UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

CMA competition and growth fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

Host team:

Microeconomics unit

Academic discipline/s:

Economics

Summary:

An opportunity to use economics skills to improve evidence on and policy making in relation to competition and economic growth.

Policy topic:

Understanding competition and its role in promoting investment, innovation and productivity, as part of the growth mission. The fellow will work to identify research that fills an important evidence gap and advances the state of knowledge on competition, consumer protection dynamism or related topics.

Research career stage:

Open to early and mid-career researchers

Fellowship structure

The fellowship is scheduled to begin on 1 October 2027 subject to 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 CMA has offices in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast, Darlington and Manchester. The base location for this fellowship will be agreed with the successful fellow. The fellow will be working with the CMA Microeconomics Unit, based in Darlington, and we would expect the fellow to visit the CMA's Darlington office on a frequent basis to collaborate with colleagues in the unit.

Hybrid working:

The CMA, like many other organisations, operate a hybrid working model with a mix of office and home working. Our current expectation is for colleagues to spend 40% of their working time in a CMA office. We will discuss suitable working arrangements with the successful fellow and would be content to agree less frequent attendance than the standard expectation. A laptop will be provided enabling work from home or other sites, providing access to host systems.

The Microeconomics Unit holds regular team days in Darlington, and we would envisage the fellow attends these once per month during the inception and placement phases. 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:

Basic Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is required, which usually takes around six 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 UKRI. Inception phase can begin before the security clearance process is completed but will be required for the main placement phase. The civil service also has nationality requirements that candidates would need to meet in order to take up the post. Please see civil service recruitment nationality rules for further information. Candidates should check these requirements before applying to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria.

Fellowship position description

The Microeconomics Unit is the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)'s economic research team. The unit provides microeconomic expertise to the CMA and wider government on issues of competition, investment, innovation, productivity and growth. Additionally, it ensures the CMA is abreast of emerging issues in industrial organisation, is as effective as possible in protecting consumers and ensuring competitive markets and can engage in international regulatory debate.

The fellow will be embedded in the Microeconomics Unit and contribute to delivering the CMA's economic research strategy, which aims to advance the state of knowledge on competition, consumer rights, supply-side reforms and productivity improvements. There is scope for the fellow to shape the role, co-designing research on the parts of the CMA's areas of research interest that are most relevant to the fellow's interests, background and expertise.

Some of the main areas of research interest for the CMA, and examples of potential research topics (though note this list is note exhaustive), include:

Innovation, investment and productivity; including:

- improved measurement of innovation inputs, outputs and outcomes
- empirical research on links between competition, innovation and productivity
- research on the link between investment (especially in intangibles) and market structure

Understanding markets and market power in the aggregate; covering the causes and consequences of market power in the economy as a whole, including:

- measuring markets, ultimate ownership networks and substitution patterns
- improved data or methods for production-function estimation
- research on drivers of economy-wide or regional trends in market power

Competition, information exchange, digitalisation and the implications of AI for competition.

The interaction of competition and economic regulation in sectors such as energy, financial services, telecommunications and transport.

Corporate ownership, firm organisation and competition policy, including:

- the importance and impact of common ownership and interlocking directorates
- efficiency and anticompetitive effects of vertical integration
- theoretical and empirical research into novel issues arising from competition casework

We envisage the fellow will carry out a research project in one of these areas of interest – with the scope to be agreed as part of the inception phase. Such a project may include:

- synthesising academic research and evidence to inform policy making
- scoping and carrying out original economic research and quantitative/econometric analysis

We also expect the fellow will contribute to and/or advise CMA colleagues on other research projects or economic issues.

The fellow will be embedded in the team and benefit from:

- support and oversight from the CMA Microeconomics Unit, potentially including junior economist resources to support research projects
- access to a wider network of CMA economists and other experts, and opportunities to engage with other government departments
- the opportunity to inform and influence CMA and wider government policy on important economic issues
- proximity to and experience of key debates in competition policy, informing relevance of future research

Depending on the research topic(s), we expect the fellowship to result in one or more CMA working papers, and we will encourage the fellow to submit the research to academic journals in line with the CMA research strategy. In order to disseminate results widely, papers may also be accompanied by shorter, more accessible pieces such as a blog post or a non-technical policy paper. Finally, we will support other knowledge exchange opportunities including seminars and roundtables where relevant.

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 academic track record in applied economic research
- expertise and interest in areas of economics relevant to the CMA's areas of research interest

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 working with UK consumer or business microdata
- ability to manage others' work and support their development and capability

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 CMA'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.