

Research in Practice (RinP) Placement Opportunity

The following information has been provided by the Host Organisation and outlines the placement opportunity available. Any queries about this placement should be addressed to the Host Organisation at the details provided below.

This opportunity is aimed at Postgraduate Researchers who have funding through a Doctoral Training Partnership to undertake a placement as part of their studentship.

Please note this opportunity is being advertised at multiple universities.

| Host Details | |
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| Name of Host Organisation: | UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) |
| Host location: | Our head office is in Canary Wharf. We also have offices in Liverpool, Bristol and Birmingham. |
| Brief description of the Host Organisation: <i>Please include a link to a website if you have one.</i> | <p>UK Health Security Agency - GOV.UK</p> <p>UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). At UKHSA, our mission is to protect people's health by preventing and responding to threats—whether that's a new pandemic, everyday infections like influenza, or environmental dangers like radiation or extreme weather. We save lives, protect livelihoods, and work with partners across the NHS, care systems, and globally to keep communities safe.</p> <p>We're a hub of scientific and operational expertise, tackling health challenges at every level—local, national, and international.</p> <p>The Chief Data Officer (CDO) group is the analytical powerhouse of UKHSA and plays a key role in making sure data is used safely, legally, and ethically. We support every step of the data journey—from collecting and managing information to analytics and delivering insights that drive real-world action.</p> <p>If you're passionate about using data to make a difference and want to help solve big health challenges, there's a place for you here in the CDO group.</p> |

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| Host contact details: | <p><i>Any queries about this opportunity should be addressed to the Host Organisation:</i></p> <p>CDO Partnerships Team, UKHSA CDOPartnerships@ukhsa.gov.uk and Becca.dikuyi@ukhsa.gov.uk <i>Please reference the placement you are enquiring about in the subject heading.</i></p> |

| Project Description | |
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| Placement role title: <i>e.g. Project Assistant</i> | The future of UK Health Security – understanding risks and opportunities |
| Background/ expected impact of the project: | <p><u>Overview:</u> UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is looking for academic expertise to support the development of a new capability to understand health security futures and the implications potential futures scenarios may have for UKHSA and wider government, to inform future strategy and planning.</p> <p><u>Background:</u> Currently, much of the health security risk assessment in the UK Government focuses on a six-month to five-year threat horizon. This has benefits in providing actionable insights to inform immediate policy and capability decisions, but looking further into the future (15-20 years) offers the UK a strategic advantage in anticipating and mitigating emerging health security threats before they become critical. Futures analysis enables more proactive investment in research, infrastructure, and policy development, reducing the risk of being caught unprepared. Long-term foresight also supports better coordination across government, academia, and industry, fostering innovation and resilience. Ultimately, it strengthens national preparedness and helps safeguard public health, economic stability, and global leadership in health security.</p> <p>UKHSA has recently worked with academic partners and stakeholders across government to understand areas of focus for future health security and has a number of recommendations for the strategic direction UKHSA and wider Government should take to mitigate risks and leverage opportunities.</p> |

We require an academic partner to develop a practical plan that helps UKHSA begin preparing for long-term health security threats, by translating academic foresight into actionable steps aligned with government policy and decision-making. This project presents an exciting opportunity for an academic to apply their expertise in health threats and foresight within a real-world policy context. This partnership will offer a unique chance to understand how UKHSA assesses risk, develops its strategic priorities, and makes decisions under uncertainty, with the opportunity to make a tangible impact across all these areas. The outcome will support UKHSA in shaping its strategic response to long-term health challenges, while fostering stronger links across Government and between academic research and public policy.

This placement will be within the All Hazards Intelligence (AHI) Situational Awareness team, which is currently responsible for developing the Health Security Risk Assessment which assesses risk over a six-month to five-year time period. The academic partner will be able to access expertise from the team and stakeholders across UKHSA more widely.

Expected impact and strategic fit: The outputs from this placement would be expected to have the following impacts, in line with UKHSA's Chief Data Officer (CDO) Group strategic priorities:

- **Informing health outcomes through threat analysis and assessment to enable response:** This placement will set out a plan to extend the horizon of our current threat assessment capability, enabling more robust and anticipatory decision-making.
- The placement will help identify means to establishing **secure public health digital and data capabilities** for early warning and response systems for emerging threats.
- By translating long-term foresight into actionable planning, the project supports smarter, future-focused investment in surveillance and intelligence technologies, aligning with the CDO goal to **lead investment in public health services to transform the UK's approach to public health technology, surveillance and intelligence.**
- **Helping to make the nation's health secure and contribute to economic resilience:** Early planning for long-term risks

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| | <p>strengthens national resilience, reduces the cost of future crises, and supports the UK's leadership in global health security.</p> <p><u>Benefits for the placement holder:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Real-world policy impact: Opportunity to apply academic foresight and health threat expertise in a government setting, with the potential to influence long-term public health security strategy, national preparedness and resilience. ● Strategic insight: Gain deep understanding of how UKHSA and wider government assess risk, set priorities, and make decisions under uncertainty. ● Cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaboration: Engage with stakeholders across government, academia, and industry, building valuable networks and professional relationships. ● Skill development: Enhance skills in futures analysis, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and policy translation—highly transferable across public health and policy roles. ● Career advancement: Strengthen CV with a high-profile placement that demonstrates ability to bridge academic research and public policy. |
| <p>Outline of duties:</p> | <p>During this placement we would expect you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read, understand, and collate existing materials on health security futures (all previous UKHSA materials of relevance to be supplied at start of placement). ● Work with the AHI Situational Awareness team to understand internal (to UKHSA) and external (wider government, academia and industry) stakeholder landscape and agree an approach to stakeholder engagement. ● Carry out stakeholder engagement to understand current capability, expert thinking, and good practice, to feed into Deliverable 1 (Gap and capability analysis). ● Develop forward plan for developing a futures capability (Deliverable 2), working with stakeholders across UKHSA to understand a feasible approach. ● The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) is also initiating a Futures Thinking work programme; the work proposed here would link into the wider DHSC programme and the |

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| | placement holder would be expected to liaise with the DHSC team. |
| Expected output(s)/ deliverable(s): | <p>This placement will deliver recommendations for a programme of work that UKHSA should undertake in order to develop a futures capability for health security risk assessment.</p> <p><u>Deliverable 1 - Gap and capability analysis:</u> The academic partner will conduct a structured analysis comparing the organisation's current capabilities, policies, and systems with the demands posed by the long-term health threat scenarios already identified by previous UKHSA work in this area and other relevant materials. This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mapping existing capabilities (e.g. workforce expertise, policy frameworks, relationships with cross-Government partners, industry and academia) against the needs implied by each scenario. ● Drawing on other sources of futures analysis (e.g. from academic literature, industry) to augment the existing futures work, identifying key themes, and adding these to the gap analysis. ● Identifying gaps where current resources, processes, or partnerships may be insufficient to respond effectively to future threats. ● Highlighting strengths that could be leveraged or scaled to meet future challenges. ● Recommending areas for investment or development, such as new data sources, analytical tools, or cross-sector collaborations, providing insights into how these would boost organisational readiness for future challenges. ● This analysis will help the organisation understand where it is well-positioned and where strategic action is needed to build resilience over the long term. <p><u>Deliverable 2 – Forward Plan:</u> The academic partner will develop a proposal for a future programme of work that UKHSA could follow to build a futures capability for health security threat assessment. This deliverable will include:</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying and justifying priority areas for where Futures can be used for decision-making based on scenario relevance and organisational readiness. ● Outlining potential workstreams or projects that could form part of a coordinated programme of work. ● Estimating resource needs for each workstream, including staffing, training and skills, data, technology, and partnerships. ● Suggesting indicative delivery timelines and milestones for implementation. ● Highlighting opportunities for cross-government collaboration or external engagement. <p>The Forward Plan will serve as a foundation for internal discussions and potential funding proposals, helping UKHSA take forward strategic action in long-term health security planning.</p> |
| Support for Postgraduate Researcher: | <p>UKHSA is an excellent placement host as we have a developed culture of learning and development, fostered in an inclusive environment. To ensure that you have opportunities to expand your skillsets and to develop professionally, we can provide training in analysis, where required, but we also encourage you to engage with subject matter experts and other early career researchers (ECR) across the UKHSA.</p> <p>At UKHSA, we have a thriving ECR network led by our CDO Partnerships team. You will have the opportunity to join and be supported by the ECR network within the UKHSA, and by other ECRs and team members within the host team.</p> <p>After your placement you will also join our Alumni ECR Network, where you will receive exclusive insights, future opportunities and development from CDO. So, invest in your future and apply, if you think you fit the skills criteria below, we'd love to hear from you!</p> |
| Skills and experience required for the role: | <p>Essential skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stakeholder Engagement: Ability to work across government, academia, and industry. ● Strategic Planning: Skilled in gap analysis and translating evidence into recommendations for policy or strategy. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Strong written and verbal skills for briefing senior stakeholders. • Systems Thinking: Ability to map complex interdependencies. • Project Delivery: Experience managing or contributing to structured projects. <p>Desirable skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Policy Awareness: Understanding of UK Government decision-making processes. • Risk Assessment Knowledge: Familiarity with government risk frameworks (such as the National Risk Register). • Academic-Policy Translation: Experience applying research in policy contexts. • Facilitation Skills: Experience running workshops or foresight exercises. |
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| Key Information | |
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| Placement start date: | Monday 5th January 2026 |
| Placement duration: | 3 months |
| Full-time or part-time: <i>e.g. 37.5 hours per week or usually 18-19 hours per week</i> | Full-time is preferred so you can fully immerse yourself in the team and project, but we will work flexibly if part-time hours are required. We do however need the placement to be undertaken in one continuous block due to IT and data access/security requirements. |
| In-person, online or hybrid: | <p>The placement will be remote with the occasional office/event attendance, but this is at the successful candidate's discretion.</p> <p>If you would like to attend one of the offices more regularly, we can look at getting you a government pass.</p> |
| Security/ health and safety restrictions (if relevant): | Mandatory training as part of the civil service requirements of onboarding. |
| Anticipated costs and financial support the Host can offer to help cover these (if relevant): | Any costs associated with travel or accommodation will usually be reimbursed by UKHSA in line with other funding schemes. |

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| e.g. travel and subsistence costs. | Placements are remote based, and you will not be expected to travel, but we have several offices if you do wish to work out of them. |
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| How to Apply | |
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| Closing date and time for applications: | Friday 17th October at 23:59 GMT |
| Application format: e.g. CV, cover letter, application form, etc | CV and a 500-word (max) cover letter to evidence how you fit the project requirements, skills and what you can bring to this role. |
| How to submit an application: | <p>Send your CV and cover letter to the CDO Partnerships Team, UKHSA, Becca.dikuyi@ukhsa.gov.uk and CDOPartnerships@ukhsa.gov.uk with the subject line “UKHSA FHS placement application”.</p> <p>Please cc. escrip@bangor.ac.uk with your application</p> |
| Recruitment process: | <p><i>The Host Organisation is responsible for processing the applications received for this opportunity and applications will be processed as follows:</i></p> <p>Successful applicants will be invited for a short virtual interview on MS Teams. The successful candidate will be informed within a week after the interview, depending on how many interviews there are.</p> <p>The successful candidate will then be asked to sign an agreement after security checks (United Kingdom Security Vetting: Applicant - GOV.UK) have been completed. Please allow 4-6 weeks for the whole onboarding process, at the higher end if you are an international PGR holding a student visa.</p> <p>Civil Service eligibility criteria will apply. How to Apply Civil Service Careers (civil-service-careers.gov.uk).</p> |