 

**COP26 Fellowships – FAQ**

June 2020

**Research and engagement**

***Q: Are the Fellowships intended to be UK-focused (ie allow the UK to lead the international negotiations at COP26) or internationally-focused? Should the international focus be on developed countries, developing countries or at global scale?***

**A:** The Fellowships aim to support the international climate negotiations broadly defined, with a particular focus on COP26. Fellows will probably work most closely with the UK host, but may also engage with the UNFCCC Secretariat or other any other parties to the UNFCCC. Narrow proposals (e.g. climate policy in country X, the role of technology Y), will be less attractive, unless they offer lessons for the international negotiations.

***Q: What degree of focus on PCAN’s objectives must the Fellowship include? Should the Fellowship meet the needs of both PCAN and COP26?***

A: PCAN is about place-based climate action in the UK, so the COP26 Fellowships go well beyond PCAN’s remit. The role of subnational entities in the COP process globally is one potential avenue of exploration, but there are many others and a link to PCAN is not required.

***Q: The call document refers to work of “direct practical relevance to the deliberations at COP26”. Does this mean that the audience for outputs is explicitly politicians and negotiators, or are outputs aimed at the public or wider society appropriate?***

**A:** A wide range of potential audiences is possible for the Fellowships. The focus might be on particular UNFCCC processes (e.g. the rulebook) but can also be much broader, e.g. engaging with wider society on the climate negotiations.

***Q: Will the deliverables strictly need to be tailored to COP26 and the UK host, or are international benefits for climate policy and future COPs equally relevant?***

**A:** While the main objective of the Fellowships is to support COP26, wider analytical questions, e.g., on how to make the entire Paris process (not just this particular COP) more effective, would also be welcome.

***Q: Will activities under the Fellowship feed directly into the COP26 negotiations, or will Fellows run their own programmes in coordination with the UK COP26 Universities Network to feed into a broader discussion of the issues?***

**A:** *Fellows are able to collaborate with the UK COP26 Universities Network to help establish links with the relevant contacts in the COP26 teams and beyond, but it is for the Fellows to design and run these programmes. Fellows are not part of the UK COP delegation and their work will not be directed, commissioned or supervised by any COP26 entity.*

***Q: The call document refers to the possible availability of training. Can you elaborate***

**A:**  We are exploring, through a related project, a training course for academics to engage more effectively with policy makers. If this is set up in time we would invite interested Fellows to participate in the course.

**Analytical methods and outputs**

***Q: Are you interested mostly in desk-based or empirical research that uses existing data or is it possible to collect data? Do you consider projects to be done in cooperation with communities in the call?***

**A:**  There are no constraints with respect to research approaches or analytical methods. Community engagement is certainly possible, as is the collection of primary data. The only constraint is that results must be available in time to engage meaningfully with the COP process.

***Q: Is the panel looking for original research plan/insights or engagement activities (outside of the planned COP26 Universities network activities) in the proposal, or a combination of both?***

**A:** The proposed activities can and should go beyond the activities of just the COP26 Universities Network, although they will become embedded into it. Original research is very welcome, though engagement and synthesis are equally valuable. The main constraint is that results must be available in time to engage meaningfully with the COP process*.*

**Eligibility**

***Q: Do applicants have to have a contract at the time of application that extends to or beyond that start date of the Fellowship?***

**A:** Candidates have to have an employment contract during the Fellowship, since the Fellowship will be processed through their host institution. If they don’t have this, we need to hear from the host institution that they are happy to employ the candidate for the duration of the Fellowship on UKRI terms (i.e. be willing to cover the host institution’s 20% FEC).

***Q: Do applicants have to have completed their PhD at the time of application or prior to commencing the Fellowship?***

**A:** Candidates need to be in an employment contract for the duration of the Fellowship in order to be eligible. Typically, this means they need to have their PhDs or equivalent academic experience at the start of the Fellowship.

***Q: Do you consider relevant equivalent experience in place of a PhD?***

**A:** This would be acceptable, provided the applicants are bona fide independent researchers. The PhD is just one way to signal this is the case.

***Q: Is there scope to write into the proposal research assistance in the form of PDRA support?***

**A:** Yes, this is possible, and will often be an effective way of organising the proposed work.

***Q: Can Fellowships be shared between two people?***

**A:** Yes, this is possible, as long as both individual contributions are equally significant. If one of the contributions is a lot smaller, a structure with research assistants may be

easier.

**Budget and timeframe**

***Q: Is the indicative budget of £65,000 - £100,000 per Fellowship the 100% FEC amount or the  80% UKRI-funded amount? Are higher or lower amounts possible?***

**A:** This is the 100% FEC amount, of which the Fellowship will cover 80% and the host institution 20% FEC. Higher or lower amounts are possible. The overall budget for the COP26 Fellowship programme is £400,000. We anticipate making four to six awards, implying an indicative budget of £65,000 - £100,000 at 100% FEC per Fellowship. However, proposals outside this range will also be considered, although budgets may be subject to negotiation.

***Q: Can people start earlier or later than autumn 2020, and can the Fellowship be shorter or longer than one year? Are there any budget implications of a different start date?***

**A:** We expect Fellows to engage actively with the COP26 Universities Network, which is up and running now and will continue until COP26, which is now in November 2021. Many Fellows will also wish to participate in the actual COP. This makes Fellowships over the entire academic year 2020/21 the most natural option. However, different durations are possible. Candidates will have to submit a budget that reflects the proposed length of the Fellowship. The programme ends at the end of November 2021 so all Fellowships must conclude by then.

***Q: What is the expected minimum time commitment from Fellows under project?***

**A:** We have deliberately not specified exact time commitments, but we expect Fellows to make a significant contribution to the COP26 process, including time to engage with policy makers and the COP26 Universities Network. However, there is flexibility and we appreciate many people will have other commitments (e.g. teaching).

***Q: What expenditures are eligible?***

**A:** The standard [UKRI rules on eligible expenditures](https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/) apply (e.g. in terms of publication costs).

***Q: Is travel and accommodation for COP26 included? What are the expectations in terms of attending the COP?***

**A:**  Fellows are highly unlikely to participate in the entire COP26 fortnight. However, we would encourage Fellows to participate in selected side events (some of which may be organised by the CO26 Universities Network). The submitted budget should include provisions for this. Note that badges for access to the negotiations will have to be secured through the Fellow’s host university.

***Q: Are there any additional resources through the COP26 Universities Network?***

**A:** The Universities Network cannot support individual projects. Any such activities should be budgeted for. However, the network has the capacity to convene meetings across the Fellowship programme and facilitate access to decision makers.

***Q: Can applicants submit indexed costs and use their institutional indexation rate?***

A: No indexation is necessary.

**Submission of proposals and evaluation**

***Q: Who will evaluate the proposals? Should proposals be pitched to a scientific or a lay audience? Will evaluators have expertise in my area of interest?***

**A:** *Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by an interdisciplinary panel of academics from engineering, the social sciences and the natural sciences. The panel will also include experts who are close to the climate negotiations and can judge policy relevance. As such, proposals should be pitched to an analytically competent audience, but core experts in your area.*

***Q: In respect of the required support from the host institution, is there any formal documentation required to confirm this (letter of support etc.)?***

**A:** Applicants should discuss their proposal with their institution and secure the necessary approvals. However, we do not need a support letter at this stage.

***Q: Are we to include references in the project summary and, if so, can we provide these in an abbreviated format?***

**A:** Only really essential references need to be included and this can be in abbreviated form.