

## Public Policy Highlight Notice in the AHRC Leadership Fellows Scheme

AHRC is launching a highlight notice in its Leadership Fellows scheme as part of a range of activities to support the contribution which arts and humanities research can make to public policy.

The aim of the highlight notice is to encourage applications to the Leadership Fellows scheme which propose innovative ways to exercise leadership through engaging policy makers in their research, and explore the potential for impact in policy development. **This can be in connection with any area of public policy.**

Public policy in this context is understood broadly to include government at local, regional or national levels, as well as in connection with international governance bodies. Equally it covers the policies adopted by major civil society and third-sector organisations, such as major charities or charity partnerships, professional associations, etc, which effectively have a role in setting policy in areas which impact public life.

**While proposals are welcome in any area of public policy,** AHRC has been working with the Chief Scientific Advisors in Whitehall and devolved administrations to identify policy areas where input from arts and humanities researchers are particularly welcome.

Arts and humanities researchers across a wide range of disciplines can play an important role in policy-making, as well as drawing new insights and ideas for research from engagement with policy makers. AHRC has previously run a Public Policy highlight notice in the [Research Networking scheme](#) to foster collaborative working and discussion between researchers and policy makers, and a training course [Engaging with Government](#) for early career researchers in partnership with the [Institute for Government](#). Further information on AHRC's support for the potential impact that arts and humanities research can have on public policy is available [here](#), including Guidance on Planning and Demonstrating Effective Policy Engagement.

The Leadership Fellows scheme is well suited to enabling researchers to explore new research alongside collaborative engagement with policy makers. It is designed to support research leadership in a flexible way, through, for example:

- funding for sustained engagement with a policy body, or government department, and a period of embedded work with them;
- developing a suite of research seminars within a department;
- bringing policy makers into universities to build relationships with researchers;
- activities to bring policy makers or wider community stakeholders together to participate in discussions linked to the Fellow's research; etc.

Applicants will need to clearly articulate leadership activities connected to their research proposal, demonstrating how these activities enhance the transformational potential of their research, and its policy influence and importance. In keeping with the RCUK commitment to maintain the highest standards in [research integrity](#), proposals should include a declaration of any affiliations which may give rise to the perception of a potential conflict of interest in regard to the independence of their proposed research.

AHRC's Leadership Fellows scheme has Early Career and Standard routes, and operates as a partnership with the Research Organisation. Applicants should discuss any potential application with their Research

Organisation at an early stage, as strong evidence of institutional support for the individual and their proposal is required as part of the application process. Equally, for proposals under this highlight notice, clear support from the policy bodies involved should be provided through a letter of support.

**This highlight notice runs in the Leadership Fellows scheme until 30 September 2016.**

## **AHRC Leadership Fellows Scheme – Public Policy Areas in the Highlight Notice**

This highlight notice runs in the Leadership Fellows scheme until **30 September 2016** – [Standard Route](#) and [Early Career Researchers Route](#)

### **Policy Areas – Open**

Proposals under the highlight notice are welcome in relation to *any area of public policy* where arts and humanities research can make a contribution, including researchers connected with AHRC's existing Themes, where policy issues have emerged as part of the research:

- Connected Communities
- Care for the Future
- Translating Cultures
- Science in Culture
- Digital Transformations

### **Other Suggested Policy Areas**

AHRC has also been working with the Chief Scientific Advisors in Whitehall and devolved administrations to identify policy areas where input from arts and humanities researchers would be particularly welcomed.

1. Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC)
2. Scottish Government
3. Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

The policy areas are outlined below, along with contact details for the Departments involved.

**NOTE:** The highlight notice is **not** restricted to the above policy issues, and proposals under this notice can relate to **any** area of public policy.

## **1. Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC)**

### ***Policy Area: Public Engagement with Energy & Climate Change***

While there is some public concern about climate change, the issue is often given insufficient priority. This represents a barrier to meeting national greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets, decarbonising the UK economy, and achieving a global deal to reduce GHGs.

Extensive robust scientific research discussing the causes and risks of climate change has not translated effectively into widespread action, committed public support or ownership of the issue. Similarly, support for action by many high profile individuals and institutions is not reflected among the wider population.

Avoiding the most serious impacts of climate change requires a decoupling of economic growth from carbon emissions. This calls for a transformation of the energy system (including energy use), which may have social and economic impacts. Public support for any such transformation is important to its success.

People are the agents of change in the energy system. Understanding attitudes and behaviours, how they interact, and how they are influenced by drivers such as media and legislation, will be important for a successful transition.

DECC is responsible for leading progress towards the UK's ambitious GHG reduction targets, largely through instigating a transition to a low-carbon energy system. A better understanding of the role of individual and organisational attitudes and behaviour in meeting this ambition is required.

**Research proposals** could include consideration of:

- Current levels of committed support for action, the barriers involved, and how to overcome them. This may include, but is not limited to, exploring issues surrounding personal responsibility and decision making, or the role of technology in modern life.
- How to communicate effectively and engage with the public to encourage support, ownership and action. Of particular interest is how concern about climate change and energy issues materialises, and how this concern translates into support for action or behaviour change, or how disengagement results in resistance to change.
- Who the agents of influence are in public discussion, and what role the arts and the creative sector play.

Contact - Brendan Roth ([brendan.roth@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:brendan.roth@decc.gsi.gov.uk))

## **2. Scottish Government**

### ***Policy Area: Arts Policy Interventions***

The Scottish Government has a number of high level policy considerations that they would like to see explored in relation to its arts policies. These reflect the overarching context of how policy is being developed, designed and evaluated in Scotland.

**Research proposals** could include or focus on a combination of the following:

- How should the impact of policy interventions in support of arts be measured? Are there better measures, both qualitative and quantitative for assessing the effect of interventions?
- What is the role of self-evaluation in assessing the effectiveness of longer term interventions for supporting the arts?
- What role is there for co-production in the design, and evaluation, of arts-related policy interventions?

Contact: [Duncan.Whitehead@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Duncan.Whitehead@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

### ***Policy Area: Cultural Diplomacy***

The sharing of culture is a powerful vehicle for international dialogue, and cultural relations grow across a myriad of activities and sectors. In our globalised, interdependent world, cultural diplomacy, whereby formal diplomats, serving national governments and government officials try to shape and channel the flow of cultural relations, is increasingly recognised as critical in fostering peace and stability throughout the world. The research proposals for this theme could be based around the impact of activities across a wide range of policies and jurisdictions, to identify the areas where the greatest positive impact can be achieved in international cultural diplomacy.

**Research proposals** could include or focus on a combination of the following:

- What can the Scottish Government learn from looking at 'cultural diplomacy' in different sub-national contexts?
- What roles have Governments undertaken to achieve this type of diplomacy?
- What issues have emerged for devolved administrations (such as Scotland) in seeking impact in cultural diplomacy, and what can we learn from the Scottish approach?
- How can Government work effectively with diaspora, partner organisations and others to deliver cultural diplomacy?
- What has been the effect of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum on culture and heritage discourse from the perspective of Cultural Diplomacy?

Contact: [Duncan.Whitehead@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Duncan.Whitehead@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

## ***Policy Area: Gaelic Culture***

- **Gaelic medium education (GME)**

GME is still relatively recent and considerable thought is still being given to how it should operate and be supported in schools. There are many issues of interest that could be pursued in research and would be of benefit to this minority education sector in Scottish education. For example, exploration of practices and technology used in bilingual education internationally which may be applicable to GME.

**Research proposals** could include consideration of:

- What can Scotland's GME programme learn from the delivery, management and comparative consideration of bilingual education elsewhere?

- **Gaelic Arts and Broadcasting**

We have a Gaelic arts sector and Gaelic broadcasting is now in place. There are many issues of interest that could be pursued in research, particularly comparisons with other minority language cultures, and questions about what value arts and broadcasting add to other areas of Gaelic development, to wider cultural expression and to attitudes to language in general.

**Research proposals** could include consideration of:

- What is the wider impact of Gaelic arts and broadcasting on minority language (Gaelic) development, Scottish cultural life and general public attitudes on language and Culture in Scotland?

- **Scottish Studies**

There has been considerable emphasis recently on studying Scotland in schools and in higher education, and encouraging a focus on Scotland's history, literature, languages and more. These are broad research areas of importance here relating to the interaction of language and literature with politics and identity.

**Research Proposals** could include consideration of:

- What place do languages, (Gaelic and Scots), in Scottish literature play, and what has been their contribution to questions of culture, identity and politics?

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### **3. Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)**

#### ***Policy Area: Plant Health***

Plants (including trees) represent a vital dimension of natural, cultural and living / working heritage in Britain, supporting an enormously wide range of artistic, cultural, and heritage-based activities and practices.

Plant health in Britain is facing unprecedented levels of threat from pests and diseases, a problem which is exacerbated by the increased speed and globalisation of trade (including, but not limited to, trade in plants and plant products), and processes of environmental change, such as changes in land use and global climate change. The increasing level of threat to plant health means that the artistic, cultural and heritage values that plants represent, along with the artistic and cultural activities and practices through which these values are realised and 'co-produced', are also under threat.

Threats to plant and tree health, along with government-led policy and management in this area have become topics of increased media and public interest and scrutiny. The Chalara Ash dieback outbreak in 2012 is a good example of this.

Defra's new 5 year strategy, along with recent developments in plant and tree health policy (Plant Biosecurity Strategy; Tree Health Management Plan) emphasise the importance of protecting Britain from natural threats and hazards, and the need to further develop strong response and recovery capabilities. Within the context of plant health, protection, response and recovery require a collaborative approach and Defra recognises the need to engage and work with the public and a wide range of stakeholders. Defra are currently developing a communications strategy in support of the Department's new 5 year strategy, with key themes around helping stakeholders and the public to understand natural hazards and threats and the action they should take to protect against them.

These developments underline the importance of carefully designed communications and engagement based on a good understanding of the diverse range of values, attitudes, motivations and behaviours that will inform people's preparedness to get involved with, and support the delivery of plant health protection, response and recovery.

**Research proposals** in the following area are of particular interest:

- the natural, cultural and living / working / heritage values of plant health in Britain;
- the broad range of social, artistic and cultural activities and practices that are expressive of these values;
- and how this can inform public dialogue around these issues.

Arts and humanities research in these areas can help inform a long-term artistic, cultural and heritage value framework for plant health in Britain. Such a framework could then be used:

- (a) To review the treatment and coverage of plant health issues within the media (to include social media) and official communications and engagement around plant health protection issues;
- (b) to inform communications and engagement activities and products aimed at building a shared understanding of the artistic, cultural and heritage values that are threatened, and achieving collaboration in the form of positive and responsible changes in behaviour to support enhanced plant health protection.

Contact: Jake Morris ([Jake.Morris@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Jake.Morris@defra.gsi.gov.uk))