following the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and has been a valuable cross-sectoral and cross-departmental mechanism enabling HMG to review, monitor and escalate infectious disease risks.

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.

The fellow will provide:

- technical support, for example providing analysis, gathering evidence, writing briefs or interpreting technical documents, to country and regional FCDO officials facing an unusual disease outbreak. This will be delivered through the EpiThreats network; and
- epidemiology and disease surveillance expert advice to the Chief Scientific Adviser and Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser; and
- an understanding of scientific evidence and principles of surveillance and outbreak management in international settings, to inform FCDO policy and programming.

The fellow will be responsible for:

- **Science advice:** Drawing on a range of teams and mechanisms (within FCDO, across HMG and externally), to provide science advice to inform FCDO's response to disease outbreaks and provide advice to the Chief Scientific Adviser and Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser.
- **Evidence synthesis:** Drawing on relevant evidence sources (using appropriate evidence synthesis practices).
- **Modelling:** Where data is available, modelling projections of outbreak trajectory to inform FCDO response options.

Expected outputs:

- Updates and advice for the Chief Scientific Adviser and Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser, so they are kept well informed during FCDO's response to a disease outbreak.
- Evidence notes written in plain English and accessible for non-expert audiences, to be shared with teams across FCDO to better inform operational and policy decisions during disease outbreak responses.
- Modelling to illustrate disease outbreak data projections, providing a visual prompt to help increase awareness and understanding across FCDO.

Person Specification

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

Essential Criteria:

- A proven academic track record in epidemiology.
- Comprehensive knowledge of research methodology, method, techniques, and application of these appropriately.
- Ability to analyse and interpret complex information into accessible language.
- Ability to communicate research / evidence / evaluation findings to a wide range of audiences, including to non-technical senior leadership, to influence policy.
- Ability to work at pace and deliver to tight deadlines.
- Ability to see the bigger picture and think beyond current practices, and to develop proposals for new ways of working.
- Capable of establishing effective internal and external networks.

- Demonstrated interest in Global Health.

Desirable Criteria:

- Experience of working internationally on global science issues.
- Ability to design and lead on knowledge exchange activity between research, policy and funder communities.
- Aptitude for thinking about politics and international affairs.
- Ability for teamwork.
- Previous policy related experience.

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 Science Cell 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