

## **Policy placement fellowships and their role in knowledge exchange**

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Policy placement fellowships involve academics spending periods of time (usually 3-12 months) working with policy makers. They are one mechanism to improve the impact of academic research on policy. This paper reports on practical experiences of both the policy makers hosting placements and academics undertaking such placements. The authors have been personally involved, and have additional qualitative data from 6 interviews and a focus group. We identify three main types of knowledge exchanged through such placements: conceptual knowledge of different cultures, instrumental knowledge encompassing specific expertise, and the ability of academics to question policy practices. We also identify three tensions that arise. The first relates to the speed at which policy requires evidence. The second questions whether the knowledge exchange extends beyond the individual taking part in the placement. The third relates to the role that academics play with respect to evidence-base.

We conclude that placements enable greater understanding of the different cultures and drivers in the two sectors and can facilitate relationships that are important to knowledge exchange. However, there are a number of challenges in achieving an appropriate balance between challenge to the policy world and complete subservience to it, and in seeking an appropriate 'Broker' role.