



**Australian Government**  
**Office of the Chief Scientist**



# Program Summary

Australian Science Policy Fellowship Program

Office of the Chief Scientist

# Contents

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Contents .....                              | 2 |
| About the program .....                     | 3 |
| Eligibility .....                           | 4 |
| Role of Office of the Chief Scientist ..... | 4 |
| Role of Host Departments .....              | 4 |
| Role of Partner Organisations .....         | 5 |
| What does the program offer?.....           | 5 |
| Application Timeline .....                  | 6 |
| Online Application .....                    | 7 |

# About the program

The Australian Science Policy Fellowship Pilot Program (the program) seeks to grow the diversity of expertise in the Australian Public Service workforce by providing a pathway for early- and mid-career scientists and engineers to become skilled policy practitioners. The program strengthens the science-policy interface by producing both a scientifically informed policy workforce and a policy literate academic community, strengthening the links between science and policymaking.

The program is inspired by similar successful programs internationally, including in the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and several countries in the Asian region.

The program has been endorsed by Commonwealth Science Council and Secretaries Board. The program is championed by the Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel AO, and is administered by the Office of the Chief Scientist in collaboration with other Commonwealth Departments and Agencies.

## Duration of the fellowships

Each fellowship will be for a period of 12 months.

## Number of fellowships available

There will be up to 20 fellowships available each year depending on placements available from host departments.

## Target candidates

The program targets early- and mid-career scientists and engineers with up to 15 years post-PhD experience.

## Terms of employment

Successful applicants will be employed by host departments as non-ongoing policy officers for 12 months. Appointments will be made at the APS6 level and under the enterprise agreement of the host department.

## Location

Host departments are located in Canberra and successful candidates will be required to relocate in order to participate in the program.

# Eligibility

The Australian Science Policy Fellowship Pilot Program seeks candidates from a range of backgrounds within the following eligibility criteria. Applicants must

- be an Australian citizen aged 18 years or over
- hold a PhD in one of the following disciplines
  - medical and health sciences
  - biological, physical or earth sciences
  - behavioural sciences
  - computational sciences and mathematics
  - engineering disciplines (applicants with a Masters in engineering and three years of professional engineering experience also qualify)
- be no more than 15 years post PhD completion (adjusted for career breaks) and
- be prepared to relocate to Canberra if you currently live interstate.

Degrees from overseas universities must be recognised by an Overseas Qualification Unit.

More information on overseas qualifications recognition is available at

<https://internationaleducation.gov.au/services-and-resources/pages/qualifications-recognition.aspx>

## Role of Office of the Chief Scientist

The Office of the Chief Scientist is responsible for the management of the program, including advertising the program each year, the recruitment process, supporting the alumni network (in collaboration with partner organisations) and evaluating the pilot program performance. The Office of the Chief Scientist also facilitates mentoring opportunities in collaboration with host departments.

## Role of Host Departments

Host departments will employ participants in the program as policy officers on a non-ongoing basis for 12 months.

To participate in the program, host departments will provide an outline of the opportunity available in their department, including an outline of the proposed work area and responsibilities.

To ensure candidate suitability, host departments will participate in second-round interviews of candidates (see Application Timeline section below).

As the program aims to provide exposure to the culture and practice of policy development, fellows will be embedded in a team in their host department and will gain first-hand experience of the policymaking process. Fellows will not be subject-matter specialists, but will apply their skills and experience in scientific research to policy problems.

Host departments are also expected to support fellows in their professional development, including through formal training opportunities and mentoring.

Host departments are responsible for supporting the salary and reasonable relocation costs for their fellows.

A merit list at the APS 6 level will be established through the initial selection process and can be used by host departments to permanently appoint the fellow, subject to certain conditions.

If the merit list is not able to be used, a separate recruitment process will need to occur if host areas wish to recruit participants permanently. This is the responsibility of the host department.

## Role of Partner Organisations

The pilot would not have been possible without the support and guidance of the partner organisations. Partner organisations include:

- Science and Technology Australia (STA)
- Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering (ATSE)
- Early- and Mid-Career Researcher Forum of the Australian Academy of Science

## What does the program offer?

The program offers early-to-mid career scientists and engineers a 12 month opportunity to learn how to develop policy in an Australian Government department.

At the end of the program, fellows will have received on-the-job training in, and exposure to, policy making, equipping them to seek permanent employment in the public service.

### Mentoring and professional development

Fellows will have opportunities for mentoring from their host departments, as well as formal training opportunities. In addition, fellows will receive on-the-job training and experience.

### Alumni Network

The alumni network is managed by the Office of the Chief Scientist. The network also provides mentors for future participants in the program. The alumni network will be pivotal in assessing the success of the pilot as it will provide a mechanism for tracking employment outcomes for all participants.

### A Pathway to Public Service

Successful candidates may seek permanent opportunities in the Australian Public Service, and will be able to competitively apply for other policy and program roles at any stage in the program.

# Application Timeline

The **Science Policy Fellowship Program** application process will run over a number of months.

| Date       | Event   |
|------------|---|
| November   | Applications open   |
| January    | Applications close early January  |
| January    | Short-listed candidates notified by email and invited to attend interview.  |
| February   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>1<sup>st</sup> round interviews:</b> Panel conducts interviews</li><li>• <b>2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews:</b> Interviews with the panel and the proposed host department.</li></ul> |
| March      | Successful candidates notified.<br>Host departments make offers to successful candidates, with formal letter of offer to be provided by the end of March.   |
| April      | Candidates accept offers.   |
| Early July | Successful candidates commence fellowships in Canberra.   |

# Online Application

**Below is an outline of the sections candidates will be asked to complete in their online application.**

- Standard candidate data, including personal details, education, current employment and diversity information.
- Curriculum vitae (3 page limit).
- Details of two referees and two letters of recommendation.
- Short biography (300 word limit): tell us about yourself, including areas of policy interest.
- Candidate statement (500 word limit): Why are you interested in a career in policy and what makes you a good fit for the role?
  - Areas of interest: Outline the policy areas or issues that you are particularly interested in addressing during the fellowship.
  - Role as a policy officer: Describe how you imagine you might apply your skill set and expertise to policy issues and how they can be applied in government decision-making.
  - Career goals: State your goals following the fellowship and into the future, and how you envision the fellowship will help you achieve those goals.

Do not duplicate information in your CV, instead explain how your experiences and qualifications are relevant to this program.

## Further Information

For further information please contact:

Office of the Chief Scientist

[OCS-projects@chiefscientist.gov.au](mailto:OCS-projects@chiefscientist.gov.au)