

AHRC-ESRC-FCO

Knowledge Exchange Fellowship Scheme

Call for applications

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Summary

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are pleased to invite

applications to the AHRC-ESRC-FCO Knowledge Exchange (KE) Fellowships scheme. The scheme will provide the opportunity for each intake of fellows to be seconded into the FCO to work alongside, advise and influence policymakers. Fellows will bring fresh thinking, depth and breadth of expert knowledge and apply their learning to policy challenges. This is not a scheme to support research projects about the FCO. It will build new capacity in the FCO and across the UK research base.

The fellowship scheme will go beyond current ad hoc arrangements, create deeper engagement between academia and policy, impact on diplomacy, increase the professional reputation of participating scholars and build long term, two way relationships. The benefits will flow to the wider academic community through fellows' engagement with their home research organisation and wider research communities as well as through a dedicated policy seminar series hosted by the FCO during the lifetime of the scheme.

The partners anticipate supporting three-four KE Fellows working between 0.6 to 0.8 FTE for 24 months. The maximum amount available for one Fellowship will depend on individual applications. The costs will be met by the participating Research Councils. Consistent with the Research Councils' arrangements for fEC, the AHRC and ESRC will contribute **80%** of the costs and the remaining balance must be guaranteed by the Fellows' research organisations.

This call, which is initially being run as a pilot, aims to create a distinctive, transformative and potentially long-lasting fellowship scheme and the call specification addresses the first intake of fellows for the pilot. The pilot will last for two in-takes of three-four Fellows and further development of the scheme will be informed by the evaluation of this pilot stage.

Applications must be submitted by **16:00 on 31 October 2017**. The Fellows should be able to commence at the FCO from September 1 2018.

Background and aims of scheme

Diplomats have highly specialised and unique research requirements. They operate in a world where having access to high-quality evidence-based analysis can mean the difference between success and failure. But they also operate in a world of nuance and subtlety where exerting influence, negotiating and leveraging others' power at precisely the right moment is at a premium. Timing is always key. This makes it difficult for academics operating outside of the diplomatic world to have a significant impact. Academics often have the best ideas; but these ideas are seldom injected into policy at the right moment. Working in close proximity to and in tight interaction with FCO policymakers can help change this, providing opportunities to influence and to challenge. Whilst no one can guarantee that the approaches and recommendations made by academics will shape UK foreign policy, bringing academic expertise directly into the heart of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through this scheme increases the chances of creating meaningful impact on British diplomacy.

The FCO wants and needs access to the expertise of academics working at the cutting-edge of their specialism. And the great majority of academics want their work to be used by policymakers, creating impacts and, ideally, tangible benefits for humanity. Both the logic and mutual desire for cooperation are very strong. But it has consistently proved hard in

practice to create really effective collaborative partnerships serving the interests of both sides. Of course, we are not starting from scratch. In recent years, academics have become much more experienced at presenting their work to meet Government's need for concise information on specific issues: by writing blogs or policy briefs, for example, or speaking at policy-themed seminars. But we want to go further. This pilot scheme aims to support a programme of fellowships with the intention of bringing a paradigm shift to the way that academics and policymakers work together. Our goal is a distinctive, transformative and long-lasting fellowship scheme that aims to set the highest standards for collaboration between academia and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Collaboration between academics and policymakers at FCO is often frustrated by obstacles including:

- current academic research not necessarily addressing or answering the questions that policymakers want/need to have answered
- the need for confidentiality constraining academics' access to internal documents and deliberations
- lacking trust, mutual comprehension and understanding when the two parties work in different professions with different codes, standards and working patterns
- academics have little way of knowing who they need to be networking with inside the Diplomatic Service network and policy process to ensure their ideas and analysis reach the right audience.

Nature of the Fellowship

The aim of scheme is to begin to dissolve the obstacles noted above by seconding academics into the FCO to work alongside policymakers as part of the Research Analysts Cadre for an extended period of two years; the scheme does **not** provide funding for academic research on the FCO or within the FCO.

The FCO will induct and integrate the fellows into its structure. On a day-to-day basis AHRC/ESRC-FCO fellows would be placed within a policy team which could be geographic (for example, Overseas Territories or South Asia), thematic or institutional (UN, EU, NATO) in the scope of its work. Fellows would also be attached to a Research Group (Europe; Americas etc.) within the wider Research Analysts Cadre whose analysts are usually in place for years, or even decades. The FCO's Research Analysts (RAs) form a specialist cadre of geographical and thematic experts. They are an integral part of the policy-making process and are organised into nine research groups, each attached to a Directorate within the FCO: Africa Research Group, Americas Research Group, Asia-Pacific Research Group, Eastern Research Group, Europe Research Group, Middle East and North Africa Research Group, Multilateral Research Group, National Security Research Group and the South Asia and Afghanistan Research Group. Most Research Analysts are members of the Diplomatic Service, others are on temporary loan from other Government departments, universities, think tanks or research institutes. RAs write commissioned research papers, provide ad-hoc advice, organise training and other events and are the FCO's corporate policy memory. They also link the Office to external expertise and the wider Whitehall analytical community and provide a challenge function.

Fellows would report to a line manager either from the RA Cadre or the generalist body of the FCO. Additional support and mentoring would be provided by both senior Generalists (Directors; Ambassadors; Heads of Department; Deputy Heads) and by senior Research Analysts. Work-planning, as for permanent Research Analysts, would be a mixture of demand and self-tasking based on evolving FCO needs. An indicative list of tasks would include: writing papers and shorter notes, oral briefings for senior officials and ministers, meeting external and cross-Whitehall partners, research visits overseas as well as organising and running masterclasses.

The scheme is limited to the FCO and designed to meet the distinct needs of the Diplomatic Service, which differ from many parts of the Home Civil Service. The FCO requires security vetting, the highest levels of discretion and confidentiality and agile, subject-specific advice. The FCO has an almost limitless demand for expert specialist knowledge of foreign countries, international institutions and global policy challenges. The skills and training of scholars across social sciences and arts and humanities may be highly valuable, including, but not limited to, anthropologists, area specialists, cultural studies scholars, linguists, historians, political scientists, security studies scholars, lawyers, economists, sociologists, statisticians, demographers, international relations scholars, psychologists, geographers, philosophers and theologians.

The 0.6FTE or 0.8FTE limit for the fellowship is intended to allow the fellow time to retain a close connection to their home institution as well as the time needed for publishing, supervision of research students, journal editorships etc.

Anticipated benefits of the scheme

Potential academic-facing benefits

The benefits from the scheme for the UK research environment would include:

- opening up new research agendas across disciplines
- dissemination by the fellows of their experience of how Government and the foreign policy process work through workshops and authoritative briefings to learned societies, research councils and universities (as well as to early career researchers and research students)
- an understanding across UK academia of what impact is and how it is generated
- higher levels of mutual trust between Government and academia that will lead to improved access to the extensive networks of Government at home and abroad. Individual fellows would all be required to set out a dissemination plan in their applications

The FCO will assist the provision of these longer-term academic benefits by establishing:

- an institutionalised annual meeting between the research councils and the FCO to discuss their respective research priorities and showcase projects
- a dedicated high-level research councils/FCO policy seminar series (hosted biannually and funded by the FCO).

The individual fellows would acquire:

- deep, broad and practical understanding of how foreign policy-making and Government work that would underpin their own research, research supervision and teaching over their careers
- networks of trusted connections across the Government and internationally on which they could draw throughout their career
- opportunities for career development.

The fellows would be able to continue publishing (subject to the conditions outlined below under 'Code of conduct'). Although the aim of the fellowships is not to study the FCO itself, and strictly subject to the FCO's clearance processes, they would be able to draw on the work they had been undertaking. Fellows would potentially be in a strong position to write strong impact case studies for the REF for which the FCO would provide support.

Potential practitioner-Facing benefits

The main FCO-facing benefit anticipated from this scheme for the FCO would be more robust and better-informed foreign policy. The fellowship scheme would over time create a small group of highly-trained, specialised and policy-aware academics that would act as a resource on which policymakers could continue to draw long after the formal fellowship was completed. They would also, in the normal course of events, download their understanding of the FCO policymaking environment to students, cascading knowledge to others who may themselves in due course be channels for knowledge exchange.

Shared benefits

Greater mutual understanding and familiarity would develop between Government and academia, potentially also opening the way for outward fellowships from the Foreign Office to universities and research institutions.

The scheme has the potential to open up new areas of research enquiry as more directly relevant research questions would be asked of and answered by academics. It would lead to a qualitative advance in our understanding of what impact is and how it is created. It should also facilitate lasting partnerships between academics and the FCO, longer-term career benefits and facilitate the co-production of research in the medium- and longer-term.

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must be resident in the UK and be employed by an RCUK-eligible research organisation (higher education institution or recognised independent research organisation). Researchers at all stages of their careers from post-doctoral, to early- and mid-career academics as well as professors are encouraged to apply.

Security clearance

For security reasons, and in line with FCO policy, successful applicants would have to be security cleared before the offer of a fellowship could be confirmed. **While UK nationality is not essential, applicants need to have a minimum of two years' residence, including 12 months of continuous residence, in the UK in the preceding ten years.** Dual nationality is not in itself a barrier but dual nationals and other potential applicants with close ties to the area on which they would be working should contact the FCO before applying since there may be security limitations which would prevent them from accessing the necessary material. Fellows would have to pass the relevant level of clearance, either Security Check or in some cases the higher level

Developed Vetting. Loss of clearance during the fellowship period, for example, due to personal conduct, will risk termination of the secondment.

All security clearance decisions are personal to the applicant and depend on a range of factors. In order to ensure that the allocation of fellowships is fully used and in view of the time constraints sending HEIs will face as they arrange backfilling for fellows, the scheme may in some cases invite more than one prospective fellow, following successful interviews, for a particular region or theme to begin the clearance process. If both were successfully cleared, both would begin the fellowship whilst focusing on different aspects of the topic. The scheme timeline has been designed to minimise the risk that an applicant's security clearance has not been granted in time for them to take up the fellowship in September 2018. But in the unlikely event the clearance process has not finalised by 1 September 2018, the fellowship will not be confirmed and will not proceed.

Code of conduct

As an additional condition to the standard fellowship terms and conditions, the fellows will need to agree to respect the FCO's values and standards of behaviour; failure to do so may result in the termination of the fellowship. Fellows will also be obliged to respect the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and observe the duties of propriety and confidentiality during and after the fellowship period. This means consulting the FCO before undertaking activities involving:

- the disclosure of British Government official information
- the publication or disclosure of material liable to affect the Government's relations with other countries.

An FCO-nominated contact will be responsible for the sensitivity review of all publications prior to their submission for publication. However, the fellows will not be obliged to make amendments to the content unless publications contain information that is in breach of the Official Secrets Act (as laid out in the Civil Service Code), or a confidentiality agreement, or which could disclose sensitive, classified and/or personal information, or affect the Government's relations with other countries. A standard intellectual property agreement would need to be concluded between the fellow's home institution and the FCO.

Funding

The AHRC and ESRC will support three-four Fellows per intake under this call. The maximum amount available for one Fellowship will depend on individual applications. The costs will be met by the participating Research Councils. Consistent with the Research Councils' arrangements for fEC, the AHRC and ESRC will contribute 80 per cent of the costs and the remaining balance must be guaranteed by the Fellow's research organisation.

Eligible costs are set out in the ESRC Research Funding Guide (www.esrc.ac.uk/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/). However, Research Assistant costs will not be supported under this initiative.

The FCO will play a full role in jointly managing the scheme and be responsible for the cost of running the scheme at FCO end with the associated administrative expenses (security

clearance, business travel, IT, office space, administrative support). Salary and other related fellowship expenses will be covered by the AHRC and ESRC and should be costed in the application.

Person specification

Applications are welcome from eligible social scientists and arts and humanities researchers with demonstrable track records of research relevant to the broad spectrum of stated areas within the remit of FCO Research Analysts. Applicants should also demonstrate a track record of engagement with policy and practice agendas, including leadership in the successful development and promotion of knowledge exchange between the research, policy and practice communities. Candidates are expected to have sufficient experience and competence to work effectively with senior public sector stakeholders. Applicants at earlier stages of their career, who may have not yet acquired extensive experience, will not be disadvantaged as long as they demonstrate their ability to acquire and apply experience at pace. Candidates with relevant experience and expertise will be considered from any disciplinary background within the social sciences and arts and humanities.

Assessment process

The scheme will use a two-stage assessment process. Firstly, applications will be reviewed by a Joint Shortlisting Panel comprising FCO officials and senior academics with suitable expertise and experience, including experience in working with government. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited for a selection interview with members of the same panel.

The successful candidates will then undertake the FCO security clearance process.

Assessment criteria

Applicants will be assessed on the basis of demonstrated fit to the person specification and performance at interview.

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- understanding of the needs of the FCO
- an ability to bring fresh insights to the Diplomatic Service through expertise, communication skills, experience and connections into the research, policy and practice communities
- deep knowledge and nuanced understanding of particular area/s within the broad remit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- experience of communicating with a wide range of audiences
- experience of leading or contributing to knowledge exchange activities.

How to apply

This call will be managed by the ESRC on behalf of the two participating Research Councils. In the first instance, an application should be sent as an email attachment to the ESRC on



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



fcofellow@esrc.ac.uk by **16:00 on 31 October 2017**. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

The application should take the following form:

- Statement of Application (2 A4 pages max in 12 point font) please use the following headings:
 1. **Motivation in applying for this call:** please outline why you are interested in this call, what you would hope to gain from a KE Fellowship and how you see it fitting into your long term career. Please state how you plan to share the benefits of the experience with other academics.
 2. **Evidence of relevant expertise and experience:** please outline areas of expertise and experience that you consider relevant to engagement with the FCO and maximising the value of the fellowship. This should include work experience, knowledge and skills.
 3. **Experience using expertise in a non-academic context:** please outline your experience of applying and communicating your expertise in a non-academic context, for example - public policy engagement within or outside Government and politics; provision of expertise to non-academic users; writing reports or giving presentations for the private sector.] The examples given are purely for illustrative purposes and are non-exhaustive.
 4. **Proposed commitment and Indicative Costs:** please indicate the proposed FTE commitment and indicative costs: including estimated salary costs and indirect costs (these should be calculated by the applicant's research office), estimated other costs including any proposed knowledge exchange activities to be undertaken. Please indicate both the 100% fEC figure and the 80% fEC Research Council contribution in **the costings template**.
- Outline CV: not more than two sides of A4 in 12pt font
- Summary publication list: no more than one side of A4 in 12pt font
- Letter of support confirming applicant's higher education institution or research organisation support for the application.

Applications will be acknowledged on receipt. Shortlisted applicants will be informed and invited to interviews which are currently planned to take place in **w/c 22 January 2018**.

Successful applicants will be required to submit formal applications through the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>). This will be through an invitation-only call, guidance will be provided at the time of invitation.

Fellowship induction

The FCO will arrange an **intensive induction** to the processes and culture of the FCO and Whitehall, and provide extensive support and mentoring throughout the fellowship. At the end of the process (and in addition to regular discussions with Research Analysts colleagues over the course of the fellowship) a detailed exit interview will be conducted to gather feedback on how to continue to hone and improve the scheme.

The FCO will have no other formal follow-up requirements from fellows who have completed their fellowship but will seek to build a network of alumni and it is our strong expectation that they would maintain close contact with the FCO for many years to come - and perhaps even return to the FCO under this or other schemes in future.

Grant and reporting requirements

The Fellowship will be supported by a grant issued and managed by the ESRC. See www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/grant-holders/

The Fellowship will be subject to the ESRC's standard Final Reporting requirements. See www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/grant-holders/project-reporting.aspx

Timetable

31 October 2017	Closing date for applications (16:00)
w/c 18 December 2017	Applicants are informed on the outcome of the applications review
w/c 22 January 2018	Interviews with shortlisted applicants
February 2018	Conditional offer made to successful applicants (pending security clearance)
June 2018	Invitations to submit Je-S applications and guidance sent to successful applicants
July 2018	Award letter sent out (subject to security clearance)
September 2018	Fellowships commence

Contacts

For further information on the applications process:

- **ESRC**
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- **AHRC**
Ian Broadbridge; Strategy and Development Manager
Email: ian.broadbridge@ahrc.ac.uk
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- **FCO**
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