Science Policy Associate Scheme for Research Fellows: Guidance Notes

Introduction

The Royal Society Science Policy Associate Scheme provides University Research Fellows (URF) and Dorothy Hodgkin Fellows (DHF) an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of working in science policy and using science and evidence to inform policy advice and decision making.

Secondments take place in a science policy environment in a central government department, devolved administration, decentralised agency or any other relevant public body[1]. The secondment may wholly or partly be undertaken remotely as long as the host organisation is content with that arrangement, although we encourage secondees to make the most of the opportunity and participate in-person as much as possible.

Up to five secondments will be offered to start between October 2024 and March 2025.

The scope of the activities during the secondment will be agreed between the Research Fellow and the relevant host organisation; however, as a Policy Associate you will have the opportunity to:

- Receive first-hand experience of how scientific research and other evidence inform the policy making process
- Develop networks with policy organisations and officials in areas allied to your research interest
- Network with thought leaders in research, industry and policy
- Develop your understanding of potential routes to achieving research impact

Eligibility

University Research Fellows and Dorothy Hodgkin Fellows applying to this scheme must have already completed the first year of their fellowship at the time of application. Those with less than 18 months left of their fellowship at the time of application are not eligible to apply. However, applications are discussed on a case-by-case basis and there might be some flexibility allowed in that regard: please contact us if you wish to discuss.

Start Dates / Duration

The secondment will last for a period of up to three months on a full-time basis or may be taken on a part-time basis over the course of up to nine months (minimum of two days per week spent at the secondment host organisation). The secondment will be available to start between October 2024 and March 2025.

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[1] Policy Associates usually undertake their secondments in central government departments located in London, but we are able to explore opportunities for secondments across the country and encourage eligible URFs and DHFs based in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to apply. Please contact us if you would like further information about this before applying.

GP/01/24

Fellowship extension

University Research Fellows and Dorothy Hodgkin Fellows undertaking this secondment will be able to extend their fellowship by the period of the secondment (up to a maximum of three months).

Support costs

During the period of the secondment, Research Fellows will continue to be funded by the Royal Society. Policy Associates may request travel and subsistence costs of up to £3,000 based on location and proximity to host organisation. Travel expenses accrued during the duration of the secondment must be taken from URF/DHF research expenses. The Royal Society will only increase the value of the award to cover these expenses up to a maximum of £3,000. Research Fellows will be required to provide a list of their travel costs and present original receipts when requesting increase to the value of the award.

Organisational Support

Applications must be discussed and approved by your Head of Department before submission. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that approval has been granted before commencing the secondment.

Final Reports and Presentations

The Research Fellows will be required to complete and submit a short report and/or blog post to the Society at the end of their secondment. The Royal Society may also ask them to give a presentation or public talk, and to share their secondment experience with delegates at the Society's Policy Primer course, which acts as a stepping stone to the Policy Associates secondment scheme.

Termination

If you wish to terminate your secondment before the agreed end date, you must discuss this with the host organisation and inform the Royal Society of the decision.

Application Process

- Applications will be made using Flexi-Grant®. FAQ and Troubleshooting information can be found online (**https://support.flexigrant.com/support/home**)
- **The deadline for applications is 3pm BST on Thursday 11 April 2024.**
- Applications will be reviewed by the Royal Society and a decision will be made by 10 June 2024. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application shortly after this date.

Application Guidance Notes

Using Flexi-Grant®

Applications can only be submitted online using the Royal Society's Grants and Awards management system (Flexi-Grant®) via **https://grants.royalsociety.org**. Support, FAQs and troubleshooting can be found via **http://royalsocietyapplicantsupport.fluenttechnology.com/support/login**. If you have not

previously used Flexi-Grant®, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant® homepage. **To note, paper-based applications will not be accepted.**

Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements and ensure all necessary information is presented in the application. These requirements are strictly adhered to and applications without all the necessary information will be rejected.

ORCID identifier: All applicants applying to the Royal Society will be required to obtain an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier before they can commence their application. ORCID maintains a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research funding, research publications, research data and any other research outputs to these unique identifiers. You can register for an ORCID identifier via **https://orcid.org/register**.

Further information about the Grants and Awards Management system can be found via **https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/flexi-grant/**.

Completing the application form

The application can be completed by using the navigation tabs on the application summary page, with each page categorised as follows:

- **Contact details**
- **Area of expertise**
- **Previous science policy interactions and interests**
- **Statement of participation and secondment preferences**
- **Head of Department's Approval**

A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application can be found in the following pages. In the following table each box represents a page of the application form; the left-hand column contains the questions within each of these pages as set out in the form; the right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion.

Please note that questions with * are mandatory fields, which is typically the majority of questions. You will only be able to submit your application for approval by the Royal Society once all sections of the application form have been marked as complete, and your participants have marked their work as complete (please check the status of participants under the participants tab on the application form summary page). Late applications will not be accepted.

Application questions

Category	What you are asked to provide
Contact details and host organisation*	Please review and complete your personal details accurately, including for your host organisation. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application.
Area of Expertise: Subject Area*	Please select the subject area(s) that most closely reflect your area of research.
Keywords*	Please provide 5–10 keywords which relate most to your research.

Field of Specialisation*	Please enter details of your field(s) of specialisation.
Knowledge of how scientific advice is used in government*	Please provide a statement outlining your current understanding of how scientific advice is used in government, with examples given where appropriate. (500 words max.)
Areas of Policy interest*	Please list particular areas of policy you find most interesting. (250 words max.)
Previous science policy or science communication experience*	Please provide details of any relevant previous science policy or science communication experience that you have.
Statement of interest*	Please provide a brief statement outlining why you would like to take part in the Royal Society's Policy Associate Scheme, including how this will support your career development.
Preferred start date of secondment*	Please provide your preferred start date between October 2024 and March 2025.
Full-time (over three months) or part-time (up to nine months)*	Please state whether you would prefer to take a full-time (over three months) or part-time (up to nine months) should your application be successful.
Head of Department's Approval*	Please confirm that you have approval from your Head of Department to apply for this scheme. Written confirmation from your Head of Department will be required if your application is successful.

Review process

All applications submitted are initially reviewed and assessed and a shortlist is drawn up by members of a selection panel with relevant scientific and policy expertise. Following completion of this assessment, the shortlisted candidates are then approved by the Grants Committee and Science Policy Committee. It is expected that all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email by 10 June 2024.

Please be assured that the Royal Society specifically requests anyone involved in reviewing applications to consider them in confidence.

Enquiries

If you have any enquiries about the submission of your application or about the Flexi-Grant® process, please contact Georgia Park, Senior Programme Manager at the Royal Society:
georgia.park@royalsociety.org.