

Job Description

Post title	Post-Doctoral Research Associate
Faculty/PS Directorate (Tier 1)	Social Science and Public Policy
School/Division/Department (Tier 2)	Department of Geography
Grade	6
Line Management	Research and Policy Manager

Role purpose
<p>The fourth National Adaptation Programme (NAP4) is due to be published in 2028. To drive greater action and ambition, Defra is working across government to set adaptation objectives. This is a challenging piece of work: Defra is looking to support teams across government to use the existing evidence base to formulate objectives for each of the 14 systems set out in CCRA4 (IA Technical Report Community Review) . The work includes scoping objectives; testing and revising objectives using evidence and working with delivery partners and stakeholders, and finally, developing delivery plans and indicators.</p> <p>To support this process, Defra has established an objectives support service at the Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) Hub to run from November 2025 to March 2026. This service will contribute directly to evidence gathering, synthesis, and analysis required by UK Government teams in developing robust climate adaptation objectives and provide knowledge and tools to continue this work over the next three years.</p> <p>The support will be provided by a team of post-doctoral research associates (PDRA), supported by part-time PhD students and the MACC Hub, working alongside government teams. Activities are divided into four work streams relating to understanding what at least two degrees could mean, what a resilient system looks like, how adaptation aligns with other government objectives and how to make decisions under uncertainty. In addition to translating and synthesising existing evidence, the MACC Hub objectives support service will convene stakeholders to provide expert input to the process.</p> <p>The MACC Hub at King’s College London is recruiting four fixed term PDRAs. For this role, the post-holder will lead on work how adaptation aligns with other government objectives. The post holder will report to Suzannah Sherman, Research and Policy manager, who is overseeing the support service and will be able to work as part of King’s hybrid working model (Strand Campus).</p>

Key Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and articulate how adaptation can contribute to wider national government priorities and statutory commitments—including net zero, economic development, housing, public health, and nature recovery. • Highlight co-benefits and potential trade-offs by examining how adaptation interacts with broader government priorities. • Consider the alignment between national strategy, sectoral planning, and local implementation, assessing whether these layers are coherent, data-driven, and inclusive of diverse communities. • Identify key leverage points and opportunities for enabling transformational adaptation. • Produce concise, persuasive briefings for government seniors making the case for climate change adaptation. • Engage with policy teams (including risk owners and teams responsible for other national priorities). • Work collegiately with other PDRAs and RAs to coordinate research progress and contribute to the development of strengthened adaptation objectives. • Produce clear, informative, and visually engaging reports and written outputs.

The above list of responsibilities may not be exhaustive, and the post holder will be required to undertake such tasks and responsibilities as may reasonably be expected within the scope and grading of the post.

Award Criteria

The outputs of this project will be diverse, and each will require a slightly different set of skills and experience. We therefore welcome your application even if you do not meet every single Essential criterion (we recommend that you meet at least around 70%).

To be successful in this role, we are looking for candidates to have the following skills and experience:

Essential criteria

- PhD (or equivalent experience) in Climate Change Adaptation, Environmental Policy, Public Policy, Disaster Risk Management, Contingency Planning, Resilience Planning, or related interdisciplinary fields.
- Demonstrated knowledge of regulatory and policy research.
- Strong ability to synthesise complex evidence and communicate clearly to non-expert audiences.
- Experience of systematic literature review, qualitative analysis and/or policy analysis.
- Proven experience of producing high-quality outputs to short deadlines.
- Experience working on indicator development or measurement, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approaches.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills to a varied audience with differing levels of expertise and capability. Ability to communicate concisely in accessible ways.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively across multidisciplinary teams.
- Ability to think strategically and identify levers for action.
- Experience of operating at the science: policy interface, such as providing advice or guidance on developing key priority policies.

Desirable criteria

- Familiarity with the UK Government's requirements for climate change adaptation under the Climate Change Act 2008
- Working experience with efficient governance approaches such as joined-up government, whole-of-government approaches, integrated public services, or collaborative governance.
- Strong understanding of integrated policymaking, shared objectives, and approaches that break down traditional silos between government departments and sectors. Experience preparing policy-oriented reports or producing regulation/policy inventories or maps.
- Evident interest in climate change adaptation and/or working with policy teams.

Submitting Application & Key Dates

To apply, please submit the following

- 1) A cover letter outlining how you meet the essential and desirable criteria (2 pages)
- 2) A CV (2 pages)
- 3) Your interaction visual (maximum 1-page) – responding to the prompt below.

Create one simple visual (table, matrix, or diagram) showing:

- How adaptation objectives could interact with three national priorities: Net zero; Economic growth; Public health.
- Include indications of alignment, trade-offs, and missed opportunities.

Applications need to be submitted to MOSS@kcl.ac.uk.

Closing date: 11:59 PM on Sunday, 14 December 2025

Interview dates: 17–19 December 2025

Expected starting date: 8 January 2026

Applications may be reviewed and candidates contacted on a rolling basis, final decisions will be made after the closing date.

Our Expectations

There are a number of duties and responsibilities that we ask all employees to be familiar with and adhere to.

- Positively contributes to an environment at King's that truly represents our [Principles in Action](#) and where every individual feels safe, secure and supported.
- Always comply with the requirements of health and safety regulations to ensure their own wellbeing and that of their colleagues.
- To have an understanding of sustainability, including its impact on the University and the work we do, and engage in sustainable practices in the workplace.
- Ensure you are working in a safe environment, where you complete with our Health and Safety regulations, and ensure confidentiality, only releasing confidential information obtained during the course of employment to those acting in an official capacity.
- Comply with King's protocols on the appropriate use of telephone, email and internet facilities.

Equal opportunities

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion are central tenets of King's Vision 2029 which sets out the roadmap for King's ambition to provide an exceptional student experience and to be an employer of choice. Integral to this is ensuring equality of opportunity and outcome, recognising, celebrating and improving our diversity and inclusion.

As a responsible employer we aim to provide and promote a positive working, learning, and social environment which is free from prejudice, discrimination and any forms of harassment, bullying or victimisation. Our commitment to inclusion means that King's aims to create an environment where differences are not just respected, but also valued and celebrated. Everyone should be able to bring their whole self to King's.

All King's students, staff and affiliates are responsible for meeting these commitments to value diversity and create an inclusive environment. King's will support and equip all members of its community to do this, embedding inclusion throughout the university's policies, procedures, and practices.