



Nottingham Civic Exchange

Fellowship guidance notes for applicants

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Introduction

Nottingham Civic Exchange is continuing to enhance the space and focus for colleagues to deliver policy and civic impact using an established and successful government fellowship model. We will be running the second year of the NCE Policy Fellowship project where we will work with up to six academics across any pathways in the new year (2025/26).

The NCE Policy Fellowships aim to provide a coaching opportunity to colleagues creating space and support to further their policy and/or civic ambitions helping them to build their skills, confidence and network to make a positive difference in society. The scheme is open to all School colleagues up to Associate Professor level. This project aims to strengthen knowledge exchange pathways, enhance impact, create connections and support new research, practice and scholarly opportunities. It is intended that this Fellowship offer runs for up to one academic year.

About Nottingham Civic Exchange

Nottingham Civic Exchange is Nottingham Trent University's think tank, established to maximise research, policy and practical impact by bringing together university expertise with partners seeking to address the needs of people, communities and organisations. Nottingham Civic Exchange acts as a resource to look at social science focused issues in new ways. This means facilitating debate, acting as a bridge between research and policy debates, and developing practical projects on a local, city and regional level. Since our launch in 2017 we embraced evidence, created debate and inspired change. We offer exciting new perspectives on historic issues.

Nottingham Civic Exchange engages deeply with our school, departments and research expertise to deliver meaningful evidence-based change. We act as a navigator for partners to connect with our expertise and knowledge so please get in touch with your ideas.

From next year we have been asked to expand our engagement across all of NTU and this fellowship programme is a tangible example of this work. You can find out more about [NCE's previous work via our webpages](#).

Nottingham Civic Exchange Policy Fellowship

A successful policy fellowship will build on colleague's research, expertise and current external networks to take forward work on a specific policy challenge or challenges. Support from NCE will help to refine the specific challenge and approaches to engage

with it. The topic and the factors surrounding it will inform the types of work that can be conducted and the sorts of conversations and engagement we will undertake. NCE will work with each Fellow to develop a plan for the year.

Alongside specific outputs designed into a workplan for the Fellowship NCE also expects each Fellow to write a summative blog for the NTU news pages to outline their experiences and learning which will be used to support future rounds of the Fellowship scheme.

This project will utilise NCE secured buy-out secured from our external projects to fund six policy fellowships. Each Fellowship aims to start from the beginning of an academic term. An open application process for our academics has been created to ensure best fit for the fellowships and to support departments to manage their own staff development plans. Applicants are required to complete a short form that would need to be signed off by their line manager and ADR. This will be assessed by NCE who will recommend applicants for final decisions are made by NCE's Steering Group. To ensure equitable distribution of this scheme departments can only take one position per year.

What to expect as a policy fellow?

Successful applicant will develop a proposal together with NCE to ensure outputs and learning are timetabled to build a successful policy fellowship that fosters knowledge exchange and impact activities alongside tangible outputs for their fellowship.

Applicants would be required to plan their fellowship around a set of policy engagement activities and goals with some example activities being:

- hosting workshops/roundtables with policy makers
- creating and sharing policy briefs
- undertaking longer term impact and knowledge exchange planning
- stakeholder mapping and engagement
- publishing policy focused reports and blog outputs
- select committee submission

Flexibility will be built into the process due to the complex and at times chaotic nature of the policy making environment so plans outlined at the beginning will be outline and developmental.

Funding

The Policy Fellowship programme offers a development budget for each Policy Fellow to support attendance at events, to meet partners face to face and to host engagement activities with organisations and partners. We expect there to be a budget of up to £1,500 per Policy Fellow.

The application

We are hosting an open application process for the NCE Fellowship programme. To apply please follow the online form link below to complete the application. Please ensure you have discussed your application with your line manager first.

[Apply online via the link](#)

The application questions

- Suggested Policy Fellowship title?
- What do you hope to achieve as a policy fellow?
- What do you see as the major policy challenges in your focused area?
- Who else works in this policy space? Who will you need to work with?
- How do you plan to use the resources available through the Policy Fellowship to help you deliver on your proposed plans?
- What research and expertise base will you be building this policy fellowship on?
- What do you hope to learn from this experience?

Criteria

If you are interested, please check if you meet the following criteria.

Criteria	Questions to ask yourself	Weighting
Eligibility	Are you on a member of staff within NTU? Are you the correct grade to apply?	0%
Vision	Do you have the desire to deploy your expertise to a policy space? Do you know what you want to achieve or the direction you want to go in? Have you considered how to use research and your expertise to make a difference?	25%
Policy space awareness	Do you understand where and how your work fits within a policy context? Who it might be useful too and how they might take it?	25%
Feasibility	Are you able to carry out the specific planned policy engagement activities in the allocated fellowship period? Are you aware of the risks and pitfalls?	25%
Expertise	Do you have a developing research track record to support you to establish yourself in a policy system?	15%
Development Goals	Are you able to identify areas you need to improve on to develop in a policy space?	10%

Schedule

Task	Date
Application deadline	Friday 29 August 2025 at 5:00 pm
Application decisions communicated to applicants	Mid-September 2025
Policy Fellows start	October 2025
Policy Fellow outline plans and setting agreed	By the end of October 2025
Skill-Building: The principles of policy engagement monthly coaching session	From October 2025 – April 2026
Mid-point review	February 2026
End point review	July 2026

Assessment Process

As with prior cohorts Nottingham Civic Exchange will convene a panel made up of internal and external individuals who will review all applications against the criteria outlined above. No department will be able to secure more than one Policy Fellow per round so the most promising candidate will be considered in the final decision-making process. Heads of Department will be consulted to ensure line manager agreement has been sought prior to participation. Feedback will be gathered and distributed to all applicants following the announcement of the selected colleagues. Not being put forward will not restrict NCEs capability to engage with applicants going forward.

If you have any question or require further information, please contact Rich Pickford richard.pickford@ntu.ac.uk for an informal conversation.