UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Glasgow City Region innovation diffusion fellowship

Fellowship type:

Place policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Glasgow City Region

Host team:

Glasgow City Region Intelligence Hub. The team provide a range of economic intelligence related services. This includes data analysis, policy research, economic modelling, strategy development and project evaluation for the City Region and the City Deal. The work covers a broad range of economic issues – including demographics, land use, sustainability, inward investment, innovation, economic growth, tourism, transport, enterprise, skills, employment and housing.
Work delivered by the Hub provides the evidence base for future policy and investment decisions across the Region.

Academic discipline/s:

Economics, innovation, behavioural science

Summary:

An opportunity for a researcher to shape regional innovation policy by working with Glasgow City Region to explore how the Region can support the diffusion of innovation from its frontier clusters to the wider economy – and what this would mean for productivity and inclusive growth.

Policy topic:

Answering this question sits at the heart of the UK Governments Industrial Strategy and also the Scottish Government's Innovation Strategy whilst also being central to the delivery of Glasgow City Region Economic Strategy missions to be the most productive and inclusive city region in the UK.

Research career stage:

Open to early and mid-career researchers

Fellowship structure

The fellowship is scheduled to begin on 1 October 2027. 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 role will be based in the Glasgow City Council offices, 231 George Street, Glasgow, G1 1QU.

Hybrid working:

The team works a hybrid arrangement and are expected to be in the office twice a week – which is usually Mondays and Tuesdays. For the other days, the Council policy requires team members to work from the UK and within commutable distance. During the inception phase there will be flexibility in this. However, it is expected that that the fellow will be in the office for at least 3 days a month to ensure there is sufficient face to face contact. Those days won't be fixed and how this will work can be agreed in advance.

A laptop will be provided enabling work from home or other sites, providing access to host systems. In addition to office attendance, it would be useful to budget for travel to other city regions such as Greater Manchester and West Midlands four times in the placement year for knowledge exchange purposes. 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:

There are no specific security clearance requirements for this fellowship. Applicants must have the right to work in the UK, and no additional nationality eligibility requirements apply.

Fellowship position description

Overview:

The Glasgow City Region has a thriving innovation ecosystem supporting a wide range of specialisms in sectors such as diagnostics, precision medicine, satellites, quantum and photonics. However, the Region has a productivity gap and research shows that innovation diffusion is a critical component of bridging it. Over the past few years Region has been able to support the growth of its frontier clusters through programmes such as the Innovation Accelerator, Investment Zone and Local Innovation Partnership Fund. The challenge for the Region is how can it create new policies and programmes to support the diffusion to the wider economy. The fellow will work across the Region's quadruple helix model to help design these new policies and programmes.

Background:

Glasgow City Region has a thriving innovation ecosystem. Driven by its leading research institutes, Scotland's first innovation districts and a burgeoning Small and Medium Enterprises base, the Region has some of the UKs most innovative firms which are attracting a wide range of investment from Venture Capital Firms and UK government. For instance, the Health and Life Sciences cluster in the Region 88% of firms are innovation active, outperforming London, Cambridge, and Oxford (using Department Science Innovation and Technology, now Department Business Innovation Science and Trade, business-level RD&I indicators).

Over the past five years, the Region has been taking a place-based approach to its innovation activity. The Glasgow City Region team has been collaborating with the local further and higher education institutes, Scottish Enterprise, Innovate UK, UKRI and wider DBIST to support cluster growth.

However, there is a recognition that there is a need to go a step further and ensure that innovation policy reaches into the wider economy. The fellow will work within the Glasgow City Region Intelligence Hub. The

Hub has been at the forefront of identifying the Region's innovation specialisms. This work has directly shaped over £250m of innovation funding over the past three years. And more recently, the team has been working with the NESTA Innovation Growth Lab on an Inclusive Innovation Framework for the Region.

The fellow will be tasked with undertaking original research and analysis (both primary and secondary) to help identify what policies would support move innovation beyond the clusters into the wider economy. In doing so, they would have access to the work of the team to date. Access to the data sets they have built up which help understand how the economy functions including proprietary datasets such as Data City and Dealroom. They would also get access to the extensive network of partner organisations we work with across the Region's quadruple helix model. This includes key academics in the Region's research institutions, leaders in the Region's Innovation Districts, representatives from our colleges and also from our key economic development agencies both locally and nationally such as Scottish Enterprise. They would have access to senior business representatives from our networks such as Glasgow Economic Leadership.

This is a crucial time in the development of policy and programmes within Glasgow City Region. We are in active discussions with both Scottish and UK governments about a new devolved arrangement for the Region. One that would provide us with same levers that they have in the likes of Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities for regional delivery. And so, the Region will be looking to develop new policies over the next two years which allow it to best use any new levers to deliver economic prosperity. The fellow will have the chance to directly influence these policies and resulting programmes.

Equally, we know this is a national issue as identified in recent UK wide research: UK Innovation Survey 2025 Report. We work closely with partners in the combined authorities and regions in the devolved nations. We know they would be very interested in this research. Thus, there is a real opportunity for the fellow to make a meaningful contribution to place-based innovation policy.

As well as shaping specific innovation policy, by being based within the Hub, the fellow will get a chance to understand how policies are shaped and programmes are developed across a region.

In delivering the work, we would support the fellow to have their research published. We understand that the work may lead to opportunities for new areas of research not originally envisaged. We would be very open to exploring what this could look like.

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 economics or data science
- subject matter expertise in specific topics related to the fellowship (such as economics of growth and productivity)
- strong analytical skills relating to the opportunity (for example, the ability to synthesise a range of quantitative and qualitative data using statistical and data science 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:

- understanding of local, regional and national policy
- experience of innovation policy
- experience in stakeholder management

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 Glasgow City Region'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.