

BLAVATNIK SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Summary

Job title	ESRC Policy Fellow and Researcher: Government Strategy
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Blavatnik School of Government
Location	Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6GG
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £36,024 - £44,263 (with discretionary range to £48,350 per annum, dependent on experience) An Oxford University Weighting of £1,500 per year (pro rata) to be applied with effect from 1 August 2024
Hours	Full time (we welcome a conversation about flexible working options)
Contract type	Fixed-term for 12 months
Reporting to	Kathy Hall, Chief Operating Officer
Vacancy reference	174512
Additional information	The post is available on a secondment/ sabbatical basis. The closing date for applications is 12 noon (UK time) on Monday 27 August 2024. Interviews will be held virtually on week commencing 2 September 2024.

Research topic	<p>How can Government be better at strategy?</p> <p>What does it mean to set 'national strategy' and to maintain national strategic objectives over time?</p> <p>What capabilities, structures, processes, culture are required to develop and implement strategies to address long-term challenges?</p> <p>What capabilities, structures, processes, culture are required for the successful development and implementation of strategies in government?</p>
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Principal Investigator supervisor	/ Lucy Smith, Heywood Fellow, Blavatnik School of Government
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC)

The role

Reporting to the Blavatnik School of Government's Heywood Fellow, the grant holder funded by the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) will be a member of a small team (consisting of three experienced civil servants taking career breaks and one part-time administrator) and will have responsibility for carrying out an evidence-based UK public policy project.

The Heywood Fellow is a very senior UK civil servant who is supported by the Heywood Foundation and hosted by the Blavatnik School to conduct a detailed inquiry into a specific policy issue which has long-term impacts for the UK and/or which has proven stubbornly intractable over time. For 2024-25, the fellow will be Lucy Smith; recently Director General, Strategy at Defra, and former Director General, UK Governance at the Cabinet Office. Lucy intends to explore the question of how government can be better at strategy, including the case for 'national strategy' to respond to the growing complexity and long-term nature of external challenges, and at the capabilities, structures, culture and other elements required to develop and deliver successful strategies in government.

The ESRC Policy Fellow will bring their knowledge and expertise of the field, of key thinkers and researchers and of research approaches and methodologies. In return, they will gain a unique insight into the policy mind-set, access to a senior level policy network and be connected to the ESRC Policy Fellowship [2021](#) and [2023](#) cohort, to enhance their understanding of how research and evidence can impact on policy. The ESRC Policy Fellow will be a core part of the team and expected to contribute to a range of outputs and events, including with policymakers and senior researchers. Insights from the ESRC Policy Fellow into engagement between academic research and policy making will feed into ESRC's broader programme of activities focused on people exchange.

Funding and support

The ESRC Policy Fellow will be an employee of Oxford University, hosted by the Blavatnik School of Government. Funding is provided the ESRC and the post holder will be expected to comply with [UKRI Terms and Conditions](#). ESRC will meet 80% of the full economic costs and Oxford University are supporting the remaining 20%

Once successful candidates have been agreed, they will be instructed to submit a form to ESRC through UKRI's Funding Service in order to receive funding. This process will be led by the Blavatnik School of Government.

Responsibilities

- Contribute ideas for the new research project identified by the Heywood Fellow, in collaboration with colleagues in the Heywood Fellowship team

- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on methodologies and approaches to support and enhance the project, adapting existing and developing new research methodologies and materials to support the project.
- Provide team colleagues with insight to the key literature relevant to the project and, drawing on this, preparing working theories and analysis.
- Analyse qualitative and/or quantitative data from a variety of sources, reviewing and refining theories as appropriate.
- Prepare case studies, both domestic examples and international comparisons.
- Prepare and conduct interviews to gather evidence and insight for the project.
- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small scale project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines.
- Collaborate in the preparation of research and policy publications, including literature reviews, evidence syntheses, surveys, policy briefs and articles.
- Present papers at conferences or public meetings.
- Represent the research group at external meetings/seminars, either with other members of the group or alone.
- Work closely colleagues and partners to develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan, with the aim to maximise knowledge exchange and impact.
- Commit to reflect on and gather insights into the process of translating research and evidence into policy, to share this regularly with the ESRC and with a community of practice of other policy fellows and to write a reflective evaluation at the end of the fellowship.
- Undertake any other activities as directed by the Heywood Fellow, commensurate with this post.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Hold a relevant doctorate, together with relevant experience.
- Possess sufficient specialist knowledge in the discipline to work within established research programmes and contribute to this evidence-led policy project.
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities.
- Evidence of success in working effectively and collaboratively in a team of both academics and practitioners.
- Ability to advise on, develop and apply the methodologies set out above, including the ability to develop case studies and international comparisons.
- Previous experience of contributing to publications/presentations.
- Ability to contribute ideas for new research projects.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research group at meetings – especially to non-academic audiences.
- Interest in the policy-making process and desire to use the opportunity to deepen and share an understanding of how evidence and research can inform better policymaking.
- The ability to design and lead activity that supports effective knowledge exchange between research, policy, and funder communities.

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project.
- Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication.
- Experience of and/or desire to work on applied research that impacts on policy-making.

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. If you have previously worked for the University we will also verify key information such as your dates of employment and reason for leaving your previous role with the department/unit where you worked. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

The Blavatnik School of Government

Our vision is of a world better led, a world better served and a world better governed. We are a global school committed to improving the quality of government and public policymaking worldwide, through three routes: teaching current and future leaders; applied research; and engagement with government and practitioners.

The School was founded in 2010 and our founding dean is [Professor Ngaire Woods](#). We admitted the first 38 Master of Public Policy (MPP) students in 2012 and we currently accept around 140 MPP students and around eight doctoral students a year. We also accept a small group of students for our MSc in Public Policy Research.

The Blavatnik School of Government holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all. You can find more information on the [Blavatnik School of Government's website](#).

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application, you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the HR team directly on recruit@bsg.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82** of 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. Staff can access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to Health Assured, a confidential employee assistance programme which is available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-assured-eap>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We have excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as places at many other private nurseries. See <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>.

We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities for dependants of all types. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

Supporting disability and health-related issues (including menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Information about the University's Staff Disability Advisor, is at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>. For information about how we support those going through menopause see <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/menopause-guidance>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBTQ+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause. Find out more at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>

Oxford's Research Staff Society is a collective voice for our researchers. They also organise social and professional networking activities for researchers. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/connecting-other-researchers/oxford-research-staff-society>