

Canadian Science Policy Fellowship position title

Policy position involving risk mitigation in the Canadian Government

Description of position

From an increasingly interconnected modern global community a complex environment has emerged due to continuously evolving science and technology developments. Addressing these unique challenges requires a comprehensive approach that recognizes the importance of reducing the risk associated with these developments.

This host office aims to position Canada as a global leader in managing these evolving and complex risks through knowledge sharing of best practices. This is a vision of shared commitment, wherein the Canadian government works closely with international partners to advance strategies for risk reduction. Through this vision, we will address a full spectrum of opportunities to mitigate risks associated with particular emphasis on preparedness through focused research, knowledge translation, and training.

The objectives of the host office fall under two broad work packages:

1. Mitigation through predictive tools and countermeasure solutions: activities that expand our capability to prevent, detect and respond to priority issues.
2. Harnessing global capacity for risk management: activities that transform the international response promoting sustained and cohesive actions that evolve in order to address surge capacity, personnel exchange and undertaking joint research to address shared priorities through partnerships.

The fellow's main deliverable will relate to advancing the department's advice around medium-term planning for the government in anticipation of federal elections and transitions to new government mandates. This work will also inform department mandate priorities. Key files will include the future of research (e.g. review of risk mitigation system and impact of changes implemented to date, priority setting for research areas/themes, international linkages and collaborations).

The successful candidate will be involved with senior management and have the opportunity to prepare briefing notes to inform and engage with government officials, scientists and the general public about the department's successes and future plans. The fellow will also be working directly with government officials and scientists internationally to collect and share information. The fellow would be responsible for working across teams, conducting data analysis, developing projections, in order to provide the various programs with appropriate data to inform policy development.

Bringing in someone from an academic program into this team through the fellowship program is a way to access a highly skilled graduate with the skills to work with large amounts of information and data, synthesize and analyze that data, and develop a clear set of recommendations. The external landscape is highly complex, so the fellow will need to demonstrate a comfort level dealing with complex material. The ideal candidate has significant knowledge of the literature in the subject matter area and has experience publishing scientific peer-reviewed papers. They demonstrate strong writing skills in English, strategic thinking, initiative, as well as interpersonal and project management skills.

Policy processes and activities

The fellow will provide essential support to the implementation of the deliverables through:

- Organizing and connecting subject matter experts
- Disseminating high consequence information among stakeholders; creating resources for distribution and knowledge exchange
- Assessing currently available research in the area across partner agencies as part of a literature review
- Contributing to strategic workforce planning to prepare for future needs
- Facilitating an exchange of resources among trusted partners
- Developing a pilot study to collect available data and provide a detailed report to identify options and challenges regarding the data needed to develop a risk assessment model
- Participating in the expert elicitation process
- Developing the methodological approach and sampling design
- Conducting discussions with stakeholders to explain the purpose of the model, expected scope of results, timeframes for different steps
- After the performance assessment has been completed and evaluated by a scientific committee, the fellow will contribute to adjustments
- Prepare detailed internal reports and scientific communications (oral and written)
- Contributing insightful policy analysis and advice to inform decision-making and policy/program development generally
- Collaborating and consulting horizontally with internal and external stakeholders on policy matters to help inform and advance the government's agenda
- Providing well-researched information, advice, and recommendations in an accurate, concise, and timely manner, taking into account the current context and priorities and the target audience.

Fellowship support

The fellow would, as a new employee with the department, be encouraged to participate in the branch's Orientation Session for New Employees, which has a pre-session, on-line, training segment. This will help the fellow learn about the broader mandate and operations of the department. Additional training will be offered on-the-job and in the form of formally offered in-house courses and other events (i.e. conference attendance). Travel opportunities may also be offered where relevant.

The fellow would also be introduced to new colleagues in the office and be paired with a Manager in the branch to help guide the fellow in learning the duties and tasks relevant to their new position. The Manager will provide the fellow with a binder of relevant documents that give useful background information and templates procedures for producing science policy briefing materials. The fellow would report to her/his Director of the branch through the Manager. The Manager will also serve as a mentor to the fellow and bring him/her along to meetings and briefings on key science policy issues, as appropriate. The Manager will, on an ongoing basis, delegate projects and deliverables and provide feedback, advice and support to the fellow throughout the duration of the fellowship.

The fellow will join a technical committee composed of academic and subject matter experts. Under the direction of a senior advisor, the fellow will conduct an updated review of the scientific and policy literature pertaining to the position.

This team is directly responsible for producing deliverables to support the Assistant Deputy Minister for travel and other external engagements, and the fellow will participate in briefings with senior management staff. Communicating findings to senior management will be an important part of the policy fellow's work. This could take several forms, including verbal and written briefings, the development and delivery of presentation or discussion documents, such as white papers or internal reports.

The science policy fellow shall also support the emerging international community of practice. This will involve working closely with colleagues, including the Director General Champion for the initiative and with interested international parties to define areas for future collaboration, and possibly to prepare an international meeting.

