



Scottish Parliament Academic Fellowship Scheme 2024/25

Employability funding in Scotland

Employability funding in Scotland is allocated to local authorities under the [No One Left Behind approach](#) and delivered in a large part by third sector organisations which means there is considerable variation across Scotland.

During an [evidence session on the disability employment gap in 2023](#), the Economy and Fair Work Committee heard that there is varied provision across Scotland, and that there have been some delays in allocating funding to delivery organisations.

The employability budget in Scotland has been under pressure recently, reducing by 23% in cash terms in the [2024-25 Budget](#), following a reduction of [£53 million in the 2022-23 Emergency Budget Review](#).

A fellowship could explore how the funding model impacts delivery of employability support across Scotland, particularly in the context of the challenging budget settlement.

What will the work involve?

Whilst we are happy to discuss approaches, we envisage that the work could involve:

- Producing an overview of employability provision across Scotland, including the types of providers who deliver frontline services and the client groups being served.
- Analysing and producing a summary of how funding flows from the Scottish Government to local authorities and then to delivery partners, and how this has changed over time.
- Analysing the outcomes for different user groups and how these outcomes are defined and measured.
- Evaluating the experience of delivery partners in receiving funding to provide employability services, with a particular emphasis on highlighting any variations in approach across Scotland.

Outputs and ways of working for this fellowship

At this stage, we envisage that the main output for this work would be a SPICe briefing summarising the issues outlined above. The briefing must be written in a clear, accessible and jargon free manner which can be easily used and understood by MSPs. The [SPICe style guide](#) explains what this means in practice.

For a recent example of a similar SPICe fellowship briefing see the 2022 SPICe briefing on [Human rights budgeting](#).

In addition, as this fellowship would complement the work of the Economy and Fair Work Committee, we expect that there would be some opportunities to engage directly with the Committee, for example in presenting the final report. There may also be an opportunity to present the findings of the report at a seminar in Parliament.

We aim to give the fellow a rounded experience of working in, and with, the Parliament, and where relevant can look for opportunities for the fellow to observe a range of parliamentary activities.

Experience needed

We are looking for candidates who have an in-depth understanding of the employability landscape. Ideally, candidates would also have contacts in local authorities and delivery partners.

As outlined above, candidates will have to be able to communicate clearly and succinctly for a parliamentary audience who are not necessarily experts in this field.

We do accept joint applications. However, if more than one person is applying it will be advantageous to be able to demonstrate that the candidates have worked effectively together in the past.

Timescale and working pattern

We anticipate at this stage that the work could begin in June, and would have to be completed by the end of the September 2024, with a final briefing being published around October 2024.

We expect that this work would be around 1-2 days per week, and can take place in Parliament or remotely, with the presentation of final outputs to take place in person.

Funding

It is up to the prospective fellow and their academic institution to set out the basis upon which their costs are determined and the sources of their funding.

Although funding cannot be guaranteed, the Parliament does, however, have a limited budget which it can potentially use to fund or part-fund fellows (previously, funding provided has typically been between £3-4,000). We can discuss funding in more detail with applicants once applications have been submitted and assessed.

Further information

Please contact Andrew Feeney-Seale in SPICe if you wish to discuss further (andrew.feeney-seale@parliament.scot).