



2019/20 BES Policy Fellowship with the UK Government

The British Ecological Society is committed to making the best scientific evidence available to decision-makers, and supporting members to build their policy engagement skills and enhance the impact of their work. The BES Policy Fellowship offers an ecologist the chance to spend up to six months on a placement embedded within a government department or agency, applying their scientific expertise to a practical policy challenge. The 2019/20- Fellowship will be hosted by Defra. The Fellowship will provide a prestigious opportunity for BES members to gain first-hand experience of working within government, improving their policy knowledge and awareness, developing their science communication skills, and building their professional networks at an exciting and crucial time for environmental policy. The Fellowship will also help to foster wider links between the ecological and policy communities, and support policy development informed by outstanding science.

Nature of the Fellowship

Eligibility

Applications to the BES Policy Fellowship will be open to any BES member with two or more years' research experience post-PhD.

Placement

In 2019/20, one Fellowship will be available, offering an individual project within Defra's. Potential project areas are listed below, but there is some flexibility to adapt them to take account of the research interests or career plans of the successful applicant, emergent policy needs and timing of the placement.

Possible work areas:

1. Improving Defra's understanding of the costs and benefits of delivering biodiversity outcomes to inform policy decision making
2. Potential for nature-based solutions to provide benefits for biodiversity and other environmental outcomes
3. Improving Defra's understanding of ecosystem function and health, including methods and tools for assessment and monitoring

The Fellow will be encouraged to spend 40% of their time over the course of the placement based in Defra's offices. However, we are aware that the fellow may have teaching and/or childcare commitments which will require more flexible working. Please mention any flexible working needs in your application.

Defra will provide a named line manager for the Fellow. The placement would ideally be based in Defra offices in London, Bristol or York, with travel to attend meetings and events within the UK.

The Fellow will remain employed by her/his home institution for the duration of the placement.

Duration

The Fellowship will last between three months (full-time) and six months (part-time), with the precise duration of the placement to be determined between Defra, the Fellow and the Fellow's home institution.

Start Date

The Fellowship will begin ideally in November 2019, with the exact start date to be agreed between Defra, the Fellow, and the Fellow's home institution.

Other Requirements

The 2019 Fellow will:

- Complete a defined project for Defra within the agreed deadline.
- Contribute to related work on evidence management, analysis and policy development as a member of the EAU.
- Support external academic engagement activities undertaken by Defra (e.g. assisting with workshops with external stakeholders, helping to organise small seminars ("bite-size sessions") bringing experts from a range of institutions into the Department, representing aspects of Defra work at external academic meetings).
- Submit a mid-placement progress report to the BES and Defra, outlining progress against agreed objectives.
- With support from the BES and Defra, arrange at least one knowledge exchange event (to be held at Defra/BES/host institution as appropriate) to discuss the outputs and learning from the project with a wider policy and/or scientific audience.
- Actively share the knowledge and experience gained through the Fellowship with the wider BES membership (e.g. through two articles on the BES website or in the Niche, and a presentation at the BES Annual Meeting).
- Ensure all communications, outputs and products are approved by Defra before publication.

The host organisation (Defra) will:

- Provide a named line manager for the Fellow for the duration of the placement.
- Identify a defined project for the Fellow, with clear objectives and success criteria, and an appropriate scope and timeframe.
- Provide facilities including desk space and a laptop configured for Defra networks.

- Provide a suitable induction programme for the Fellow and opportunities to engage in policy development.
- Provide feedback at the end of the placement in line with standard practice in the host organisation.
- Where full publication of the work undertaken by the Fellow is not possible, provide an impact report outlining how the results have been used.

The BES will:

- Identify and offer opportunities to engage more widely with the BES's policy work during the Fellowship, including:
 - Contributing to the work of the BES Brexit Policy Working Group where applicable.
 - Attending and contributing to relevant parliamentary events organised through the Royal Society of Biology's Parliamentary Steering Group (e.g. Parliamentary Links Day).
- Provide funding for the duration of the placement as outlined below.
- Support the Fellow to organise at least one knowledge exchange event to discuss the outputs and learning from the project with a wider policy and/or scientific audience.

Conditions of work

All Fellows must adhere to their employer's and Defra's requirements of independence from political or commercial interest through the placement. Fellows will need to give undertakings to respect a confidentiality agreement, specifying that information on policy advice and internal debate will not be disclosed without prior written agreement of the host organisation. Fellows will be required to seek security clearance as necessary for access to government office buildings and IT equipment. A Counter Terrorist Check is necessary for access to Defra offices in London which requires personal details and criminal records etc to be submitted and may take several weeks.

Funding

A maximum of £20,000 is available from the BES to support the Fellowship. Applicants are asked to specify and justify the amount of funding requested and how it would be spent.

Eligible expenditure includes:

- Salary costs for the applicant, including national insurance and superannuation, but not estates or indirect costs.
- Travel and subsistence, including accommodation.
- Other factors

Facilities, including laptop and office space (hot desking) will be provided by Defra.

Application Procedure

Applications will open on 18 July, and will close on 27 August 2019. Applications will be via the grants portal on the BES website. You will need to register into our online grants system, complete your contact details, and navigate to 'Your Applications'.

<https://bes.flexigrant.com/>

Alongside the application form, candidates will be asked to provide:

- A CV.
- A letter of support from the Head of Department/School at the applicant's home institution indicating that they agree to the applicant taking time away from their normal duties to complete the Fellowship according to the requirements and conditions set out above.
- An equality and diversity monitoring form.

Initial shortlisting will be conducted by a review panel consisting of the BES Policy Committee Chair, one representative of Defra, the BES Policy Manager and two other members of Policy Committee. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview, with the interview panel comprising the BES Policy Manager, one representative of Defra and one member of the Policy Committee.

Applicants will be judged on the following criteria:

- Motivation for and interest in the Fellowship.
- Science communication, collaboration and team working skills relevant to policy engagement.
- Scientific expertise relevant to the placement project.
- Skills necessary to widely share the outputs and learning of the Fellowship.
- Strong research record.