PhD placements in the Cabinet Office’s Open Innovation Team

The Cabinet Office’s Open Innovation Team has been established to generate analysis and ideas for priority projects by helping officials collaborate more intensively with outside experts. We are supported by Research Councils UK and sponsored by four leading universities — Essex, Lancaster, York and Brunel — but our relationship with our sponsors is not exclusive.

We are inviting PhD students to join our team on placement for a minimum of 3 months to help us deliver projects on health, welfare reform, industrial strategy, digital transformation and various other priority areas.

Over the past two years, we have had more than 40 PhD students join our team or departments we are working with for placements of three to six months. At least five of these students have gone on to get policy jobs after completing their studies. Please get in touch if you are interested in arranging a placement with us at openinnovation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

Responsibilities
PhD students working with us on placement will be expected to carry out a range of tasks, including:

- Reviewing evidence to inform policy discussions and help scope out projects
- Generating analysis and policy ideas working alongside officials and outside experts
- Developing project plans to ensure projects remain on track
- Pitching new projects to Whitehall departments and non-government partners
- Managing stakeholders inside and outside Whitehall
- Organising engagement activity, including arranging meetings, university visits and Whitehall policy seminars

Required skills/experience
We are looking for PhD students who can:

- Communicate well, including translating complex ideas to non-expert audiences
- Manage their time effectively, juggling a variety of tasks with minimal supervision
- Collaborate with a variety of team members, government officials and academics
- Adapt as projects and partners evolve
- Demonstrate an interest in policy and a willingness to learn about new issues

Training and experience expected to be gained on the placement
The placement will provide an excellent opportunity to:

- Understand more about how Whitehall works and how policy is developed
- Hone writing and communication skills for non-expert audiences
- Develop networks in government, including the Cabinet Office and other departments
- Build knowledge of new policy areas