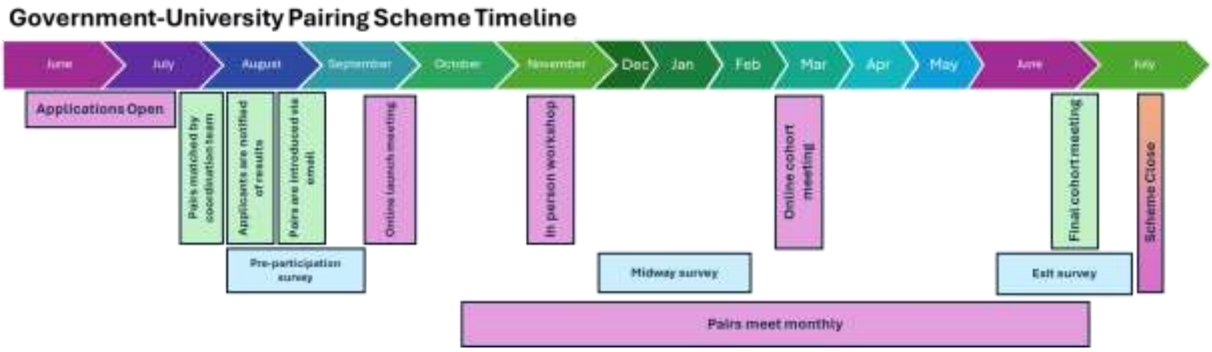
Applicant Pack

Government University Pairing Scheme



<u>**Pairing Scheme at a Glance**</u>

Duration: 12 months

Commitment: Approximately one meeting per month during term time

Format: Primarily participant-led, with cohort-wide events and support from the coordination team

Participants: University and government staff interested in research–policy engagement

Key activity: At least one shadowing or reciprocal learning experience

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About the Scheme

The Government–University Pairing Scheme, delivered in collaboration with the Government Office for Science and supported by UPEN member universities Durham and UCL.

The scheme brings together participants from universities and government for a year-long partnership, providing a unique opportunity to build relationships, gain insight into different working environments, and improve understanding of how knowledge mobilisation practices can support better research and policy engagement.

For more information, please read our applicant pack and [blogpost] featuring reflections from previous participants. If you have any questions, please contact Daisy Forster (UCL Public Policy) at daisy.forster@ucl.ac.uk.

Who is the scheme for?

We welcome expressions of interest from those interested in knowledge mobilisation practices — for example, facilitating engagement between research and policy — at any career stage. This includes policy and analytical professionals, academics, professional services staff, technical specialists, and others working in universities and/or government.

What are the aims of the scheme?

The aim of the scheme is to demystify engagement between universities and government. It helps participants better understand ways of working, motivations, and cultures across both sectors, and supports more effective future engagement.

While the scheme may open opportunities for collaboration on specific projects, it is not designed to be project- or subject-specific. Over the 12-month period, participants are encouraged to focus on professional development, improving their understanding and ways of engaging, and expanding their networks.

Your Pairing Experience

What is expected from participants?

Participants are expected to:

- Attend at least one meeting per month during term time (virtual or in-person).
- Take part in at least one reciprocal learning activity, such as observing each other's work or attending relevant meetings together .
- Engage with cohort-wide activities, including one in-person workshop.
- Schedule meetings proactively and in advance.
- Participate in evaluation and communications activities throughout the year.

How long and how often do meetings need to be?

This is for each pair to decide. We recommend setting up monthly meetings as a recurring calendar series from the outset. Meeting length will vary—sometimes an hour is appropriate, while at other times a shorter 15-minute check-in may be sufficient. What matters most is clear communication and maintaining regular contact.

What does shadowing involve?

Shadowing looks different in every pair. In the past, pairs have:

- Visited each other's workplaces with pre-arranged meetings and activities
- Attended team meetings or internal discussions (in person or online)
- Joined conferences or external events together

The aim is to gain insight into each other's working environments and ways of working.

Will remote engagement be supported?

Yes. The scheme will mostly take place remotely, unless individual pairs decide otherwise. Travel to any in-person cohort activities is expected to be funded by participants' own organisations.

Learning and Development Opportunities

What activities are there for the whole cohort?

There will be up to four full cohort meetings throughout the year, including one in person. These sessions provide participants with the opportunity to network with the wider group and hear from other pairs about their approach to the scheme. Please view the participant timeline for more details.

Are there any outputs expected of participants?

Case studies and other outputs are always welcome, but are not required. Participants are, however, expected to complete feedback and evaluation surveys at various stages of the scheme, which helps us improve the experience for current and future cohorts.

Support Throughout the Scheme

The coordination team will:

- Match participants with a relevant counterpart based on application information
- Provide regular check-ins and guidance
- Respond to queries in a timely and supportive way
- Organise up to four cohort-wide sessions, including one in-person workshop

Matching and Pairing

How are pairs matched?

Pairs are matched based on previous experience of academic-policy engagement, regional location, career stage, and interests, expertise, and goals.

Confidentiality and Good Practice

Are there any restrictions around confidentiality?

The scheme organisers are not responsible for vetting participants or establishing confidentiality agreements. Pairs are responsible for setting their own expectations, and participants decide what to share with their counterpart.

As the scheme is discipline-neutral, it is unlikely that confidential or project-specific information will need to be shared. If in doubt, we recommend seeking advice from a colleague or line manager and revisiting the topic at a subsequent meeting.

June 2026

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