

General Information

Title: Investment in Future Roads

Non-Academic partner: Department for Transport

Role/Sector: Government

Location: London

Duration: 3 months

Start date: Preferably Autumn 2017 but negotiable

Full or Part time: Preferably full time but with some flexibility

Who are you going to work with

The Department for Transport is responsible for the transport policy for the UK. The Roads Devolution and Motoring Group is responsible for around 92% of all journeys undertaken in the UK each day, invests a budget of around £10bn a year and has responsibility for some of the fastest-evolving areas of transport policy.

How do you expect to spend your day

We have two potential projects, both of which would be suitable for an internship:

Project 1 would look at the impact of improved transport on under-connected communities. The aim would be to understand the full range of impacts of better connections, and the extent to which these can be quantified and included in appraisal; but also to articulate the wider qualitative impacts on quality of life, access to services and the ability to do business. This would be amenable to a variety of techniques, and would help to fill a gap in our existing evidence base.

Project 2 would focus on a) the impact of connected and autonomous vehicles on road transport; and b) the implications that this has for the selection of investment projects today. We are already commissioning social research to gather evidence on this topic, but the process of synthesising this and other evidence into a seamless picture of the future remains to be done. In addition to raising questions about the use of technology, there are also important questions about the role of uncertainty in government's response to technological change.

The intern could expect to spend the majority of their time:

- Carrying out a literature review of established research in the relevant area
- Interviewing key individuals, inside and outside of DfT, in order to understand the existing consensus; and organising workshops to expose the emerging findings of the project to further discussion.
- In the case of project 2, shaping and/or interpreting the findings of a social research project (depending on timing).
- Participating in meetings to understand and influence the collective thinking of the department
- Ideally, finding a way of quantifying some of the questions and answers that emerge from research.
- Presenting their findings in a way that is understandable to a lay audience, and which can form part of the government's Road Investment Strategy.

Depending on time available, the intern could also have time to learn more about the formation of government infrastructure policy at both a strategic and a detailed level.

The ideal intern's personality and qualifications

Policymaking in this area is mainly the preserve of civil service generalists. An ideal intern would be comfortable working with people whose approach to problems is relatively broad, but also encouraging them towards more searching and intellectually rigorous conclusions. This implies strong communications skills mixed with an ability to articulate a coherent view of a complex area with substantial uncertainties. No specific qualifications are essential.

For project 1, there are natural links with social science subjects, such as geography, economic history and economics. An ideal candidate would be comfortable with both qualitative and quantitative information.

For project 2, the obvious connections would be to engineering and to social sciences. An ability to join an understanding of technical improvements to likely shifts in attitudes and activities would be essential.

However in either case we are happy to consider applicants from any background.

Essential skills:

- Strong communications skills and ability to engage constructively across an organisation.
- Breadth of understanding, to comprehend complex topics that encompass a wide range of stakeholder viewpoints.
- Ability to identify evidence from a wide and potentially conflicting range of sources.
- Ability to produce clear written information that is accessible to a lay reader.

Desirable skills:

- Project 1 – good understanding of the geography of England, economic history of the UK and/or economic geography
- Project 2 – good understanding of emerging technology in transport and/or transport history

What are the benefits of Interning at this project

These areas have historically had limited links to academia, and this represents an unusual chance to engage with areas that are traditionally out of reach for those outside of the policy community. An intern will be able to contribute to the cutting-edge thought underpinning one of the government's largest investment programmes, worth over £5bn a year; and for either project, the findings have the potential to direct the investment of hundreds of millions of pounds. Both proposed projects would involve key policy areas (regional rebalancing and connected and autonomous vehicles) at the forefront of the government's economic agenda, and would place the intern at the forefront of major ongoing debates.

Apply for this role

If you are interested in applying for this opportunity, please email the completed [application form](#) and a CV to esrcdtc@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Please note that all applications must be approved by the applicant's PhD supervisor. The application deadline is **September 20 2017**. Results will be announced early October 2017.