Government Office for Science: National Security Risk Assessment

Organisation background

The Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA) advises the Prime Minister and Cabinet on scientific and social science issues and drives the improvement of the use of scientific evidence across Government. The GCSA is supported by the Government Office for Science.

The Government Office for Science looks to ensure that government policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long-term thinking. We are responsible for:

- giving scientific advice to the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet, through a programme of projects that reflect the priorities of the Government Chief Scientific Adviser;
- ensuring and improving the quality and use of scientific evidence and advice in government (through advice and projects and by creating and supporting connections between officials and the scientific community);
- providing the best scientific advice in the case of emergencies, through the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE); and
- helping the independent Council for Science and Technology provide high level advice to the Prime Minister.

Project brief

We are looking for either one intern for six months or two interns for three months to undertake a discrete project to support work on the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA). The internship will last six months.

The NSRA identifies and prioritises all major disruptive risks to the UK's national interests over the next 20 years. The NSRA informs the decision making process of the Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy, which set out the government's approach to national security.

The aim of this project will be to undertake a meta-analysis of innovative cost benefit analysis methods, such as those on the economics of climate change, which could be used to compare risks in the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA). The outputs from this project will be tested by departmental analysts for possible use in the context of future iterations of the NSRA.

This project is part of wider work that is aiming to identify potential new methods to help clarify the relationships between risks and risk management spending. The project involves high profile work, working closely with senior officials across Whitehall.

Student specification
We are looking to recruit an intern or interns with the following skills or experience:
- A research background in quantitative economics and cost benefit analyses.
- Creativity to be able to provide innovative approaches to policy problems.
- Good oral and written communications skills.
- Ability to explain technical concepts to non-expert audiences, both in oral presentation and in writing.
- An interest in risk assessment, resilience and/or national security is desirable, but not essential.
- Confidence in dealing with quantitative data is also required.

Start date of Internship
February 2017 onwards

Security
The successful candidate will need to go through standard security clearance processes. The level of security needed in Security Check (SC). This can take at least two months.

Deadline
The deadline for applications is 6 January 2017.

Queries
Application forms and any queries relating to the project should be directed to:
colin.armstrong@go-science.gsi.gov.uk

Application process

To apply for this internship, please submit your CV (maximum two sides of A4) and a cover letter (maximum two sides of A4) to colin.armstrong@go-science.gsi.gov.uk. Your cover letter should cover:

- Title of PhD
- Brief summary of your project
- Explain why you are applying for this internship
- Outline the skills you hope to gain from this internship
- Outline the skills you can bring to this internship
- Dates unavailable to undertake your internship
- Funding and Permissions (confirmation that the DTC will extend studentship)