

2022 Call for Parliamentary Thematic Research Leads: Guidance Notes for Applicants

Please read this document BEFORE submitting your application.

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) is collaborating with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to launch a new and exciting partnership between Parliament and the research community, which will place academics at the heart of Parliament.

For nearly ten years, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has collaborated with Parliament by investing in the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). Through the collaboration, the partners have embedded social science research in Parliament, developed a world-leading Knowledge Exchange Unit, and established a culture of knowledge exchange between Parliament and the research community.

Building on the successes of the past decade, POST is now entering into a new phase of collaboration with ESRC that seeks to bring about a step change in the way research feeds into Parliament's scrutiny, legislation and debate.

This autumn, new pilot thematic policy hubs will be created to bring together experts from select committees, library staff and POST. These hubs will allow parliamentary staff to share and develop expertise to inform scrutiny, legislation and debate that addresses key economic and societal challenges.

POST and ESRC will pilot the creation of a network of Thematic Research Leads (TRLs) in support of this work.

TRLs will be mid-career researchers embedded part-time in the hubs, bringing their academic expertise and experience of working with research evidence to the policy, research and analysis work that is carried out across Parliament.

These positions, if proven, may ultimately become highly influential and prestigious roles at the heart of Parliament, somewhat akin to the Government's Chief Scientific Advisers, but shaped for a parliamentary context.

The TRLs that POST and ESRC will appoint as part of this pilot will help to shape the development of this new approach to evidence engagement in Parliament. They will help to ensure that:

- thematic policy hubs take a strategic, forward-looking, evidence-informed approach to engaging with policy areas
- the best available research evidence feeds into the committees, libraries and POST
- networks and connections between Parliament and the wider research community are strengthened

TRLs will be mid-career researchers who conduct the role of TRL part-time: three days a week (0.6FTE), whilst retaining their substantive academic post the remaining two days a week.

POST and ESRC will launch this pilot at the end of 2022, with three TRLs appointed to join three policy hubs in Parliament on the following areas:

- Climate and Environment

- International Affairs and Defence
- Parliament, Public Administration and Constitution.

Funding for the TRL positions will be provided by ESRC.

Throughout 2023, these three TRLs will establish ways of working and inform the future development of these roles and the policy hubs.

This guidance provides further information about the following aspects of the Parliamentary Thematic Research Leads 2022 Call:

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1. Key dates

- 13 June 2022: Parliamentary Thematic Research Leads Call opens for applications
- 1 August 2022: Deadline for applications
- Early September 2022: Interviews
- October 2022 – successful applicant’s Research Organisation submits a Je-S form to ESRC
- October – December 2022: Onboarding
- From January 2023: Thematic Research Leads take up their positions in Parliament

It is our expectation that the process will follow the timescales above. Should any changes to this be necessary, we will update the Thematic Research Leads Call webpage with details as soon as possible.

We are aware that adjustments of timing may be required for some applicants throughout this process including disabled people, those with caring responsibilities and those observing religious occasions or festivities. If you have any adjustment needs that will impact your participation in the timescales above, please let us know so that we can consider an adjustment for you.

2. Eligibility and security clearance

Applications are open to all UK-based mid-career university researchers who already have a PhD and are employed on an academic contract. Exceptionally, they are also open to those who don't have a PhD but have equivalent experience of a mid-career researcher and are employed on an academic contract.

For the purposes of this call, mid-career researchers are considered those in professional research roles up to but not including professorial level.

If successful in your application, you will be required to complete pre-employment checks. You must have permission to work in the UK, and will need to receive security clearance from UK Parliament to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level. You are required to pass these checks before an offer can be confirmed. You should be aware that if you have resided outside of the UK for a total of more than

two of the last five years, you are not eligible to receive security clearance to work on the Parliamentary Estate. Find [information on the Government webpages on United Kingdom Security Vetting](#) and [information on the security vetting process in Parliament](#).

If you are unsure whether you are eligible to apply, please [get in touch with the Knowledge Exchange Unit at Parliament](#) to ask.

When submitting your application, you should provide evidence of your Head of Department's support, including your institution's financial support, for you to take up the position as Thematic Research Lead.

3. Funding

Funding for the Thematic Research Lead positions will be provided by ESRC. Each post is for a 12-month period at 0.6 FTE. Applicants will be able to request 80% of justified costs of a total Full Economic Cost of up to £125K (including justified travel and subsistence costs within this amount). Applicants will be expected to comply with UKRI Terms and Conditions and applicants must be from a research organisation eligible for ESRC funding. ESRC will meet 80% of the full economic costs and the host institution is expected to support the remaining 20%.

POST will contribute in-kind funding including supervision, professional development opportunities, workspace and IT equipment.

4. How to apply

In 2022, we are recruiting three Thematic Research Leads with the following portfolios and areas of expertise:

- Climate and Environment
- International Affairs and Defence
- Parliament, Public Administration and Constitution.

Each Thematic Research Lead role has a Person Specification available on Parliament's online recruitment portal, as well as on the Thematic Research Lead Call webpage. Each Person Specification outlines:

- The role of the Thematic Research Lead
- The expected timeline and working arrangements
- The skills and experience required in the role, which will be assessed at application and interview

You should consult the Thematic Research Lead Person Specification for the role you would like to apply to undertake.

To apply, you will need to complete an application for your chosen role on Parliament's online recruitment portal. This is not an employment recruitment process; an online recruitment portal is being used for best practice, including protection of your data and diversity monitoring.

In the application, you will need to demonstrate how you meet the criteria listed in the Thematic Research Lead Person Specification.

You will also need to submit a three-page CV, which emphasises your knowledge exchange and engagement activities as well as work with networks. You should upload this to the recruitment portal and submit it along with your application.

When preparing your application, you should confirm your Head of Department's support – including your research institution's financial support – to take up the role. You and your Head of Department should complete the 'Support and Funding Verification Form', which must be signed by your Head of Department. You should upload this to the recruitment portal and submit it along with your application.

The deadline to submit your application is 23:55pm on Monday 1 August 2022.

Please note that your application will be ineligible if any part of the application is left blank.

5. Assessment and selection process

Your application will be assessed by the POST's Knowledge Exchange Lead, a senior official from the House of Commons Select Committee Team or Library, and a member of the thematic policy hub in which you would be based.

Assessment of your application will take into consideration the degree to which you meet the skills and experience criteria listed in the Thematic Research Lead Person Specification.

If you are successful at the initial application stage, you will be invited to an interview. Full details will be provided at that stage.

If you are invited to interview, we will ask you a combination of competency questions and role specific questions based on the criteria in the Thematic Research Lead Person Specification. The interview panel will consist of staff who participated in the shortlisting exercise and a representative of the research community. A representative of ESRC may also join to observe the interview.

We may also ask you to complete a test, presentation or other assessment as a part of your recruitment process. Any presentation or test requirements will be clearly communicated to you well in advance of your interview.

6. Our values

The House of Commons is proud of our organisational values, which will deliver our strategy.

We are looking for people who can bring these values to life:

Inclusive: We value everyone equally; We respect each other; We all have a voice.

Courageous: We try new things; We own our actions and decisions; We learn from our mistakes.

Trusted: We trust each other to do a good job; We are impartial; We build confidence in Parliament with our integrity.

Collaborative: We share our knowledge and experience; We work towards a shared vision; We know we work better in a partnership.

7. Reasonable adjustments and workplace adjustments

If you require any recruitment documentation in other formats or if you require reasonable adjustments to be made during the application process, please contact the recruitment team on recruitment@parliament.uk and/or specify this in the allocated place on the application.

The House of Commons supports individuals in need of workplace adjustments. The workplace adjustment process prevents, reduces or removes problems you might face during the course of your time as Thematic Research Lead at Parliament. Adjustments can be requested to help with obstacles relating to mental health, and physical or non-physical requirements. You can request a workplace adjustment if you have a disability or suffer from a difficulty or disadvantage in your

workplace.

8. Ethics approval

If, as part of your role as Thematic Research Lead, you were to engage in research that raises ethical issues, such as the collection of data from human participants (including Parliamentarians, Members' staff and or parliamentary staff, or anyone else), you would be responsible for obtaining ethics approval from the appropriate body prior to undertaking the research. This will usually be your university.

9. Thematic Research Lead status

You will have the status of Parliamentary Thematic Research Lead for the duration of your time in Parliament, and at no point will you hold the status of employee of the House.

10. Terms and conditions

If you are successful in your application, you will be required to enter into a Formal Agreement that sets out the specific terms governing your engagement in Parliament as a Thematic Research Lead. You must also undergo security vetting. Your placement is conditional on the formal agreement being signed and security clearance being obtained.

The paragraphs below are intended to give you a general indication of some of the key terms that will apply whilst you are in role as a Thematic Research Lead; the paragraphs in themselves are not intended to be legally binding, but the Formal Agreement will be, once signed.

Impartiality

In line with the policy of the UK Parliament, Thematic Research Leads must be, and appear to be, honest and impartial in the exercise of their work as Thematic Research Leads. They must demonstrate the same impartiality as parliamentary staff, who must provide services with complete political impartiality, and whose work, including briefing and advice, must not be influenced by their personal political opinions.

Confidential Information

The Formal Agreement will set out the terms on which Thematic Research Leads will be permitted to access and use confidential information. Such information may include:

- any information that relates to the proceedings, business, affairs, personnel and suppliers of either House of Parliament;
- personal data as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018;
- information which has a confidentiality or privacy marking;
- information protected by the Official Secrets Act 1989;
- information protected by parliamentary privilege, including papers and evidence received by select committees, draft committee reports and internal committee papers.

Copyright

The Formal Agreement will outline that Parliament will own the copyright in any works made by the Thematic Research Lead in the course or arising out of their role to which Parliamentary copyright applies, or which are made for the benefit of either House of Parliament (for example parliamentary briefings).

The Thematic Research Lead will own the copyright of any works made by the Thematic Research Lead in the course or arising out of their role which are not made solely for the benefit of either

House of Parliament (for example blogs, articles, books).

The Agreement will include a term whereby Thematic Research Leads grant to Parliament a non-exclusive, indefinite, cost- and royalty-free, worldwide licence to use the material they create through their role as Thematic Research Lead in all media and for any purpose. It will include that the Thematic Research Lead and Parliament will jointly own the copyright of works created jointly.

Publication of Thematic Research Lead Outputs

The Formal Agreement will contain provisions specifying that:

- Publication of material that draws upon or includes confidential information will be subject to the prior agreement of the parliamentary supervisor.
- Publication of material that includes information gained in the service of a select committee or otherwise protected by parliamentary privilege will be subject to the prior agreement of that committee or either House of Parliament as appropriate. Thematic Research Leads will be required to keep the material confidential if such permission is denied.

Status

Nothing in the Agreement will constitute the status of the Thematic Research Lead as an employee of the House of Commons / House of Lords.

Conflicts of interest

Thematic Research Leads will be required to follow standard procedures for registering any conflicts of interest that may arise during the course of their placement.

11. Contacts and sources of further information

For more information, please see the Parliamentary Thematic Research Lead Call webpage.

For any remaining queries, please contact:

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