

Research Officer

Salary: £36,038 - £41,166 (advertised salary for 2024/25, salary negotiations for 2025/26 are not yet concluded)

Location: Flexible (office-based in Inverness or home-based within Scotland). Regular travel will be required to Inverness for monthly team meetings and for stakeholder engagement.

Hours: 35 hours per week (Flexible working options available)

Contract: Fixed-term, 2-years

Reporting to: Policy and Practice Lead

The Scottish Land Commission is seeking to appoint a Research Officer. This is an exciting opportunity to join the Scottish Land Commission team and shape changes in the way land is owned and used.

Scottish Land Commission

The Scottish Land Commission stimulates fresh thinking in the ways we own and use land in Scotland. We are a public body, established by the Scottish Parliament in 2017, and our role is to advise on changes in policy and law, and to support good practice and change on the ground.

The Commission's strategic plan 2023-26 sets out our focus on achieving three strategic objectives:

- People: Enabling people to participate in and influence decisions about land.
- Power: Diversifying the power and control in land ownership and governance.
- Prosperity: Using the value and benefits of land to create national economic prosperity.

This role will manage and conduct research to support high quality evidence and analysis across our Programme of Work. The Commission will be delivering a refreshed Programme of Work from April 2025, which sets the high-level focus for the Commission for the following 18 months. During this time the Commission will be undertaking work to inform the Land Reform Bill, strengthen implementation of Scotland's Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, continue our annual reporting on the rural land market, and provide advice on other areas of policy including tax and community land ownership.

We are seeking a researcher with strong social science skills to lead on the delivery of research within this programme, by commissioning research externally, carrying out in-house research, delivering the Commission's wider research strategy and supporting policy advice.

Purpose of role: to deliver high quality and impactful research and evidence to inform policy and practice.

Key duties of the Role:

Delivery responsibilities

- Lead the design, management and delivery of high quality, impactful research and analysis to support policy development on land reform.
- Lead the delivery of the Commission's respected annual Rural Land Market Insights and Data Reports, including partnership management and relationship building with partners, original research, and proactive market monitoring.
- Develop and deliver the Commission's research strategy, including identifying opportunities for collaboration and external funding support.
- Be responsible for the contract management of externally commissioned research projects to support business plan activities, including advising on research approaches, preparation of research briefs, and managing the commissioning and contractual relationship of research contracts with external suppliers.
- Undertake data analysis, manage data requirements and data sharing agreements to support the Commission's policy priorities.
- Be the primary point of liaison, developing collaborative relationships, with research stakeholders including research and academic institutions, government and contractors.
- Provide constructive challenge and evidence-based insights to support internal discussions on policy design and development.

Engagement and communications

- Proactively support knowledge transfer and effective communication of research outputs through a range of mediums including, reports, publications, events, and meetings.
- Support effective relationships with stakeholders that help delivery and increase the impact of the Commission's work.
- Support a strong reputation and profile for the Commission including representing the Commission regularly with stakeholders and at events.
- Seek opportunities to communicate and increase the profile of the Commission's work.

Governance and business systems

- Ensure that expenditure is planned and authorised in accordance with the Commission's policies, budget requirements and procurement principles.
- Contribute to good governance practices, accountability and compliance, including managing and reporting of operational risks.
- Contribute to organisational performance monitoring and reporting, including reporting against Business Plan objectives where the postholder has delivery responsibility (for example, on Rural Land Market Reports).

- Maintain and apply the Commission's research quality assurance and ethics policies, including periodic review and updating as required.

Leadership and Professional Development

- Take a proactive approach to own professional development and committing to regular continuing professional development.
- Support the professional development of colleagues by providing constructive feedback where appropriate. This may include providing mentorship/supervision to students or junior colleagues.
- Support the development of the Scottish Land Commission by contributing actively to organisational planning processes (e.g. quarterly milestones, annual business plan and three year strategic plan).
- Contribute to and support organisational development through behaviours and ways of working that bring our organisational values to life.
- Seek and share opportunities to be creative and realise continuous improvement in our delivery and impact.

Key Contacts

Internal: Colleagues from the Policy Team, as well as across the Commission including the Board of Commissioners, Management, Good Practice, and Corporate Services.

External: Researchers and Academics, Policy Experts, Stakeholders, Suppliers, Elected Representatives, and Members of the Public.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications & professional experience	<p>A relevant degree or equivalent.</p> <p>Experience in relevant research role involving designing research, knowledge transfer and impact evaluation.</p> <p>Experience in supporting/informing policy development.</p>	<p>A post-graduate qualification or equivalent professional research experience.</p> <p>Awareness of socio-economic context of land reform, land ownership and use.</p>
Research skills	<p>Quantitative methods, including research design, analysis, and data visualisation.</p> <p>Qualitative methods including research design, data collection and analysis.</p>	<p>Experience of commissioning research from third parties.</p> <p>Familiarity with research analysis software such as NVivo, QGIS, R/RStudio.</p>
Communication & stakeholder engagement	<p>Ability to build collaborative relationships and engage constructively with stakeholders.</p> <p>Experience in communicating analysis and research.</p> <p>Exemplary written and verbal communication skills.</p>	<p>Experience of representing an organisation with external stakeholders.</p>
Project management	<p>Strong project co-ordination / management skills and the proven ability to meet deadlines.</p>	<p>Experience of working remotely or with minimal supervision.</p> <p>Experience in monitoring and evaluation.</p>
Professional development	<p>Willingness to learn and take on new areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Ability to quickly assimilate new information.</p>	<p>Evidence of on-going commitment to continuous professional development.</p>
Other	<p>Willingness to travel to fulfil requirements of the post.</p>	