UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Cabinet Office evaluation transparency and AI knowledge transfer fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Cabinet Office

Host team:

Evaluation Task Force (ETF)

Academic discipline/s:

Social policy, social research, artificial intelligence, knowledge transfer, data science

Summary:

An opportunity to improve transparency of evaluation evidence, including by harnessing artificial intelligence and digital innovation to transform the way knowledge is shared to inform public policy

Policy topic:

Economic Growth mission, Industrial Strategy: Digital and Technologies sector, cross-policy areas, Cabinet Office Areas of Research Interest: Support the design and implementation of HM Government's policies and the Prime Minister's priorities

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 ETF at Cabinet Office locations in Canary Wharf and Westminster.

Hybrid working:

During the main placement phase, fellows will be expected to attend Cabinet Office buildings in person at 10 South Colonnade in Canary Wharf, 1 Horse Guards Road or 70 Whitehall on average two days per week. During the inception phase, fellows should budget for attending up to six face-to-face meetings in London. 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:

Fellows will need 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. The 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 National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK and Civil Service recruitment: nationality rules - GOV.UK for further information. Candidates should check these requirements before applying to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria.

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 ETF to ensure evidence drives outcomes, efficiency, and innovation. The position will focus on increasing transparency so that evaluation findings are available when decision makers need them.

The fellow will help design and implement improvements to the UK Evaluation Registry (which currently hosts 2,000+ evaluation entries). This will involve addressing critical user research findings and exploring ways to make evaluation findings more accessible while ensuring value for money. This could include overcoming exact-keyword matching limitations, automating granular methodology tagging, resolving cross-departmental terminology discrepancies, and synthesizing complex evaluation text into structured abstracts and benefit-cost ratios.

Potential areas for focus include:

- designing tools to extract key themes or metrics (such as benefit-cost ratios) and synthesise complex information.
- exploring how to effectively transfer knowledge between key stakeholders

- developing AI search tools to allow more efficient access to information
- automating processes such as tagging of evaluation entries to ensure consistency and searchability

Co-design and collaboration:

- we envisage the fellow will carry out a research project on evaluation transparency, knowledge transfer in evaluation or potential future uses of AI in the Evaluation Registry, 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 host priorities during the inception phase, shaped by the fellow's interests and input

Examples of research questions from the Cabinet Office Areas of Research Interest include:

- how existing research evidence can be made accessible and useful to frontline services and the cost effectiveness of different communication and engagement methods
- how government can maintain trust and accountability in using AI and machine learning and the public appetite for government making use of these in decision making
- how should government make use of data for public good and to enable government transformation

Benefits to the fellow:

- opportunity to codesign, produce and publish original research, ensuring that findings contribute to wider scientific and policy discussions while adhering to necessary security protocols
- being embedded in ETF and having access to internal systems and processes, gaining in-depth understanding of the policy process
- the opportunity to inform and influence ETF and wider government policy on important evidence transparency and AI issues
- access to a wider network of policy, analysis, other experts and opportunities to engage with government departments and aligned organisations
- knowledge exchange opportunities, including cross-government workshops and wider networks

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 knowledge transfer – including a proven track record in translating technical information and making evidence accessible to decision-makers
- subject matter expertise in AI/ data science - including a proven track record in responding to user feedback and using AI and data science tools to synthesise complex information
- strong analytical skills - including knowledge of social research methods

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:

- knowledge of evaluation methodologies as outlined in the Magenta Book
- experience of applied quantitative and quantitative research methods
- understanding of government and social policy

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 Office's 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.