

## UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: Fellowship Opportunity Description

**Fellowship Title:** Ofsted Improving Outcomes Education Research fellowship

**Host Organisation:** [Ofsted](#)

**Host Team:** Insights and Research Directorate

**Summary:** In 2022, Ofsted published a new five-year strategy, which commits us to being evidence-led, and to making the most of our insights. In support of this, Ofsted formed a new Insights and Research Directorate, to lead and expand our research and analysis capability. The fellow would be hosted by this Directorate and contribute to delivering on Ofsted's Insights and Research strategic plan, which aims to develop our capability for mixed methods research, harness the insights of Ofsted's inspectors, and make the most of the data we hold, including through linking with other government datasets.

**Fellowship Theme:** Creating Opportunities, improving outcomes. *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:** Education standards

**Research Council:** ESRC

**Academic Discipline/s:** Education Research, Social Research, Psychology

**Research Career Stage:** Early and/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 FTE (**1.0 FTE preferred**)

#### **Knowledge Exchange Phase:**

**Duration:** 3 months

**FTE:** 0.4 FTE

### Work Arrangements

**Location Requirements:** Ofsted's Insights and Research Directorate, within which the fellow will be hosted, has most significant staff presence in our Bristol and London offices. As such, we have a preference for candidates who can be based in one of these locations. However, we will also consider candidates based in Birmingham or Manchester where we also have offices. There may also be a need to travel to other Ofsted offices across England, particularly the London office if not based there. Eligible travel & subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details.

**Hybrid Working:** We require this role, as with all other Ofsted roles, to attend the office for a minimum of 60% of their time.

**Security Clearance:** Baseline Personnel Security Standard, usually takes around 6 weeks. We would 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; and so, ideally, before the inception phase begins. See [National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-security-vetting-clearance-levels)

## **Fellowship Opportunity Description**

There is significant scope for an ESRC Fellow to have an impact on Ofsted policy and practice, help to develop the associated research and evidence base, develop connections between Ofsted and the research community, and ultimately have a central role in translating evidence into policy and practice for the benefit of children and learners across the country.

A Fellow would benefit from:

- Support and oversight from Ofsted's Insights and Research Directorate, potentially including analyst resource to support research projects
- Proximity to interesting and topical policy and delivery decisions at a national scale
- The opportunity to inform and influence HMCI and Ofsted's Executive Board
- Experience of Ofsted, DFE, and sector ways of working, to help 'land' research more effectively
- Access to a network of policy, analysis and research teams in Ofsted and across government
- Access to national datasets and information (for use whilst in post only, and subject to security clearances)

Specific deliverables will be agreed during the inception phase of the fellowship and will depend on the policy topic(s) being prioritised. Potential activities could include:

- Undertaking primary research, often drawing on cross-government linked data. We will support the fellow publishing research papers and outputs in academic journals and peer-reviewed publications
- Access and link government data sources to generate new insights of relevance to Ofsted, working in the Secure Research Service (SRS)
- Creating evidence summaries, reviews and analysis to meet key policy and operational needs
- Examining the existing and emerging evidence regarding education standards across Ofsted's remits
- Developing and challenging others' development of credible evidence-based assumptions about proposals and plans
- Supporting the development of Ofsted's capacity and capability in mixed methods research.
- Designing and organising workshops – to provide academic challenge and rigour
- Conducting evidence-based horizon scanning exercises

We envisage the fellow will carry out a research project in one or more area of particular interest for Ofsted – with the scope to be agreed during the inception phase. Indicative policy and research challenges might include:

- **Further Education and Skills (FES)**
  - Improved understanding of how well-prepared learners are for FES courses and to follow through in understanding their early career outcomes
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**
  - The commissioning, provision, and standards of Alternative Provision (AP) and how experience varies across the country
  - Research on the provision and regulatory interconnectedness across SEND, disadvantage, and low attainment
- **Early Years (EY):**
  - Help develop a rigorous evidence base to support children's physical, social, and wider development in the early years,
  - Contribute to the development of specialist training on early years education for our workforce to enhance their understanding of what high-quality early education looks like
  - Help raise awareness and promote a better understanding of education and care in children's early years
  - New data or methods to understanding of ownership chains in EY, and the extension of methodologies to other Ofsted remits (e.g. social care)

## **Person Specification**

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

**Essential criteria:**

- Subject matter expertise relevant to Ofsted education research, - for example, expertise in relation to primary, secondary, or post-16 education, cross-remit priorities (e.g. SEND), or international evidence on education standards.
- Experience of the design, development, management and timely delivery of education research.
- Experience of meaningful collaboration with education providers and the wider research community
- Proven ability to deliver knowledge exchange activity, communicating and present technical and complex analysis to non-technical audiences, both orally and in writing.

**Desirable criteria:**

- Familiarity with Ofsted's thinking behind approaches to inspection (and, where relevant, regulation), in relation to primary, secondary, post-16 education, or cross-remit priorities (e.g. SEND).
- Experience of developing team or organisational capability
- Experience as an approved researcher with the Secure Research Service
- Knowledge and/or experience of education reform and political priorities