UK Research and Innovation | Cabinet Office | Evaluation Task Force

UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Cabinet Office evaluation and local government fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Cabinet Office

Host team:

Evaluation Task Force

Academic discipline/s:

Social research, policy evaluation, local government policy, quantitative, qualitative research methods

Summary:

An opportunity to apply advanced research and evaluation skills to improve the design, delivery, and robust evaluation of local government interventions aligned with the UK devolution agenda.

Policy topic:

Local and devolved government, evaluation, social research, growth agenda, breaking down barriers to opportunity

Research career stage:

Open to early or 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:

Fellows will need to regularly work with the Evaluation Task Force from Cabinet Office locations in 10 South Colonnade in Canary Wharf (primary location), 1 Horse Guards Road or 70 Whitehall. There will be some travel requirements to devolved regions across the country over the course of the fellowship.

Hybrid working:

During the inception phase, fellows should budget for attending up to six face-to-face meetings in London (at above office locations). For the main placement phase, fellows will be expected to attend Cabinet Office buildings in person at the above office locations on a regular basis, on average two days per week. 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 Civil Service has nationality requirements that applicants would need to meet in order to take up the post. Please see national security vetting: clearance levels and Civil Service recruitment: nationality rules for further information. Candidates should check these requirements before applying to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria.

Successful applicants will require a minimum of Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) clearance. Security clearance can take up to three months. 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.

Fellowship position description

At the Evaluation Task Force (ETF), our mission is to embed robust evaluation evidence into policy and spending decisions across government.

This fellowship will support the ETF to ensure evaluation and resulting evidence is embedded across national and local government, in the context of broadening and deepening devolution (Rewiring the State, 2026). In particular, the fellow will lead an established workstream within the ETF to work with local governments in evaluation capability, evaluation evidence generation and application.

The fellow will build on the Evaluation Accelerator Fund (EAF), a fund designed to support evaluation across government transforming our understanding of the impact of activity in priority policy areas. They will identify, adapt and co-design frameworks to evaluate place-based policies, collaborate with local governments to identify evidence gaps across a range of priorities (e.g. economic growth, health, opportunities), and co-develop robust evaluation designs for complex local interventions.

The fellow will bridge the gap between academic methodology and operational delivery. There is flexibility depending on expertise of the fellow to focus on specific aspects of local policy and delivery, though noting an overarching interest in economic growth and prevention and early intervention.

The fellow will contribute academic expertise directly into local government policy appraisal. Key outcomes may include:

- delivering technical guidance on complex experimental/quasi-experimental designs
- translating academic evidence on local interventions into accessible toolkits
- establishing a sustained network between university researchers and local authority analysts
- writing policy and learning briefs or hosting learning sessions

This activity ensures national and local government are supported by rigorous, high-quality local evidence that meets Magenta Book standards.

Co-design and collaboration:

- we envisage the fellow will carry out a research project on evaluation in local regions, knowledge mobilisation of evaluation methodologies and or evaluation evidence across local and national government, with the scope to be agreed as part of the inception phase
- we are looking for a fellow to work on one of these areas, with the choice of the area made by the fellow based on their interests and expertise
- exact topics will be determined by current priorities during the inception phase, shaped by the fellow's interests and input, but will include the opportunity to conduct research and publish outputs (academic and public)

Benefits to the fellow:

- a unique opportunity to inform and influence the design, delivery and evaluation in high-priority government policy areas including devolution and local government
- opportunity to codesign, produce and publish original research (including academic research)
- gaining an understanding of policymaking from the heart of government, as well as the analysis, data and funding decisions that support this
- the opportunity to build their network of policy and analytical professionals within government, from key central departments (No10, Cabinet Office, HMT, MHCLG) and across local government
- peer mentoring from ETF Evaluation Leads and access to a wider network of policy, analysis, other experts (including opportunities to engage with government departments and aligned organisations)

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:

- subject matter expertise in place-based evaluation methodologies as outlined in the Magenta Book – including a proven track record in translating technical information and making resulting evidence accessible to decision-makers at both local and national government levels
- strong analytical skills - including knowledge of social research methods
- experience of working with policy or practice stakeholders to develop and refine research, monitoring or evaluation plans

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:

- understanding of or experience in operational delivery or the levers needed to turn good policy into good delivery
- ability to synthesise existing evidence and make recommendations about policy development and implementation
- experience of design and delivery of experimental or quasi-experimental impact evaluation

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 Cabinet Offices personal information charter 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.