UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Greater Manchester Combined Authority good growth fellowship

Fellowship type:

Place policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

Host team:

Hosted by the GMCA Research Team, working with the GMCA Economy, Innovation, Culture and International team and GMCA Strategy team.

Academic discipline/s:

Economics, economic geography, regional development, policy innovation, politics and international studies

Summary:

An opportunity to explore the relationship between productivity, prosperity and equity through Greater Manchester's experience as a devolved city-region, developing evidence and practical insights into how places can foster economic growth that is both high-performing and socially inclusive.

Policy topic:

The fellowship will focus on GMCA's Good Growth Areas of Research Interest including an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of good growth policy levers and influence of place-based asset ownership on local communities and the wider city-region economy.

Research career stage:

Open to early and mid-career researchers

Fellowship structure

The fellowship is scheduled to begin on 1 October 2027, subject to completion of standard eligibility checks. 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 can be based in our GMCA offices in Manchester or remotely, with occasional requirements to attend in-person meetings. Fellows may find their ability to build relationships and understand organisational context is enhanced by spending time in the office.

Hybrid working:

GMCA operates an organisation wide hybrid working policy, enabling flexible arrangements between employees and the business that focus on achieving organisational objectives rather than prioritising office-based desk time. Within the Research Team we ask researchers to commit to the equivalent of one day per week in the office averaged out over a month. The fellowship across all three phases will follow a similar approach, responding to individual preference and ensuring sufficient office time to progress the core asks of the fellowship. We anticipate that the need for in-person attendance may vary across the fellowship, with less likely to be required during the inception and knowledge exchange phases.
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 Manchester (up to 4 times per month). 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:

None required – standard eligibility check will be undertaken by GMCA People Services Team including confirmation of the successful candidate's right to work in the UK. No additional nationality-specific eligibility requirements are currently specified for this fellowship.

Fellowship position description

This fellowship offers the opportunity to shape a policy-facing research project in a real-world devolved policy environment. The fellow will be working directly with Greater Manchester decisionmakers to explore how productivity, prosperity and equity can be advanced together in practice.

GMCA are uniquely positioned as a pioneering city-region for English devolution, equipped with:

- a track record of collaborating with public, private, third sector and academic partners
- successive trailblazer devolution deals that have established GMCA as a trusted partner of government and expanded the scope of GMCA's public service delivery, strategic planning and convening power
- a Greater Manchester Strategy (2035) outlining the 10-year vision for the city region and key strategic objectives that aim to build a thriving city-region where everyone can live a good life
- emerging powers, functions and resources to drive innovative and forward-facing policy interventions that drive GMCA's strategic ambitions

GMCA have identified a series of Areas of Research Interest (ARIs) that pertain to these long-term ambitions focussed on Good Growth and Prevention and this fellowship is focussing on those questions relating to Good Growth only.

'Good Growth' for GMCA, is ensuring all parts and communities within Greater Manchester benefit from economic growth, as well as how to maximise productivity and output. It is an understanding of how the objectives of growth and equality can be reconciled in practice; the identification of the 'policy levers' underpinning equitable growth; the metrics (or essential dimensions) which measure and track good growth and the role of resident experiences in understanding economic change.

Addressing these long-term research questions will be essential to realising the vision of the Greater Manchester Strategy. GMCA are open to the co-design of specific research questions and project scope. Current Good Growth ARI priorities drawn from the 13 identified ARIs are as follows:

- Data suggests Greater Manchester has experienced a decade of relatively strong economic growth. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence surrounding growth? Has this growth translated into more geographically balanced and inclusive outcomes across different groups and communities?
- Aside from traditional economic metrics such as GDP, how should 'good growth' and 'wellbeing' be measured in a city region?
- What policy levers are needed to implement good growth policy effectively in a city-region, can we learn from examples elsewhere in the UK and internationally, and in which sectors are public policy interventions more likely to create good growth?
- What evidence exists on the importance of who owns place-based assets and spaces, and what impact do different dimensions and models of ownership have on communities and the broader economy?

Alternative Good Growth ARI priorities will be considered if there is a strong fit with the fellow's expertise and interest.

Further information on the full list of ARIs and the process of developing them is available via GM Consult

Applicants should identify one or more ARIs in their application and describe how their experience makes them well placed to address them through their work. Applicants should provide an outline programme of work including suggestions of data sources and methods to describe how they plan to address the ARI during their fellowship. Where they anticipate requiring support (such as access to data or GMCA staff) this should be outlined in the application.

Fellows, embedded within the GMCA Research team, will have the opportunity to:

- codesign, collect data, produce and publish original research to help address the project research questions outlined above and share findings with policymakers and academics. Outputs should be tailored to both audiences e.g. journal article and policy paper
- conduct research which builds on existing academic experience and draws on the research capacity and expertise within GMCA research team
- explore citizen-led research methodologies including, where appropriate, applying participatory research methods to collect new insight
- act as an advisor informing policy development, liaising with policy makers across the city-region
- build the evidence-base underpinning good growth policy levers across the UK and internationally
- directly engage with key decisionmakers at local, mayoral strategic authority and central government level, including No10 North and other Government departments.
- build networks across local, regional and national government

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 strong research track record and subject-matter expertise relevant to Good Growth, particularly in areas such as productivity, inclusive growth, regional or local economic growth
- strong analytical skills relating to the fellowship with experience of quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods to address complex research questions, synthesise different forms of evidence and draw robust conclusions
- ability to translate research into practical policy insight, with evidence of applying academic knowledge and research to policy-relevant questions and an understanding of how evidence can support decision-making in a place-based policy environment

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 the policy and governance landscape in Greater Manchester or comparable devolved areas
- experience of communicating complex research and evidence to non-academic audiences, including through policy briefings, workshops, presentations or stakeholder engagement
- experience of working collaboratively with policymakers, practitioners, communities or other research users to develop, undertake or apply research
- experience of participatory of citizen-led research approaches, where relevant to the applicants proposed research

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 Greater Manchester Combined Authority'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.