

NERC WORK SHADOW OPPORTUNITY : internship opportunity in Defra's Science and Evidence Team in the Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme, working with scientists and policy makers to review Defra's air quality modelling capacity.

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) welcome applications for a temporary placement to work with Defra in its Science and Evidence Team in the Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme, based in London (Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR) for a period of one month.

The post is being offered as part of the NERC [Workshadow Placement Scheme](#) aimed at supporting the science to policy processes between government departments and NERC. Work shadowing placements are suitable for researchers and other staff involved in environmental science research at any stage of their career although this opportunity would be particularly appropriate for a recently qualified PhD student with an interest in the science to policy interface.

During the placement, the work shadower will remain employed by her/his institution. NERC will cover travel and subsistence costs for the placement up to a maximum of £500 per week and £2,000 in total.

Closing date for applications: Wednesday 1st September 2010

An application form and guidance notes can be downloaded at :
<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/publicsector/workshadow.asp>

For further information contact: Emily Nicholl, Defra Science and Evidence Team, Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme (e-mail: Emily.Nicholl@defra.gsi.gov.uk Tel: +44 (0)207 238 6476) or Lesley Aspinall, Science to Policy Facilitator at NERC (e-mail laa@nerc.ac.uk Tel :+44 (0)1793 411536)

Details of the opportunity in Defra

Defra's Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme is reviewing its air quality modelling capacity to ensure that the scientific evidence base is fit for purpose for policy makers. In order to complete this review, a body of data is required to be collated on Defra's use of air quality models to generate the following:

- Technical detail on air quality models used at present
- The outputs the models provide – pollutants, averaging periods, temporal and spatial resolution
- The evidence needs and policy drivers met by the models.

This information is contained within contracts, contract outputs/reports and presentations and would also be gained from talking to Defra's contractors to ensure an accurate description is provided.

When completed, the body of data will be reviewed by an independent expert Steering Group who will provide recommendations to Defra on their current and future modelling capacity and the extent to which it is fit for purpose.

The internship would therefore provide an opportunity for a student to work closely with Defra scientists and policy makers to understand how evidence is used in policy making. It will provide insight into how Defra scientists work with external experts in the field, both consultants and researchers, to ensure they have a fit for purpose evidence base for policy making.

Skills essential: MS Excel, MS Word, ability to understand and process scientific and technical information and summarise succinctly.

Skills desirable: knowledge of air pollution science and general knowledge of air quality modelling.

Timescales: 1 month, to begin in September if possible.

Background

Defra and the devolved administrations have responsibility for managing outdoor air pollution in the UK; to make sure that the UK is meeting the requirements of European Directives, to make sure that the air we breathe is of an acceptable quality and to manage the effects of air pollution on the environment.

Defra's Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme aims to sustain and develop policies for cost-effective protection and improvement of atmosphere and environmental quality, contributing principally to measurable outcomes of improved human health, ecosystem protection and climate change mitigation.

To support these policy aims and to meet the requirements of European Directives, Defra has an extensive programme of air quality science and research. This includes a number of monitoring networks that measure the level of pollutants in the air, air quality modelling of the levels of air pollutants for complete UK coverage and forecasting, and research programmes to better understand how pollutants behave in the natural environment.

NERC funds world-class science in universities and research centres that increases knowledge and understanding of the natural world, through independent research and training in the environmental sciences. NERC's current strategy defines seven themes under which its science will be delivered: climate system, biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, earth system

science, natural hazards, environment pollution and human health, and technologies. NERC interacts and works regularly with a wide range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, to support the science to policy process and help develop appropriate ways to address environment issues.