UK Research and Innovation

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

DCMS media and information integrity fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Host team:

The fellowship will be based in the Media and International Analysis team, which is embedded within DCMS's Media and International (MINT) directorate. The MINT analysis team's mission is to ensure that high-quality evidence and analysis inform all stages of the policy cycle across the MINT directorate.

Academic discipline/s:

Social research, behavioural science, economic analysis, media policy, digital policy

Summary:

An opportunity to undertake research and provide evidence-led advice to Government on the efficacy of potential policy interventions to support the integrity and resilience of the UK's information environment and ways to mitigate the spread and impact of mis- and disinformation.

Policy topic:

This project is directly informed by one of DCMS Secretary of State's top five priorities for the department, 'Trust in Media'.

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 fellow can work from DCMS's London or Manchester offices. The host team is split across both locations. There will be some requirement to travel to meet other team members, this would be approximately four times within a year.

Hybrid working:

During the inception phase when the fellow is based with their home institution, the fellow will work remotely. Whilst DCMS has a 60% minimum office working requirement in line with the rest of the UK Civil Service, we would be content for a minimum one day a week office attendance, at either the London or Manchester office, during the main placement phase. The Media and International Analysis team participates in quarterly team days across the Manchester and London offices, and we envisage the fellow would attend these during the placement phase where possible. Eligible travel and subsistence costs can be supported in the main UKRI grant.

Security clearance and nationality eligibility criteria:

A fellow working from the DCMS London Office, is required to obtain Counter Terrorism Clearance (CTC). For CTC, we recommend allowing for a minimum of three months processing time. Security clearance required for the Manchester Office is Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), we recommend allowing a minimum of two months processing time. Please note that vetting may take longer for applicants who have resided outside of the United Kingdom. The fellow will not be able to start the inception phase until they have completed BPSS checks at a minimum. CTC can come after, as this is just for access to the London office. Please see National security vetting: clearance levels for more information.

This job is broadly open to the following 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 on nationality requirements see Nationality rules.

Fellowship position description

DCMS's MINT Directorate are providing an exciting opportunity for a UKRI policy fellow to help shape the UK's media landscape. This project will directly inform and shape UK Government policy by providing advice on the impact of the spread of mis- and disinformation in a modern information and media environment (including social, democratic and economic impacts), and the efficacy and feasibility of potential policy interventions (including economic viability and public acceptability).

We envisage the fellow will carry out research in one of the following areas of research interest. Exact topics will be determined by host priorities during the inception phase, shaped by the fellow's interests and input.

- what are the impacts of mis- and disinformation originating from online sources (e.g. social media platforms, AI-generated content, partisan websites) on public trust in media and other institutions
- what is the efficacy of emerging solutions to address the spread of mis- and disinformation online
- does mis- and disinformation have a differing impact on information-seeking behaviours among different demographic groups
- how has the transition of news media consumption to largely being platform-based impacted perceived trust in news across different demographic groups and has it increased or decreased trust in news sources
- what does best practice look like in the current news environment for creating accurate, impartial news
- how can organisations ensure accurate, impartial news reaches audiences across platforms in the current environment
- what is the impact of sensationalism and clickbait on audiences' perceived trust of the news and the wider media, and how does this relationship impact news providers' motivations for the type of news they create

We anticipate the fellowship will be multidisciplinary, likely cutting across behavioural science, social research, digital/technology policy and economic analysis. The fellow will engage with existing research activity in this space and use this to inform the methodology they take forward. Behavioural science could be used to examine individual susceptibility to disinformation, cognitive biases, and the mechanisms behind public engagement across different platforms. Social research methods, including qualitative deep dives, focus groups, and quantitative surveys, could be used to contextualise these findings at the macro level to measure broader shifts in institutional trust and social cohesion. Economic analysis could additionally be used to evaluate the market incentives driving news creation, assessing the financial viability of impartial journalism alongside the cost-effectiveness and scalability of proposed policy interventions. The fellow will need to integrate their findings across these streams into a comprehensive Theory of Change and Logic Model, ensuring evidence directly informs Magenta Book evaluation standards and Green Book appraisal criteria for cross-government policy adoption.

To ensure these disciplines work together effectively, the fellow will need a good understanding of and experience of applying and interpreting quantitative and a range of innovative qualitative methods. The MINT analysis team will be able to provide support to the fellow with training and guidance around producing analysis in Government (e.g. expectations from the Magenta Book, the Green Book).

The fellow will have the opportunity to co-design, co-produce and publish original research, ensuring that findings contribute to wider scientific and policy discussions while adhering to necessary security protocols. The fellow will also have opportunities to share their extensive knowledge on their research discipline with DCMS policy teams, the analytical community, the Chief Scientific Adviser team, at policy roundtables, cross-government workshops and at wider network events, which their line manager will be happy to facilitate.

The fellow will be fully embedded within the host team and within the MINT directorate, enabling them to access internal systems and processes and allowing them to gain a deep understanding of the government policymaking process. The fellow will attend the weekly MINT analyst team meetings as well as team meetings with the Media Integrity and Information policy team, with the option to join cross-departmental analytical team meetings and cross-directorate policy meetings 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:

- expertise in applying and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative research methods to study online mis- and disinformation or digital media environments

- demonstrated ability to apply behavioural science or economic principles alongside traditional social research to evaluate audience trust, engagement, or information consumption patterns
- demonstrated experience in translating complex analytical findings into strategic advice, interactive workshops, or high-impact briefings for non-academic stakeholders and decision-makers

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 developing structured evaluation frameworks, including theories of change, logic models, and comprehensive evidence scoping reviews
- practical knowledge of government analytical frameworks, such as HM Treasury's Green Book or Magenta Book guidelines
- familiarity with broader media and cross-government policy priorities, including economic analysis, social cohesion or media freedom

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 DCMS' 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.