



Affiliate Researcher Scheme Partnership Agreement

1. Definition of Affiliate Researcher Scheme (ARS)

The ARS provides a platform to develop close and long-lasting collaborations between Westminster City Council and academics whose research expertise closely aligns with local policy priorities. It is ideally suited to faculty researchers who are passionate about using their expertise to support the creation of evidence-led policy among local policymakers, and who seek opportunities for piloting research ideas that test “what works” in a real-world setting.

2. Purpose of Partnership Agreement

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to set out the expectations of Affiliate Researchers and of WCC’s Strategy & Intelligence colleagues as partners on this scheme. The scheme aims to foster research collaboration and use the results to help develop WCC’s policies. Affiliate Researchers and WCC will share ideas for collaborative research projects of mutual relevance, interest, and benefit. The scheme will work to the Research Excellence Framework to support research.

This agreement outlines our collaborative approach to this work, aspirations of the scheme, including how the scheme will be reviewed and evaluated to assess benefits, and to agree any future developments to enhance the scheme.

3. Offer & Expectations of WCC Strategy & Intelligence

WCC offers an opportunity to build deep, long-term, and mutually enriching partnerships between academic and local policymakers. WCC Strategy & Intelligence staff will play a key role in cultivating these relationships. Affiliate Researchers will work closely with the council’s multi-disciplinary team of analysts, as well as with individual directorates whose work most closely align with the researcher’s expertise. Ways in which WCC will facilitate this collaboration include workshops with council officers, and an assigned Research Partner within the host directorate. Affiliate Researchers will have the chance to use their specialist knowledge to guide policymaking and to impact socio-economic outcomes in the local area.

WCC has a rich repository of data across a range of topics, acquired from primary research and external sources. Data-sharing agreements with academics for the purpose of research that benefits Council policymaking will be considered, in accordance with relevant guidelines for data protection and privacy.

Affiliate Researchers will be invited to relevant events at the Council, including but not limited to specialised conferences that bring councillors, Council officers, and academics



into dialogue about key policy topics; the Urban Lab seminar series (at which Affiliate Researchers will be invited to present their work and ideas); and the annual Graduate Student Symposium, which showcases projects undertaken at the Council by graduate students from partner universities. They may also be invited to specialist events run by individual directorates that they partner with.

The Affiliate Researcher scheme is unfunded, and as such Affiliate Researcher is a non-paying position. However, Affiliate Researchers may also request the Council to support relevant research through writing letters of support for funding proposals, subject to demonstrating its usefulness and relevance to the Council's policy priorities.

WCC offers many opportunities for research collaboration with external academics. Affiliate Researchers are encouraged to work with Council officers to identify key challenges in their areas of specialisation, to develop joint proposals for research (including programme evaluations, piloting new interventions, and descriptive work to improve our understanding of the policy environment), and to partner in seeking external funding for such work. In some exceptional cases, certain directorates within the Council may fund (in full or in part) collaborative research on key policy topics out of available project budgets.

Equally, individual directorates may contract Affiliate Researchers as formal consultants to support policy or programme development and evaluation. There are also opportunities for Affiliate Researchers' students to partner with the Council to undertake dissertation work or to gain work experience: their supervisors may work with the Urban Lab and with Council officers to identify suitable projects for this purpose.

4. Offer & Expectations of Affiliate Researchers

We encourage our Affiliate Researchers to take an active role in the life of the Council's research and policy-making activities. This includes, but is not limited to, presenting research to stakeholders and local policymakers, sharing expertise, advising and consulting on individual projects, and working with our analysts to develop and implement collaborative research, pilot projects, and evaluations. Affiliate Researchers have discretion on the number of hours, and the amount of work they choose to take on. They will also be encouraged to choose the methods in which they collaborate with WCC, for example in field research, involvement in project initiation and service development.

Affiliate Researchers will work primarily with a host Council directorate chosen to match their research interests, but will have the opportunity to interact with officers across other directorates. A Research Partner within the host directorate will act as an initial point of contact and will help to integrate the Researcher into their team.

We also seek to maximise opportunities for knowledge exchange through sharing skills, cross-fertilisation of ideas, and to promote active dialogue between researchers and policy officers. These could include (where appropriate) the curation of joint workshops, sharing methodological resources and training opportunities, providing informal, part-time



desk space at the academic's department for a WCC analyst working in a relevant field (and vice-versa), and inviting officers to relevant seminars and events.

5. WCC Key Staff Contacts

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6. Timeframes, Review and Evaluation of the Scheme

Affiliate Researchers will be consulted beforehand as to the length of their appointment. The duration will vary, depending on the research subject and amount of time they can offer the scheme. Extensions to the Affiliate Researcher scheme will be subject to review. Reviews will be undertaken by the Urban Lab team, in consultation with individual directorates that have constituted the focus of the Researcher's Council partnership. Successful partnerships will produce research that is considered to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- i. contributes to deepening the Council's understanding of a key policy area, as described in the "Fairer Westminster" strategy
- ii. highlights existing issues of inequality or inefficiency under one of the "Fairer Westminster" themes and opportunities for policy intervention
- iii. contributes to improving the quality of service delivery in the Researcher's host directorate
- iv. supports the evaluation of existing Council programmes, providing recommendations for future improvements
- v. identifies, adapts, or develops methodologies that support the Council's research and analytical capabilities
- vi. supports the development of technical skills and expertise within the host directorate and/or the Council's analytical teams
- vii. is completed within a timeframe that enables impactful decision making e.g. aligned with key strategy, project or programme milestones where possible