

OPPORTUNITY FOR NERC POLICY PLACEMENT FELLOWSHIP IN THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Integrating the impacts of emerging science and technology into policy making in the Environment Agency.

As part of its [Policy Placement Scheme](#), the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) welcomes applications from researchers/others interested in working within the Environment Agency. The Scheme encourages environmental science researchers and managers to spend time within a partner organisation to undertake policy-relevant research and to develop the research skills of partner employees. The placement will be jointly funded by NERC and the Environment Agency, and will be based at the Environment Agency, but the Fellow will remain officially employed by his/her institution.

Closing date: 11th February 2009. Interviews will take place in the week beginning 23rd February 2009.

[Application form](#) For further information contact Dr Liz Fellman, lizf@nerc.ac.uk, tel. 01793 442575 or Malcolm Gorton, malcolm.gorton@environment-agency.gov.uk.

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales. It is their job to make sure that air, land and water are looked after by everyone in today's society, so that tomorrow's generations inherit a cleaner, healthier world. Science and technology play a vital role in the work of the Environment Agency in providing key information, advice, tools and techniques to support our policies and work in protecting and improving the environment.

NERC

NERC funds world-class science in universities and our own research centres that increases knowledge and understanding of the natural world. We lead in providing independent research and training in the environmental sciences.

At the heart of NERC's new science strategy (published in November 2007) are plans to deliver the science needed to provide solutions to the global environmental challenges that the world is facing today and will face in the future. It is important that we demonstrate that NERC can identify and respond readily to changing needs and priorities. Working in partnership with the Environment Agency we aim to scope some of the emerging issues to help us deliver our current strategy and shape our future strategies.

Title of Project

Integrating the impacts of emerging science and technology into policy making in the Environment Agency.

Length of Placement:

The placement is for 12 months on a full-time basis although part-time working may be considered.

Location of Placement:

The placement will be based at the Environment Agency, Science Resources, Bath (regular bus service from train station), although there is an expectation that the person

would spend some time (one, perhaps two, days per month) at NERC's Swindon Office (located next to Swindon train station).

Job description:

Today's innovations shape the world that the Environment Agency and NERC will need to work within tomorrow. To understand what this place may look like is essential for strategy delivery and strategy development for both the Environment Agency and for NERC.

The successful applicant will work as part of the Environment Agency's Horizon Scanning and Technology team, whose primary objective is to raise the profile of emerging science and technology and identify plausible emerging threats and opportunities. In fulfilling this role, the team helps prepare the Environment Agency for tomorrow's challenges. This position represents a great opportunity to apply knowledge and skills to a new context in a policy making environment and to gain exposure to new technologies. The role will also help to frame some of the research questions NERC will need to identify in developing and delivering its strategy, as well as contributing more broadly to NERC's horizon scanning processes.

The responsibilities of the role, with support from the Horizon Scanning and Technology team will include activities such as:

- Horizon scanning to identify emerging science and technology relevant to the Environment Agency's and to NERC's strategic themes, including regular reporting to NERC on emerging issues in order to help deliver NERC's current strategy and shape future strategies
- Contributing toward developing a forward looking evidence base for environmental scenarios
- Contributing to ongoing working developing the future Environment Agency corporate strategy
- Embedding horizon scanning and futures processes into policy and strategy work within the Environment Agency
- Contribute to developing and embedding horizon scanning and futures processes within NERC

The applicant will be expected to have existing knowledge of broad research activities that may have an impact upon the environment or its regulators, and help the Environment Agency to work in partnership with NERC to identify the research and policy challenges faced by a future society. As well as working across the [themes](#) outlined in NERC's new [strategy](#): climate system, biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, earth system science, natural hazards, environment pollution and human health, and technologies, your research will also focus on the Environment Agency's themed science programmes; climate change, flood risk, resource efficiency, integrated catchment management, better regulation and innovation for efficiency, its policies and strategy refresh.

Skills Required:

The successful applicant should ideally have a strong scientific and policy background with a broad understanding of science and knowledge of research activity sources. A strong interest in driving forward the research agenda to serve policy and operational needs is essential, as are a degree of lateral thinking and creative thinking. The following skills are expected:

- Knowledge and research experience in a relevant field is vital, as well as an understanding of NERC and the Environment Agency's remits and responsibilities.
- Good communication, networking and presentation skills, for building links internally, with policy and operational customers within the Environment Agency and NERC, influencing policy and strategy development; and for developing links externally with other Research Councils, SEPA, government departments, and academics in the environmental, technology and social science fields.
- Ability to work strategically across disciplines (economic, social and environmental) and an appreciation of the policy and regulatory context of research.
- Good project management skills, and an ability to work independently as required.
- Data analysis skills for undertaking in-house analysis involving rapid processing of relevant evidence that can inform the impacts and opportunities relating to emerging issues.
- Good written communication skills to facilitate preparation of publications for both the Environment Agency and NERC. There will also be the potential to develop FP7 proposals with the Agency's external funding team, so experience of writing proposals would be an advantage.

Background: The successful applicant will be working in the Environment Agency's Science Department, supporting and advising the Science Programme Managers and Policy Teams on opportunities and risks of emerging science and technology such that they are considered within our short and longer term strategic planning. As a science-based organization, the Agency is constantly looking to work with the very best research groups on world-class scientific evidence. The successful applicant will be expected to develop further collaborative relationships in these scientific areas.