‘Engaging with Government’ Programme

Call for Applications
**Introduction**
There are real opportunities for researchers in the arts and humanities to inform, persuade and build partnerships with policy makers. As part of its commitment to supporting academics in exploring the wider impact of their research, the AHRC is delighted to announce the call for applications for the ‘Engaging with Government’ programme, in partnership with the Institute for Government.

‘Engaging with Government’ is a course designed to provide an introduction to the policy-making process, and to enable academics to apply this to their own research. It aims to build links between policy makers and the most dynamic new research in the arts and humanities. The course is designed for researchers at all post-doctoral career stages. **We are inviting eligible researchers to submit an application to attend the course.** The deadline for receipt of applications is **5pm on 26 October 2023.**

This document is written on the assumption of an in-person course, and you should apply to attend on that basis. If for any reason, we are unable to host a physical event, the course will be delivered virtually over five half days. In the event the course is delivered virtually, we will arrange an opportunity for attendees to meet in person in a follow up session when it is feasible to do so.

**Aims**
The programme will:

- provide a thorough introduction to policymaking processes and highlight how research contributes to them
- encourage participants to think about ways in which their own research could make a valuable contribution to public policy
- challenge participants to think in more depth about the policy process, and the role of research within it
- enhance the influencing and communication skills that participants need to achieve this.

The course will be held on **27 – 29 February 2024** in central London at the Institute for Government (IfG), an award-winning think tank using research and engagement to improve the effectiveness of government. If it is not possible for the course to be conducted in person, due to further restrictions on large gatherings or non-essential travel, it will take place virtually, through a combination of video conferencing and an online learning platform. Up to 20 people will be invited to attend the course.

The programme will include discussions with a range of senior civil servants, researchers, politicians, and media professionals on the challenges and opportunities involved in engaging
with policy makers. There will be an emphasis on connecting back what participants have
learned to their own research and the steps they need to take to engage with the policy-
making process.

Over 200 researchers have attended the course since it was first run in 2013. The
programme has been very well received by participants, who feel they gained confidence in
having the knowledge and skills for engaging with government. This guide contains case
studies of how the course has been useful to previous participants and shows their
subsequent experiences of engaging with policy makers. There is an expectation that alumni
from the course will remain in contact with IfG, AHRC and other attendees to continue to
learn from each other. For AHRC, understanding the longer-term impacts of the course is
an important aspect of our support for the course.

**Eligibility**
The programme is open to researchers, at any post-doctoral career stage, based at a UK Higher
Education Institution (HEI) or recognised independent research organisation (IRO), and working
in any area of the [AHRC’s subject domain](#). **Please note that this course is not open to
current doctoral students.**

Applicants must be employed in a full or part-time postdoctoral or equivalent position,
which may be either fixed term or permanent, and which lists academic research as one of
its main responsibilities. Applicants must be in post at the time of application, and the
position must extend beyond the delivery of the ‘Engaging with Government’ course in
February 2024. Further, the position must be held at a research organisation which is
eligible to apply to the AHRC. These organisations are:

- All UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that receive grant funding from one of the
  UK higher education funding bodies
- Research institutes for which the Research Councils have established a long-term
  involvement, a list of these institutions can be found at: [Eligible research institutes –
  UKRI](#)
- Independent Research Organisations (IROs) that have received Research Council
  recognition to apply to the AHRC in responsive mode. The current list of eligible IROs
  can be found at: [Eligible independent research organisations and Catapult centres – UKRI](#).

AHRC is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. We want this funding opportunity to
be accessible to as diverse a range of eligible candidates as possible. We encourage all those
who meet the eligibility criteria to apply. We would particularly welcome applications from
ethnic minority and/or disabled candidates who have been previously underrepresented. If
any specific adjustments would help you to access this opportunity, then please let us know via researcher.development@ahrc.ukri.org and we will try our best to accommodate your needs.

**Application process**
Entry to the programme is competitive and an application is required. The link to the online application form can be found here:

https://engagementhub.ukri.org/ahrc-operations/40a635ee

You do not need policy experience to be eligible to apply, but you need to indicate why you are interested in policy making. Applicants also need an understanding of what the programme can help them to achieve and to articulate this in the application.

The course will be held at the Institute for Government Offices in central London on **27 – 29 February 2024**, and **applicants will need to commit to attending all three days in full or five half days if run virtually**. The costs of the course, accommodation, travel, and subsistence will be paid for according to AHRC’s standard terms and conditions.

**Assessment process**
The AHRC will reject a proposal upon submission where the applicant does not meet the published eligibility criteria or the application has been completed incorrectly (in this instance, there is insufficient time to return applications for amendment). Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered, whatever the circumstances.

Applications will be assessed and candidates selected by members of the AHRC executive and the Institute for Government. The assessment will be based solely on the information provided in the application form. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equalities groups in all of their relevant functions. Accordingly, no eligible job applicant, funding applicant, employee or external stakeholder including members of the public should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or similar philosophical belief, spent criminal conviction, age or disability. Proposals will be assessed and graded on their merits, in accordance with the criteria and the aims and objectives set for the scheme.
Assessment criteria
Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

• **Research track record** – successful applicants will help policy makers access the best research in their field.
• **Motivation** – applicants must demonstrate enthusiasm for engaging with the policy-making process and using their research to make a difference.
• **Relevance** – applicants must demonstrate how their research could help inform issues of public policy.
• **Development potential** – that the course will make a difference to applicants as researchers.
• **Commitment** – to promoting the role of the arts and humanities (beyond the applicant’s own research) and to helping government make better policy.

We encourage applicants to describe their research clearly, avoiding jargon or subject-specific terminology. This will ensure that the focus of the research may be understood by the non-specialist panel members and will demonstrate that the applicant possesses a key skill needed to engage successfully with non-academic partners.

With regret, the AHRC is unable to provide specific feedback to unsuccessful applicants in this instance.

Grading scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The applicant has made a compelling case for their attendance on the course and would clearly benefit from participation. In addition, the applicant has clearly and persuasively demonstrated their research track record, their potential to apply that research in the current context and has demonstrated good awareness of the ways in which the arts and humanities more generally can make a contribution to public policy making.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The applicant has made a strong case for their attendance on the course and would benefit from participation. Their application is, however, weaker in some areas – such as their research track record, their understanding of the potential relevance of their research, or how arts and humanities research more generally can contribute to public policy making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The applicant has not made a case for their attendance on the course or shown what added value their attendance would have for their personal or professional development. Or the applicant does not have a track record which demonstrates research excellence, or the applicant has not demonstrated a good</td>
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understanding of the potential relevance of their own research, or how arts and humanities research more generally could contribute to public policy making.

**Timetable**
- Closing date: **5pm on 26 October 2023**
- Panel meeting: **30 November 2023**
- Notification of outcomes: **December 2023**
- Course information sent to participants: **mid-January 2024**
- Course date: **27 - 29 February 2024**

There is also likely to be a follow-up with participants between three and six months after the course to evaluate the outcomes of the programme. In applying to attend the programme, there is a commitment, as far as possible, to engage with these follow up activities.

If you have any queries about the programme or the application process, please contact us at researcher.development@ahrc.ukri.org.