

OPPORTUNITY FOR PLACEMENT FELLOWSHIP IN RESEARCH COUNCILS UK

As part of its Placement Fellowship Scheme the ESRC welcomes applications from academics interested in working in a research capacity in the RCUK Strategy Unit. The Scheme encourages social science researchers to spend time within a partner organisation to undertake policy relevant research and to develop the research skills of partner employees. The Fellowship will be jointly funded by the ESRC and the RCUK Strategy Unit while the Fellow remains employed by his/her institution.

Project Title
Economic impact assessment within the Research Councils
Length of Fellowship
6 months
Proposed start date
ASAP
Location of Fellowship
<p>Research Councils UK, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1ET. The fellow will be hosted by the RCUK Strategy Unit (the strategic partnership between the seven UK Research Councils) but will also spend a significant amount of time working within the seven Research Councils (to note five of the Research Councils are based in Swindon, the AHRC is based in Bristol and the MRC in London)</p> <p>The fellow will spend a proportion of their time within the Department for Innovation, University and Skills (DIUS, Kingsgate House, 66-74 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6SW).</p>
Expected tasks
<p>The assessment of the economic impact of research presents a considerable intellectual challenge for which there is no unified or comprehensive solution at present. Research Councils have developed a variety of approaches over recent years, consistent with the nature of their research investments and the diversity of economic impacts (eg cultural, societal, monetary and policy). However, the obligation to demonstrate economic impact is growing in importance and Research Councils wish to progress this agenda vigorously by working more closely with academic researchers in this field.</p> <p>The fellow would develop the project with the RCUK Strategy Unit with the following overall aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to identify and evaluate significant economics and policy research that is relevant to Research Councils policy and practices for economic impact assessment. <p>Some of the specific objectives are:</p>

- to review methodologies used by the Research Councils to infer or assess economic impact
- to assess these against requirements on Research Councils (from DIUS and others)
- to highlight commonalities and areas of divergence (where inherently necessary, but also where there is scope for harmonisation) between Research Councils to identify what actions and activities Research Councils need to do to take forward this agenda as a result of the above
- to offer training and development workshops to ensure skills in impact measurement and assessment are fostered.

It is proposed that the fellow would work with the RCUK Strategy Unit to gather evidence relating to economic impact assessment, accessing current research and knowledge in this area and using a range of methods such as interviews (with Research Council colleagues, appropriate members of the research community and DIUS) and in-depth literature reviews. The fellow would then analyse and draw conclusions from this data to influence the Research Councils economic impact policies and practices. RCUK would encourage publication via the appropriate avenues on the technical aspects of this work.

Skills required

Essential

- background in economics with five years or more post graduate experience
- ability to carry out a comprehensive literature review
- ability to critically appraise and analyse evidence
- experience of having conducted impact assessment.

Desirable

- an understanding of the Research Councils
- an understanding of current policy context relating to impact and impact assessment
- knowledge of the research base
- access to current research.

Background

The Research Councils need to build capability and credibility in impact assessment, establishing the UK as a world leader in impact methodologies, and helping to ensure that we can measure and demonstrate the impact of the research we fund.

The economic impact (broadly defined) of the research base is important to the future prosperity and wellbeing of the country. The knowledge and expertise gained through our investment in people and innovation allows the UK to maintain a technological leading edge, build a strong economy and improve quality of life for its citizens.

This fellowship presents a unique intellectual challenge for a researcher and an opportunity to gain insight into the Research Councils, and influence policy related to

economic impact assessment.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THIS CALL IS FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2008

**FOR AN APPLICATION FORM EMAIL: knowledgetransfer@esrc.ac.uk
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