UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

GO-Science innovation in futures practice for better policies fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Government Office for Science (GO-Science)

Host team:

Strategic Futures team within the Technology Insights, Futures & Foresight (TIFF) Division

Academic discipline/s:

Futures studies / foresight studies, public policy, science & technology studies, sociology, ethics

Summary:

An opportunity to advise on how to innovate Futures methods to strengthen government strategic decision-making.

Policy topic:

Futures and long-term thinking are key to better government strategic decision-making and resilient policies, applicable to all major policy areas, including government missions and industrial strategy and innovation.

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 GO-Science office locations are London, Birmingham, Salford, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Darlington. Direct team members are currently based in London and Darlington, with wider division in all locations.

Hybrid working:

To maximise the benefits of the fellowship it is recommended that the fellow would spend circa 40% of their time in a GO-Science office at both the inception and placement phases. A laptop will be provided enabling work from home or other sites, providing access to host systems. GO-Science operate a hybrid working model with a mix of office and home working. We will discuss suitable working arrangements with the successful fellow. In addition to office attendance, it would be useful to budget for travel to London around four times in the placement year and once in the inception phase. 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) checks, and, if London based, Counter Terrorism Check (CTC). We would ask the person taking up our fellowship opportunity to start the security clearance application process as soon as their fellowship has been confirmed and before the inception phase begins. Clearances are normally expected to take 6-8 weeks, and the fellowship can begin once clearance has been confirmed. Please see national security vetting: clearance levels for more information.

Nationality requirements

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

Fellowship position description

GO-Science works at the heart of government, ensuring policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long-term thinking. This fellowship will be based in the GO-Science Futures team, which promotes strategic long-term thinking in government. As the centre for futures in government, the team provides resources, training, advice and networks to help government to make informed resilient policy and strategic decisions, giving the fellow first-hand experience of how policy makers across government use futures thinking.

Working with GO-Science and policy partners, the fellow will explore how futures approaches can generate better evidence for complex, uncertain policy challenges, including through improved participatory methods. The role will focus on widening engagement with diverse stakeholders, including public, to ensure futures evidence reflects broad perspectives, values and lived experience. The fellowship would also offer an opportunity to explore the role of philosophy and ethics disciplines in responsible decision making. Outputs will support practical application of futures methods in policy, strategy and decision-making processes with the potential to publish original research contributing to the body of knowledge in futures practice.

Within the context of continuing global and national challenges such as climate change and pressures on natural resources, demographic shifts and changing labour markets, rapid technology developments and a focus on devolution, this is an exciting opportunity to ensure that government is using all the tools at its disposal.

The fellowship will strengthen GO-Science's ability to provide practical, credible, inclusive futures evidence for strategic decisions across government. The fellow will add value across the team through their expertise, networks, and fresh perspectives. There is significant scope for the fellow to shape the role and identify where they can have an impact. At a high level, we envisage the fellow will carry out a research project incorporating one or more of the following areas, with the scope to be agreed as part of the inception phase:

- futures methods research, particularly focusing on the benefits and challenges of participatory and experiential approaches
- how to broaden the range of voices shaping futures analysis, increasing relevance, legitimacy and usefulness of evidence
- the role of philosophy and ethics disciplines in responsible decision making
- develop ways to test methods and produce guidance and case studies that help policy teams apply long-term thinking earlier and more systematically in decision-making

The fellow will develop their own discreet work project in the team and use the research to design innovative futures methods which can be tested and deployed across government. The fellow would co-design at the inception phase with GO-Science teams and key partners in other central government departments (such as Cabinet Office), devolved administrations and other departments and agencies in the Government Futures Network. There is scope to use the fellowship to expand the fellow's experience beyond their primary discipline. The outputs will build capability across government by sharing learning, tools and examples and may be incorporated into existing guidance, such as the Futures Toolkit. There are likely to be opportunities to publish some aspects on gov.uk, write blog articles and present at events.

The fellow will be embedded as a full member of the GO-Science Futures team and our wider leadership team. They will be involved in all regular day to day activities and receive a designated line manager for the duration of their fellowship. They will be included in team emails and meetings and their work will complement the other futures workstreams around capability building, resources, networks and advisory services to the whole of government. The fellow will have full exposure to other teams in GO-Science, to gain insights into their work, including the Foresight, Emerging Technology and Technology Insights teams and Science Capability.

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 demonstrable understanding of and/or interest in futures and foresight methods, including participatory and experiential approaches
- proven ability to research, design and test approaches, including developing materials, such as reports and training plans
- ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders at all levels

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 of collaborating with a UK government department or agency

- experience of developing and communicating innovative approaches
- expertise in conducting futures projects

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.

The GO-Science privacy notice can be obtained by contacting ukripolicyfellowships@ukri.org and requesting a copy. It will also be shared with all shortlisted candidates for this position prior to the interview. GO-Science 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.