2020 Call

Guidance for academics and staff at their institution wishing to apply for the National Assembly for Wales Academic Fellowship Scheme

This guidance document sets out:

1. Background, aims and benefits of the scheme
2. What does a Fellowship entail and practical considerations
3. Terms and Conditions
4. How to Apply
5. Assessment criteria
6. Further information

The closing date for applications is **23 March 2020.**

1. **Background information on the scheme**

Making greater use of academic expertise to support the policy and legislative scrutiny work of the Assembly is helping us to deliver the Assembly Commission’s strategic goals of providing outstanding parliamentary support, using resources wisely and engaging with all the people of Wales.

The Academic Fellowship scheme involves a senior (post-PhD) academic spending some time working with Senedd Research on a specific project, where this will have mutual benefit to the academic and to the National Assembly for Wales¹.

There will be regular calls for applications to the Fellowship scheme. The current call is for Fellowships to start during 2020. The number of Fellows to be appointed will depend on the quality and subject range of the applications, but as a general guide we would expect to appoint up to 6-8 Fellows for each annual call.

The Assembly's Academic Fellowship scheme began in 2017 – please [see here](#) for further details of the previous and current Fellows. The Fellowship scheme is managed by the Senedd Research. More information on Senedd Research can be found [here](#).

**Aims of the scheme**
The key aims of the scheme are to:

- Provide us with access to expertise on topics of relevance to priority areas;

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¹ Note that from the 6 May 2020 the National Assembly for Wales will be renamed the Welsh Parliament. At that time the National Assembly for Wales Academic Fellowship Scheme will be renamed as the Senedd Academic Fellowship Scheme.
• Promote a better public understanding of the Assembly’s work amongst the research community;
• Cultivate relationships between Assembly staff, elected Members and the research community;
• Support the Assembly Commission’s strategic goals of providing outstanding parliamentary support, using resources wisely and engaging with all the people of Wales.

Benefits of the scheme

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<th>Key benefits for academics of being a Fellow</th>
<th>Key benefits for universities of having a Fellow</th>
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<td>Publications with the Assembly;</td>
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<td>Supports an audit trail for evidencing impact of research/knowledge exchange;</td>
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<td>Potential for supporting REF impact case study submission;</td>
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<td>Invitations to present research findings;</td>
<td>Internal case study of working with an external stakeholder;</td>
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<td>Opportunity to explore novel aspects of research topic;</td>
<td>Building connections with the Assembly;</td>
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<td>Experience of writing for a new audience;</td>
<td>Reputational benefits of working with the Assembly;</td>
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<td>Building connections with the Assembly and other stakeholders.</td>
<td>Awareness of the university’s work within the Assembly.</td>
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2. What does being a Fellow entail?

An academic fellow will work alongside staff employed by the Assembly’s Senedd Research to help improve the quality of research and briefing that the service provides to Assembly Members. The research proposal to be undertaken by a fellow will be mutually agreed and will be to address knowledge gaps using expertise that would not otherwise be available. In a few cases a Fellow may be working alongside another service area on a project related to the operation/procedures of the Assembly. A Fellowship agreement will be drawn up setting out the work to be undertaken. The agreement will include specific outputs and milestone dates for the delivery of these outputs.

The Fellowship will be supervised by a lead researcher in one of the Senedd Research’s policy teams, or another senior member of Assembly Commission staff, who will be the principal point of contact.

A Fellow is likely to be involved in some or all of the following:

• Producing at least one Assembly output separate to any academic publication(s) which you may produce (see below for list of potential outputs).
• Presenting research findings internally at the Assembly, for example at a Committee session or other event.
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- Writing up of the Fellowship experience for our *In Brief* blog, and be part of a community of academics we could tap into in the future.

Examples of outputs that may be produced during the Fellowship:

- Written research briefings for a Committee;
- Written research briefings for a Senedd Research team;
- Written research report for Assembly Commission staff;
- Written online briefings for the *In Brief* blog;
- Research syntheses of existing research;
- Reports of new research findings relevant to the Fellowship topic;
- Establishment of a network of key stakeholders and contacts with the Fellowship topic.

Any new research work carried out by a Fellow will be in the capacity as an employee of an academic institution rather than directly on behalf of the Assembly. Any outputs will be used by Senedd Research to ensure that Assembly Members from all political parties are better informed. This may also involve producing written material for one of the Assembly’s Committees and/or presenting this material in an oral briefing session to committee members. However any such work would not be described as having been directly commissioned by an Assembly Committee.

All outputs, including research briefings, will be published, either during or on completion of the Fellowship.

At the end of the Fellowship the Assembly will provide the Fellow and their academic institution with written evidence of what was achieved as part of the Fellowship in the form of a letter.

Assembly business can be varied and fast changing; we therefore expect Fellows to take a flexible approach to ensure their work has the greatest impact, and understand that the list above is therefore not exhaustive. Senedd Research staff may also ask for advice within a Fellow’s area of expertise.

**Calls for applications**

Academics can apply through two main routes:

**Directed call** – Responding to an invitation to submit a proposal for a Fellowship to carry out a pre-identified priority project. Please see the application webpage for details of these projects.

**Open call** – Propose a project of your choosing that you consider to be of importance to Assembly Members. The proposed project should be of relevance to the work of Assembly Members.

The application requirements are slightly different for each route, so we encourage applicants to read the guidance thoroughly before applying.

**Eligibility**

Potential candidates must follow these eligibility guidelines:
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- Applicants must have been awarded their PhD. There are no rules based on years of post-doctoral experience, however the level of experience will be considered in the assessment of applications.
- The Scheme is open to academics from all subject areas and disciplines.
- Applicants must be employed by an academic institution in Wales or elsewhere in the UK, and must be employed by an academic institution for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Applicants must demonstrate the support of Head of Department (or equivalent) and are encouraged to seek permission from their academic institution in advance of making an application.

Ways that university teams can support an applicant
We encourage potential applicants to talk to their respective university teams early on to discuss the Fellowship. Examples of ways that the university team can support their academic are (please note: not all will be appropriate for each Fellow):

- Support the writing of the application;
- Assistance with developing ideas;
- Seek or provide financial resources for the Fellowship;
- Clarify restrictions on costs covered by the funding mechanism;
- Discuss options for releasing the academic from teaching/administrative duties;
- Examine the Fellowship Agreement of successful applicants;
- Provide guidance on engaging with policy-related stakeholders;
- Provide guidance on writing for a non-academic audience;
- Support the dissemination of outputs beyond the Fellowship (see below) with either financial or personnel resources.

Disseminating the outputs of the Fellowship further
To ensure the work conducted by the Fellow has the greatest impact, we encourage Fellows to think about ways to disseminate the findings beyond the Assembly. University staff can assist the Fellow with this, for example through helping with developing ideas, providing within university connections, providing small financial funds, providing personnel support. We encourage Fellows to discuss the potential options with their respective university teams to secure support for these extra activities.

Examples for further dissemination may include presentations to stakeholder groups, other online articles, academic journal articles, attendance at academic conferences, video abstracts, social media promotion.

Note: there are publicity restrictions on the content produced as part of the Fellowship. Please see below for further details.
Working Arrangements
There is no restriction on the duration of a Fellowship and it is expected that the duration will be decided on a case-by-case basis following agreement between the academic, the academic institution and the relevant Research team as part of the application process. However, there would generally be an expectation that Fellowships would be a minimum of one month in duration and not exceed one year. To fit in with existing academic commitments, we expect that Fellows will normally undertake a Fellowship for the Assembly on a part-time basis.

We welcome applicants who wish to work flexibly, but would expect that Fellows are available to spend some time at the Assembly’s offices in Cardiff during the Fellowship. The amount of time will depend on the nature of the Fellowship and is subject to agreement. Applicants do not have to be based in Wales.

Funding
It is expected that Fellows will normally be funded through their own institutions, either through existing research impact funding or through an agreed allocation of their own research time. Undertaking an academic Fellowship with the Assembly is beneficial for you as it provides an opportunity to demonstrate that your research is impacting directly on policy and law making and scrutiny in Wales. We are however willing to discuss funding options in exceptional circumstances where full university funding is not available. There may be scope for the Assembly to provide small amounts of match-funding.

Applicants should indicate if any funding is required, and if so the amount, on the application form. Your application will be initially assessed regardless of the availability of funding. If your application is considered to be one that could proceed but full funding is not available from your institution, then we will discuss funding options with you at that point.

3. Terms and Conditions
Successful applicants and their employing institution will be required to enter into a formal agreement that sets out the specific terms governing their Fellowship. Some Fellows may also be required to undergo security vetting. Fellowship placements are conditional on the Fellowship Agreement being signed and security clearance, if required, being obtained.

The paragraphs below are intended to give applicants a general indication of some of the key terms that will apply to the fellowship; the paragraphs in themselves are not intended to be legally binding, but parts of the fellowship agreement will be, once signed.

Intellectual Property, ownership and publication
You will retain ownership of the intellectual property rights in material you create through and specifically for the Fellowship. However the Fellowship Agreement will require you to grant to the Assembly a licence to use the material you create.
Senedd Research staff will hold regular discussions with Fellows on the progress of delivering the outputs agreed as part of the Fellowship. Fellows will receive information about the style and format required for these outputs. They will be required to submit drafts for comment. Senedd Research staff will have final editorial decision over any outputs that are to be published as a result of the Fellowship.

There will be publicity restrictions for the publication of material from the Fellowship, apart from those that are agreed upon as part of the scheme - these restrictions will be explained in full in the Fellowship Agreement made between the Assembly, the university and the successful Fellow. They include submitting work to the Assembly for comment and approval prior to its publication.

With regards to press releases, publicity or any other promotional material, neither party can use the other's name, logo, trademark or branding or the name of any employee without first obtaining written consent of that party.

Confidentiality
Successful applicants will sign an agreement setting out their access to and usage of any potentially confidential material from their Fellowship with the Assembly.

4. How to apply
To apply for the Academic Fellowship scheme at the National Assembly for Wales, academics should complete an application form and send an electronic copy, along with a sample of writing for a non-academic audience of between 500–1500 words (or URL to writing sample of the same length) and a 2 page CV to Graham Winter at graham.winter@assembly.wales. They should include in the subject of the email: “Fellowship Scheme 2020”. Applications will be assessed on the criteria outlined below. Please take a look at this BEFORE submitting your application.

The deadline for submissions for the 2020 call is 23:59 on Monday 23 March 2020. Late applications will not be considered.

How to answer the questions on the form
Section 2: Working arrangements and funding
See above for guidance on flexible working and funding.

Please specify the proposed duration of the Fellowship and how much time you will be able to spend on it. For example: Approx. four months (part-time, 2 days a week).

As specified above it is expected that Fellows will normally be funded through their own institutions. If this is the case, please confirm this in Section 2. If some funding is required, please give the details here, including a brief justification for why this is necessary.
Please indicate your availability to undertake a Fellowship from May to December 2020. If you are successful a start date will need to mutually agreed, but it is helpful to know if there are times when you will definitely not be available.

**Section 3: Research Proposal**

Please explain your research proposal for the Fellowship and how it will deliver one of the list of pre-identified priority projects (Directed Call only). You may apply for more than one project in the Directed Call, but you will need to complete a separate form for each one. If you are applying for the Open Call, use the second part of Section 3 to explain why it is of importance to Assembly Members. Please see the Assembly’s website for more information about how research is used by Members and the topics/types of outputs that are likely to be seen as important. Also see the Frequently Asked Questions about the scheme.

For both the Directed and Open calls please include in your description of the proposal how it will be of use to Assembly Members, given the scrutiny and legislative functions of the Assembly. If you are applying for a project in the Directed Call that relates to the operation/procedures of the Assembly, explain how your proposal will be of use to the Assembly Commission. Also explain the proposed timescale and the suggested outputs/outcomes of the Fellowship. It would also be helpful to set out some suggested milestones for the Fellowship and how you will ensure that any outputs will be delivered on time. Please include details of the quality assurance measures you will have in place to ensure that your research outputs are of the highest quality.

**Section 4: Communication Skills**

Please give brief examples of your experience of presenting information clearly in written and oral formats. As part of your application you should send us a sample of writing for a non-academic audience of between 500-1500 words (or URL to writing sample of the same length).

**Support of Head of Department**

The application form requires a statement of support from the Head of Department (or equivalent) at the applicant’s institution.

**5. Assessment criteria**

The criteria for the Directed and Open Calls are slightly different as set out below. Your application will be assessed and scored using each of these criteria using a 5-point rating scale, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. The highest scoring applications from both calls will be considered for a Fellowship. Note that not all of the projects listed in the Directed Call will necessarily proceed.

**Directed Call**
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Fellowship proposal

- The proposal is clearly explained
- It demonstrates how it will deliver one of the pre-identified priority projects
- The timescale for delivery is realistic and feasible
- The proposed methods are appropriate and feasible
- The outputs/outcomes will be useful to Assembly Members/Commission staff
- Appropriate quality assurance measures will be put in place

Fellowship candidate

- Relevant subject knowledge and expertise
- Ability to deliver the project in the specified timescale
- Ability to communicate complex information (written and orally) to non-specialists
- Understanding of the scrutiny and legislative roles of the Assembly

Open Call

Fellowship proposal

- The proposed topic for the Fellowship is clearly explained
- The topic is of importance to Assembly Members.
- The timescale for delivery is realistic and feasible.
- The proposed methods are appropriate and feasible.
- The outputs/outcomes will be useful to Assembly Members//Commission staff
- Appropriate quality assurance measures will be put in place

Fellowship candidate

- Relevant subject knowledge and expertise
- Ability to deliver the project in the specified timescale
- Ability to communicate complex information (written and orally) to non-specialists
- Understanding of the scrutiny and legislative roles of the Assembly

What happens after the application is submitted?

After the deadline for applications, the following will occur.

1. The applications will be assessed using the criteria outlined above. Discussions about funding, if necessary, will take place after this assessment.
2. Informal interviews will be held in mid-April 2020.
3. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of interviews/application.
4. Fellowship Agreements will be issued, negotiated and signed. This will outline start dates, time commitments, details of the project, delivery milestones.
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5. If necessary, the security vetting process will begin. It is expected that the majority of Fellows will not require security clearance.
7. Fellowships will start from May 2020 onwards.

Attendance at Induction Day
Successful applicants are strongly advised to attend the Induction Day. Previous fellows have found this to be very useful at the start of their projects. This will be held at the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff in early May 2020. Travel and subsistence costs will be covered by the National Assembly for Wales.

At the induction day fellows will have an opportunity to meet other fellows in your cohort, members of the Senedd Research team and find out more about how the Assembly works. This will give both Fellows and the Research team a chance to ask questions about the planned projects and manage expectations of the outcome of the fellowships.

6. Further information
Further information about our previous fellows and their outcomes and publications resulting from their work at the Assembly can be seen here. The potential Research Impacts derived from engagement with the Assembly are outlined in a briefing note put together by the four UK legislatures with Assembly specific REF 2014 Impact case studies detailed in this research briefing.

For any further queries please contact:

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