



'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 30 October 2025.**

This document is written on the assumption of a three day 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 **3 – 5 March 2026** 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 for any reason it is not possible for the course to be conducted in person, 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 speakers including senior civil servants, researchers, politicians, and policy influencers 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 and have pointed to tangible actions taken as a result. 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 have been awarded their doctorate by the application deadline (30 October 2025).

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 March 2026. 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: [Submit your form on EngagementHub](#)

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 **3 – 5 March 2026, 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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| 3 | 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. |
| 2 | 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. |
| 1 | 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 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 30 October 2025**
- Panel meeting: W/C 1 December 2025
- Notification of outcomes: **December 2025**
- Course information sent to participants: **mid-January 2026**
- Course date: **3 - 5 March 2026**

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.