



Oxford Policy Engagement Network and Policy Profession Peer Mentoring Scheme 2022-23

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1. Summary

Following a successful pilot in 2021/22, the University of Oxford's Policy Engagement Team and UK Civil Service Policy Profession Unit are inviting Expressions of Interest (Eoi) from those who would like to take part in the next cohort of the Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN) Peer Mentoring Scheme.

The scheme matches 15 researchers at Oxford with 15 peers in the Policy Profession for six months, enabling them

- To deepen their understanding of how research can inform policymaking and develop the relevant skills to catalyse that process;
- To broaden and deepen their academic and policy networks; and
- To strengthen leadership for academic-policy engagement.

As each other's peer mentors, the researcher and policy professional will provide each other with a sounding board, confidant, motivator, and source of challenge and feedback; and clarify the culture, politics, and values of their respective environments. This document sets out further details about the scheme and how to submit an Expression of Interest to join the next cohort of peer mentors.

Deadline: 12:00 BST, 19 December 2022

2. About the OPEN Peer Mentoring Scheme

This boundary-spanning scheme aims to bring together researchers and policy professionals with a shared interest in connecting research and policy. Both researchers and policy professionals often seek advice or direction from more experienced colleagues. The sponsors of this scheme consider that a peer-to-peer approach to mentoring is more conducive to achieving the scheme's objectives and more likely to generate network connections that outlive the mentoring relationship.

OPEN and the Policy Professional piloted the scheme between October 2021 – March 2022, matching five researchers from the University of Oxford's Faculty of Classics, Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, School of Geography and the Environment and Department of Education, with five policy professionals from the UK government's Department for Education, Department for Health and Social Care and Department for Work and Pensions. All those who completed an evaluation of the scheme indicated that they would recommend the scheme to a colleague and felt more confident in engaging with academics/policymakers as a result of participating.

The scheme is now expanding to others in OPEN and the Policy Profession who would like to join the next cohort of peer mentors, running from February 2023 to August 2023.

3. Objectives

The scheme aims to enable participating researchers and policy professionals to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- To deepen their understanding of how research can inform policy making;
- To develop awareness of their relevant strengths, potential, and opportunities for professional development and leadership in academic-policy engagement;
- To use this awareness to enable them to self-match with a mutually beneficial mentor using an online mentoring matching platform;
- To plan how to acquire more of the knowledge and skills required to achieve their potential, and begin to do so;
- To broaden and deepen their research and policy networks;
- To develop their understanding of mentoring, and some of the skills required to do it well;
- To enhance their motivation to engage; and
- To build their confidence.

4. How does it work?

The scheme is overseen by a Mentoring Committee, who will propose matches, and managed by two Mentoring Coordinators – one each from the University's Policy Engagement Team and one from the Policy Profession Unit. The scheme is run through the online platform MentorNet, as follows:

- Once accepted onto the programme participants will be invited to register on MentorNet, and create their peer mentor profile.
- Participants will be invited to consider the profiles of 15 potential peer mentors and to inform the Mentoring Coordinators of their choice of up to three who they consider likely to be a good match for them.
- The Mentoring Committee will assign peer mentor pairs, taking participants' preferences into consideration.
- Each peer mentor pair will be invited to diarise and meet in an initial 15-minute "chemistry" meeting, to explore whether the partnership is mutually agreeable. Both peer mentors will confirm with their respective Mentoring Coordinator within 24 hours whether or not they are willing to proceed with the partnership.
- Where a match is not deemed mutually agreeable, the Mentoring Committee may propose a new peer mentor for participants. If this is not possible, or this alternative partnership is not found to be mutually agreeable, participants will be invited to join the next cohort of the scheme instead.
- Peer mentor pairs are expected to meet at least once per month until the scheme ends on 24 August 2023, providing a short record of each meeting via MentorNet.

See also Cohort-building and support (Section 9 below).

5. How will Eols be assessed?

Eols should demonstrate an interest in, and some understanding of, either public policy in at least one area (for researchers) or academic research (for policy professionals). Eol should also demonstrate how the applicant's objectives align with the scheme's objectives.

6. Who can apply?

Researchers

Eol are invited from OPEN members on a research or academic contract at the University of Oxford which lasts for the duration of the scheme (i.e. at least 19 December 2022 – 24 August 2023).

Retired and Emeritus Fellows, as well as Masters and DPhil students, are ineligible.

Polymakers

Eol are invited from any civil servant who is a member of the Policy Profession at grade 7 or higher.

All applicants must be available to attend an in-person cohort-building event in Oxford on 2 March 2023 and commit to meeting with their peer mentor for at least one hour, once per month, for the duration of the scheme.

7. How to apply

Researchers

Researchers must have [joined OPEN](#) before applying.

Researchers should submit their Eol by 12:00 BST on 19 December 2023 using this form: <https://oxford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/open-peer-mentoring-scheme-expression-of-interest-form-2>

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their Eol w/c 2 January 2023.

Policy professionals

Policy professionals should contact Sue Lovelace at the Policy Profession Unit for further information: sue.lovelace@policyprofession.gov.uk.

Places will be allocated on a rolling basis from 1 September. Applicants will hear back from the Mentoring Coordinators within five working days.

8. Evaluation

All participants will be invited to an evaluation and networking meeting in Summer 2023 in London, and to complete an evaluation questionnaire about the scheme.

9. Cohort-building and support

Participants are:

- Expected to participate in an in-person, half-day meeting in Oxford on 2 March 2023 to meet other members of the cohort, share details of some of the engagement-related challenges they are facing, and offer insights that may be of common interest;
- Expected to participate in two online sessions for the whole cohort in which policy professionals (session 1) and researchers (session 2) will share more about their work and day-to-day responsibilities with others in the cohort; and
- Encouraged to be in touch with Mentoring Co-ordinators at any point to discuss any concerns they may have relating to the scheme.

If you have any questions about the scheme, or would like to discuss an EoI, please use the contact details below.

Researchers	Jess Hedge	jessica.hedge@socsci.ox.ac.uk
Policy professionals	Sue Lovelace	sue.lovelace@policyprofession.gov.uk

10. Key dates

Action	Date
Call opens	24 November 2023
Application deadline	12:00 BST, 19 December 2022
Deadline for participants to express their preferred choices for a peer mentor	24 January 2023
Participants seek chemistry meeting with their proposed peer mentor	26 January 2023 – 9 February 2023
Half-day, in-person cohort building event in Oxford	2 March 2023
Half-day, in-person networking event in Whitehall	Summer 2023