



UKRI policy fellowships 2026

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Cabinet Office government skills evidence and impact fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

[Cabinet Office](#), [Government Skills](#)

Host team:

Evidence and Impact team

Academic discipline/s:

Social research methods, economics, behavioural science, organisation studies

Summary:

Opportunity to develop the evidence base on 'learning in the flow of work', a currently under-researched area, directly helping the Cabinet Office develop interventions, and influence the work of the rest of Government in this area.

Policy topic:

Employment and skills, innovation, civil service productivity, growth mission

Research career stage:

Open to early and mid-career researchers

Fellowship structure

The fellowship is estimated to begin in May 2027. The exact date will be confirmed by the host depending on onboarding and security clearance requirements. The fellowship will have three phases:

- inception: duration is 3 months at 0.4 FTE
- main placement: duration is 12 months at 0.6-1 FTE
- knowledge exchange: duration is 3 months at 0.4 FTE

Work arrangements

Location requirements:

The Evidence and Impact team operates across multiple locations, including Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Manchester, and York, as well as remote workers. We have team days every two months, rotating between our locations, and your attendance would be very welcome where possible.

Hybrid working:

Hybrid working is encouraged to maximise the opportunities for collaboration during the fellowship. We would be content for you to work at any location listed above. Remote working will also be considered if necessary. A laptop will be provided enabling work from home or other sites, providing access to host systems. In addition to office attendance, it would be useful to budget for travel to our locations around six times a year if logistically possible. Eligible Travel and Subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details.

Security clearance and nationality eligibility criteria:

The level of security clearance needed is Counter-Terrorist Check (CTC), please see [national security vetting: clearance levels](#) for more information. CTC typically takes around 4-6 weeks once the form is submitted, depending on personal circumstances and the vetting agency's workload.

This job is broadly open to the following nationality groups:

- UK nationals
- nationals of the Republic of Ireland
- nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities with settled or pre-settled status under the [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\)](#)
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)
- individuals with limited leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain who were eligible to apply for EUSS on or before 31 December 2020
- Turkish nationals, and certain family members of Turkish nationals, who have accrued the right to work in the Civil Service

Further information can be found at [Civil Service recruitment: nationality rules - GOV.UK](#).

Fellowship position description

The Project:

This project addresses a vital policy gap: establishing what works in 'learning in the flow of work' (LIFOW) interventions. We hypothesise LIFOW is a critical element for developing agile, productive civil servants, but current evidence is fragmented.

The Fellow will design, execute, and disseminate a high-impact research project to establish the evidence-base for LIFOW interventions within the Civil Service. This is an opportunity to shape research in an emerging area and inform policy, with the potential to contribute to published research outputs.

The project will be co-designed (led by the fellow), with initial research defining the study scope, based on a solid evidence base and the specific skills of the fellow. Some of the initial ideas are:

- assess the importance of this learning
- identify and categorise effective interventions
- measure outcomes on individual and team performance

The Impact:

Government Skills is moving to become The National School of Government and Public Services (“the School”). Government Skills operates in the Government People Group, the biggest business unit in the Cabinet Office, with the Cabinet Office supporting the Prime Minister and the effective running of Government. This provides the ideal setting to provide impact.

Our work is a high profile, ministerial priority, with the Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister stating recently [in a speech](#) that the School “will bring high-quality training in-house, with a proper curriculum, to boost state capacity and give the skills needed to civil servants on technology and AI, strategic thinking needed to build a state for the future”. Our work is an enabler across all the Government Missions, ensuring that staff have the right skills, at the right time, in the right place, to deliver on key priorities.

This research is a high-priority project aiming to provide practical recommendations, and will:

- provide foundational evidence on the importance of LIFOW and the specific barriers/enablers that affect it in different governmental contexts
- deliver direct insight into how to develop and fine-tune specific interventions to enhance LIFOW
- directly inform policy for the School to design cost-effective, high-impact learning
- provide insight that will directly inform skills and productivity interventions across Government

The fellow will design the research project end-to-end, playing a key role in deciding on the right methods to use for the type of evidence that is needed, focusing on desk research but also potentially including a range of methods such as interviews, and workshops. Learning and development is available to support this process.

By the end of the fellowship the fellow will deliver a set of purposeful outputs, including a report that we can share with stakeholders, and a presentation to key stakeholders including senior sponsors within Cabinet Office and wider government.

In addition to direct value from the project, the UKRI fellow will play an important role in our considerable work focusing on creating lasting, mutually beneficial links between academia and policy, ensuring the work of the School has solid, rigorous foundations and is informed by genuine expertise. For example, we are in the process of launching a large-scale [College of Experts](#) to facilitate direct academic engagement in our policy agenda, and establishing fellowships will sit alongside and complement this work.

Ways of working:

The fellowship sits in the Evidence and Impact team, which works in Government Skills to meet the evidence needs of the programme. The team consists of social researchers, economists, statisticians, data scientists and a behavioural science fellow. You will be fully embedded within the team, ensuring maximum integration and support. This will include:

- a dedicated Line Manager who will be involved in co-designing and overseeing the research
- involvement in Evidence & Impact team meetings and wider engagement with the Government Skills Directorate as appropriate
- support for the fellow’s professional and onward career development
- access to Learning & Development opportunities
- participation in events across the Cabinet Office Analysis Function network
- facilitated cross-government networking
- direct links with our newly established academic College of Experts to ensure the project is informed by rigorous external expertise
- the Cabinet Office has an established record of hosting research fellows and we are committed to making the fellowship a mutually beneficial experience

Person specification

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

Essential criteria:

- a proven track record in social research
- strong analytic skills, particularly in conducting desk research (e.g. systematic reviews, rapid evidence assessments)
- the ability to apply your academic experience in a new, 'real world' context - and be interested in the government context for this work

Applicants shortlisted from the panel assessment will be invited to a host led interview. At this stage the host will also take into account the following desirable fellowship-specific requirements.

Desirable criteria:

- experience researching learning and/or work
- experience in other social science disciplines such as behavioural science, organisation studies, or economics

Processing personal data

If applicants are shortlisted by the UKRI assessment panel UKRI will need to share the application and any personal information that it contains with the host for the host led interview selection process.

Your personal data will be handled in line with UK data protection legislation and managed securely. If you would like to know more, including how to exercise your Rights, please see the UKRI [privacy notice](#).

Please see the [Host's privacy notice](#) and they will delete your data at the end of the selection process unless you are successful, in which case we will retain your data as an independent data controller.