



Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement

CAPE Policy Fellowship 2024 North Tyne Combined Authority

Context

Through the Capabilities in Academic-Policy Engagement (CAPE) project, we are pleased to announce a new Policy Fellowship opportunity with the North Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA). To support effective and sustained engagement between academics and policy professionals, CAPE is funding a Fellowship for up to 6 months to enhance research and academic participation in NTCA's policymaking through accelerated learning and co-production practices. This project will enable Northumbria University researchers to continue to develop and apply their research to an evolving policy context. This new Fellowship is an exciting opportunity for eligible academic and research staff at Northumbria University.

The main objective of the fellowship is to develop and demonstrate a collaborative, challenge-led model of academic-policy engagement. The fellowship will focus on the issue of inclusive economic growth, and specifically the way in which public sector innovation can support a more inclusive economy. In doing so, the fellowship will:

- Lead the planning, development and delivery of co-productive and creative spaces to connect policy questions, policy makers and academic expertise in innovative ways and to inform future knowledge exchange practice.
- Enhance the mobilisation of academic knowledge in the North of Tyne area and beyond to address the NTCA's policy priority of inclusive economic growth, by bringing together new collaborative communities of practice.
- Support engagement between the NTCA, Northumbria University and Insights North-East (INE), to bridge the gap between place-based policy and academic research.
- Evaluate and contextualise the fellowship in order to determine best practice models of academic-policy engagement to inform sustainable collaboration in the North East of England and beyond.
- Develop an evidence-based approach, building on some or all of the main themes of the current NTCA programme to achieve inclusive economic growth – child poverty, education improvement, quality of life/inclusion, employability.

The Policy Fellow will also engage with other relevant public sector, research and policy organisations and civil society and communities.

The North of Tyne is filled with stunning natural landscapes, great people, and strong institutions which make our area a truly great place to live, work and do businesses. Its economy is built on a tradition and culture of innovation, and its fast-growing digital sector, thriving offshore renewable capabilities, and specialist health and life-science industries are recognised around the world.

NTCA's innovation excellence is supported by two leading universities and numerous research assets, such as the National Innovation Centre of Rural Enterprise and National Innovation Centre for Ageing. The longstanding collaborations between public, private, voluntary and higher education help our economy to keep pace with changing social, economic and environmental contexts, within the region and beyond.

But our area is also one of contrasts. There are pockets of poor educational outcomes and lower skills levels. Some of our rural areas have poor transport links, making accessing employment and learning difficult. Overall, worklessness remains significantly above the national average, while health outcomes are below average, and this is impacting on people's abilities to live lives to the full and on productivity and wage levels.

NTCA's future ambitions for the region are presently centred around policies which **drive innovation, enable the transition to Net Zero**, and reduce inequalities by delivering **inclusive economic growth**. It is only by drawing on the region's expertise and strengths, and by working together will we achieve these ambitions.

The fellowship will focus on the issue of inclusive economic growth, and specifically the way in which public sector innovation can support a more inclusive economy. The NTCA has already made significant commitments to programmes of work designed to reduce the impact of child poverty, improve educational attainment and improve the quality of life for residents and communities, and work of the fellow(s) will support ongoing activities, including in the future iteration of NEMCA (North East Mayoral Combined Authority) for which Mayoral elections will take place in May 2024.

Role description

The Policy Fellow will have a dedicated remit to design and deliver activities which aim to address or advance strategic policy priorities through the application of research, with a specific focus on the systems and processes which underpin knowledge exchange. S/he will act as a facilitator to guide policy and academic professionals from multiple policy areas in a process of solution-focused, timebound rapid engagement. The Fellow will complement other NTCA advisers and analytical experts by contributing to the creation of an evidence informed base to inform future policy.

The successful candidate will work closely with the NTCA, Northumbria University and CAPE. There will also be the potential to link with other relevant organisations, partnerships including Insights North East, public sector, research and policy organisations, civil society and communities.

The main responsibilities of the post will be to:

- Lead the planning, development and delivery of co-productive and creative spaces to connect policy questions, policy makers and academic expertise in innovative ways
- Through the delivery of these co-productive activities, expand the understanding and use of high-quality expertise and evidence in regional policy development within the NTCA, and increase the ability of the academic community to apply knowledge and expertise to regional policy needs through evidence informed policy making
- Increase NTCA access to academic expertise to support the understanding of key policy challenges and the co-creation of a knowledge base to address them
- Build on existing programmes within the NTCA, and with partners, to strengthen networks between the NTCA and academic communities to promote knowledge exchange
- Identify key areas of research interest and long-term policy questions for the North of Tyne area for which research capabilities could be harnessed and identify practical collaborative activities to support policy development and implementation.

Priority tasks may include:

- Organising and facilitating collaborative knowledge exchange processes and other activities on topics co-identified with the NTCA and other stakeholders
- To identify areas of practice which might benefit from academic thinking, research or oversight, or where there are gaps in evidence or practice
- Identifying ready-made research which could be made more impactful through exposure to practical, real-world policy challenges
- Collating new evidence and thinking emerging from challenge-led exchange activities, and applying it to help strengthen the rationale for public sector intervention across different policy areas
- Explore the potential for creating sustainable networks of expertise and support ongoing collaboration related to long-term regional policy priorities
- Drawing on lessons of practical activities above, develop a robust business case with recommendations for how best to enhance academic-policy engagement in the North of Tyne area
- Work to contribute to live policy developments including collaboration across multi-disciplinary domains
- Work with the NTCA Data and Insights team to report upon and connect the outputs and outcomes of the Fellowship with NTCA governance structures and identify meaningfully and sustainable solutions to embed practices in future policy development approaches
- Working with CAPE on the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot; leading on data collection through interviews, surveys and /or other methods; capturing and sharing widely lessons learned.
- Develop an evidence base aligning with main themes of the NTCA programme to contribute to evidence informed policy making.

The successful candidate will be placed in the NTCA offices and will also be connected to the Northumbria University and CAPE. A blend of remote and in person working is encouraged.

The postholder will be provided with a senior mentor to help them become familiar with, and navigate, the structures within the NTCA. They will be expected to attend relevant management and policy-focused meetings, internally and externally, to ensure they are properly embedded and networked across NTCA, CAPE partners and the broader university sector.

They will sit in the Data and Insights team at NTCA, as part of the wider Innovation and Strategy function. They will work across policy departments such as the Education Improvement, Inclusive Economy, Housing and Land, and Rural, Creative and Culture. The position will be monitored and evaluated by CAPE and the NTCA over the period of the Fellowship to determine its success and any improvements that could be made to the post.

About you

Essential

- Expertise and experience in challenge-led or solution-focused (design) processes.
- Expertise and experience in using research as a means of informing and contributing towards policy development.
- Ability to operate effectively, openly, and collaboratively within highly sensitive political contexts; ability to demonstrate neutrality and impartiality while navigating competing stakeholder interests.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to effectively engage with people from different backgrounds, and at different levels of seniority.
- Strong writing skills and proven communications experience with both academic and non-academic audiences are particularly important.
- An ability to grasp project priorities quickly.
- Ability to work proactively, managing and prioritising your own workload, while managing contingencies between multiple project stakeholders.
- Excellent research and analytic skills, with demonstrable experience or transferable skills in translating research findings to other contexts.

Desirable

- Expertise or experience in an area of policy priority for public service reform, innovation or management, public health, or a wider policy priority for NTCA.
- Policy development and implementation experience.
- Previous experience of working in, or with, local and/or regional development.
- Experience of working with key stakeholders.
- Knowledge and understanding the role of the North of Tyne governance structures.

About CAPE Policy Fellowships:

This Fellowship is open to eligible academic and research staff at Northumbria University as part of the CAPE Research England funded project. It is offered on a full or part-time basis for up to 6 months. The fellowship award may be up to £40,000, dependent on career stage and salary level, experience, and time commitment, funded through CAPE. Specific terms and conditions will be stated in a joint fellowship agreement between Northumbria University and the NTCA, which the successful candidate will be required to sign at the start of their fellowship

The fellowship will start as soon as possible. It is expected that the successful candidate will take a hybrid approach to flexible working. They will be based at the NTCA's and at Northumbria University offices as well as working remotely. We will discuss a preferred working pattern with the successful candidate.

We are committed to being an inclusive employer. We welcome applications from everyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith or disability.

Closing date for applications:

Applications close at 4pm on February 13th 2024. Interviews are planned to be held on February 28th 2024.

For an informal discussion or for any queries, please contact Matilda Leng, Policy and Project Officer at Northumbria University email: matilda.leng@northumbria.ac.uk or Alex Black, Data and Insights Officer, North Tyne Combined Authority email: alex.black@northoftyne-ca.gov.uk

How to apply

To apply please send:

- A short CV (max 4 pp)
- A covering letter outlining your suitability for the role
- A writing sample produced for a non-academic audience (if available)
- A letter of support from your Head of Department/ Line Manager

to Lucy Jowett lucy.jowett@northumbria.ac.uk by the closing date of **4pm on 13th February 2024**

About the NTCA

The North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) is a ground-breaking organisation, allowing the transfer of new powers and money from the Government to our area. We are making an ambitious contribution to the lives of local people, with a clear priority to help the communities we serve to fulfil their true potential. <https://www.northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/news/our-corporate-plan/>

Devolution has given us the chance to make decisions about our future, so we are targeting investment where we know we need it most, ensuring economic growth is supported by people with the right skills, education and confidence to benefit from every opportunity.

At NTCA, we don't just accept difference, we celebrate it, we support it, and we thrive on it for the benefit of our team, our mission, and our residents. We are proud to embrace diversity and equal opportunity in a serious way, and we are committed to building a team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. The more inclusive we are, the better our work will be.

About CAPE

The £10 million, 4-year Research England-funded [CAPE](#) project is a partnership between UCL and the universities of Cambridge, Manchester, Northumbria and Nottingham, in collaboration with the Government Office for Science, the Parliamentary Office for Science & Technology, the Alliance for Useful Evidence, and the Transforming Evidence Hub, funded by Research England.

CAPE has been created to support effective and sustained engagement between academics and policy professionals across the higher education sector. CAPE comprises four broad workstreams under which activities related to the academic-policy interventions will be co-designed with policy partners: training; knowledge exchange events; seed funding; and policy fellowships. Evaluation is embedded across the project and integrated in the delivery of activities in order to 'learn as we go' and share emerging knowledge with university and public policy stakeholders.