UK Research and Innovation

Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position

Fellowship title: DESNZ climate science fellowship

Fellowship type: Natural Hazards and Resilience fellowship

Host organisation: Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Host team: Climate science (Science and Innovation for Climate and Energy directorate)

Summary: opportunity to develop and apply scientific expertise to enhance the evidence base and inform policymaking for a climate-resilient transition to net zero

Policy topic: climate change adaptation and mitigation, Clean Energy Mission, Research and Innovation

Research council: UKRI

Academic discipline(s): climate or atmospheric science

Research career stage: open to early and mid-career researchers

Fellowship structure

Inception phase:

Estimated start date: February 2026. Exact date to be confirmed by the host depending on onboarding and security clearance requirements
Duration: three months
FTE: 0.4 FTE

Main placement phase:

Duration: 12 months
FTE: 0.6 to 1 FTE

Knowledge exchange phase:

Duration: three months
FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work arrangements

Location requirements: based in any of the DESNZ offices (London, Salford, Birmingham, Cardiff, Darlington, Edinburgh). Project leads are based in Edinburgh

Hybrid working: DESNZ operate a hybrid working model with a mix of office and home working. We will discuss suitable working arrangements with the successful fellow but would envisage the fellow attending one of the offices two to four days a 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: Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) checks, these can take up to two to three months to obtain. Please see National security vetting: clearance levels for more information

Fellowship description

Making the UK a clean energy superpower and accelerating to net zero is a priority for the UK Government and DESNZ. This will require a rapid transformation of the energy system in order to deliver energy security, economic growth and a just and orderly transition away from fossil fuels. We are already experiencing impacts from climate change, such as extreme weather events, and these events are predicted to become more frequent and intense. This will undoubtedly create risks for critical national infrastructure and will impact the supply of energy from renewable energy sources and demand for energy for heating and cooling, including the frequency of low supply or high demand periods that will most stress the energy system. It is therefore critical that climate resilience is embedded into our

plans for a clean power transition, however key scientific evidence gaps remain on the drivers and evolution of climate hazards relevant to the energy sector.

The role will be based in the Climate Science team within the Science and Innovation for Climate and Energy directorate. The Climate Science team deliver targeted scientific advice, evidence and analysis to policy teams within DESNZ across a range of topics including climate mitigation (land use, bioenergy, hydrogen, greenhouse gas removals), climate resilience (including research to support adaptation solutions), and delivery of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions inventory, which is used to track progress with our net zero targets and carbon budgets. The successful fellow will work jointly with two workstreams: Climate Science Capability, who are responsible for developing our understanding on the fundamental science of climate change and who oversee the Met Office Hadley Centre Climate Programme, and the Climate Resilience workstream, which delivers scientific evidence to embed climate resilience across DESNZ, including delivery of the Climate Science for a Net-Zero World (CS-N0W) research programme.

The fellow will work closely with the DESNZ Climate Science team and policy teams in the DESNZ to address key evidence gaps on natural hazards that are likely to have a significant impact on the energy sector. Details of the project, including what hazards the research will focus on, will be scoped out at the inception stage taking into account the expertise of the fellow and progress in other research programmes delivered by the team.

The fellow will have the opportunity to carry out original research and activities could include:

- A short review of climate impacts to the energy sector and the key climate risk evidence gaps that need to be addressed
- Scoping out climate information needs and barriers in DESNZ, through workshops and roundtable discussions, to help frame the fellow's research plan and design policy-relevant outputs in order to support the DESNZ contribution to the development of the next UK Climate Information package which will succeed UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18)
- Undertaking research to improve the quantification of, for example, compound hazards or high-impact low-likelihood events, including reducing the uncertainty in their timing, magnitude and impacts
- Development of scenarios and supporting datasets to help identify, in collaboration with DESNZ energy modelling teams, possible worst-case scenarios that will help understand requirements for a future energy system
- Development of climate storylines and their application to help stress-test decarbonisation plans

This is an exciting opportunity to work at the science-policy interface in a friendly and supportive team, carrying out high-impact research on cascading risks or high-impact low-likelihood events that will directly inform how we deliver Clean Power by 2030 and how the energy sector manages and adapts to the impacts of climate change. Benefits to the fellow will include:

- An improved understanding of the breadth of science and innovation developments that underpin the delivery of the Clean Energy Mission and what the priority fundamental science evidence gaps and barriers are
- Access to a wide network of government scientists and policymakers
- The opportunity to undertake original research with a clear route to impact. We will support the fellow not only in delivering academic outputs, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, but also in evidencing how their work has informed and influenced policy
- Opportunities for dissemination of research to policy teams in the department and other government departments and stakeholders where relevant, supporting the embedding of climate risk into policy development. This will be through delivery of briefings, presentations, workshops and teach-ins

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:

- Proven academic track record and subject matter expertise in climate science, particularly relating to natural hazards and their impacts in the UK and Europe

- Expertise in climate modelling or observations and their application to quantifying climate hazards and risks

- Ability to communicate complex topics to a variety of stakeholders with different technical backgrounds both verbally (such as via teach-ins or presentations) and in written form (such as in briefings or research reports)

- Experience of cross-discipline or stakeholder engagement and collaboration, including managing a diverse set of views and sensitivities

Applicants shortlisted from the panel assessment will be assessed at the host led interview selection process against the following desirable opportunity-specific requirements:

Desirable criteria:

- Experience in methods to communicate uncertainty, such as storyline approaches
- Knowledge of climate risks to the energy sector

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.

DESNZ's' privacy notice can be found here: DESNZ personal information charter Hosts 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.