Research Assistant in Psychology

Overview

Reference	017167
Department	Psychology
Grade	Grade 6
Term	9 months Fixed Term Contract 17.5 hours per week (0.5 FTE)
Salary Range	£26,243 - £32,236
Closing Date	14th January 2019 at midday
Working Arrangements	This role is part time and we will consider requests for flexible working arrangements

Durham University

Durham University is one of the world's top universities with strengths across the Arts and Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences. We are home to some of the most talented scholars and researchers from around the world who are tackling global issues and making a difference to people's lives.

The University sits in a beautiful historic city where it shares ownership of a UNESCO World Heritage Site with Durham Cathedral, the greatest Romanesque building in Western Europe. A collegiate University, Durham recruits outstanding students from across the world and offers an unmatched wider student experience.

County Durham is a region steeped in history and natural beauty. The Durham Dales, including the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, are home to breathtaking scenery and attractions. Durham offers an excellent choice of city, suburban and rural residential locations. The University provides a range of benefits including pension and childcare benefits and the University's Relocation Manager can assist with potential schooling requirements.

Durham University seeks to promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive environment for work and study that assists all members of our University community to reach their full potential. Diversity brings strength and we welcome applications from across the international, national and regional communities that we work with and serve.

The Department

Founded in 1952, the Department of Psychology is consistently ranked as one of the very best in the UK with an outstanding reputation for excellence in teaching, research and

employability of our students. We are currently ranked 5th in the Complete University Guide, 6th in the Guardian University League Table, and in the top 100 of Psychology Departments world-wide according to the QS World Rankings.

Currently the department's research falls within four groupings: Developmental Science; Learning, Memory and Cognition, Perception, Action and Awareness; Social, Evolutionary and Affective Psychology. The department is committed to creating and maintaining a research and teaching environment that spans the entire breadth of psychology, and to this end has developed a growth strategy specifically in the area of Quantitative Social Psychology, which it is currently implementing.

The department is well equipped for research in most areas including facilities for fMRI, TMS, tDCS, EEG/ERP, eye movement tracking, biophysiological recording as well as the analysis of visuomotor action and psychophysical performance. The department also has a motion capture lab, an echo-attenuated chamber and a suite of observation labs. The department benefits from full IT and mechanical research support from departmental technicians between 8:30am and 4:30pm Monday to Friday.

We offer a prestigious undergraduate programme as well as a suite of Masters programmes including Developmental Psychopathology, Cognitive Neuroscience, Research Methods. Each year we admit around 180 single honours undergraduates, 50 masters and a number of PhD students.

In 2017 the department again received an Athena SWAN Silver Award recognising our commitment to advancing women's careers in STEMM academia and reflecting the supportive and positive environment within the department.

The Role

Applications are invited for a Research Assistant based in Psychology with a particular emphasis on mental health and science communication. The project involves being part of an editorial and production team for a new website, *Understanding Voices*, which aims to provide up-to-date information about voice-hearing (or auditory hallucinations) for the people with this experience, their friends and families, and the general public. The website will launch in summer 2019 and will be supported by a range of resources, including print materials, downloadable PDFs, and multi-media (e.g. animations, videos, and podcasts). "Understanding Voices" is being developed by Hearing the Voice, an eight-year research project on voice-hearing funded by the Wellcome Trust. The post will be line-managed by Dr Victoria Patton, head of the Understanding Voices editorial and production team and Communications, Engagement and Impact Lead for Hearing the Voice.

The successful applicant will be expected to conduct desk research, interview contributors, review and summarise research findings, and write text for a range of formats, including the website, print materials, and scripts for videos and animation. Skills with summarising

research evidence and communicating it to different audiences is a key requirement for the role, and may be suited to candidates with experience of blogging, public engagement or science communication.

Responsibilities:

- *To review and evaluate basic research by deciding how best to apply search methodology according to overall context and objectives.*
- *To identify and review existing web resources on topics relating to mental health, psychosis and hallucinations.*
- *To write up summaries and reviews of research work and present information on research findings in a clear and accurate manner.*
- *To write and edit content for Understanding Voices, including in collaboration with external contributors where appropriate*
- *To contribute to the organisation and delivery of activities associated with Understanding Voices, including stakeholder consultation events, training workshops and the launch event*
- *To understand and convey information which needs careful explanation to the team through presentations, discussions and meetings which contribute to the production of Understanding Voices*
- *To liaise with research colleagues and make internal and external contacts to develop knowledge and understanding to form relationships for future collaboration.*
- *To contribute to the planning of consultation projects.*

This post is fixed term for 9 months, part-time 17.5 hours per week. The post is for this specific amount of time to work towards the initial launch of *Understanding Voices* and contribute to edits and updates in the first 3 months of its release.

The post-holder is employed to work on this project which will be led by another colleague. Whilst this means that the post-holder will not be carrying out independent research in their own right, the expectation is that they will contribute to the advancement of the project, through the development of their own ideas and development of research, communication and engagement protocols. There may also be some limited time for the post-holder to work on independent research or contribute to other research projects within Hearing the Voice.

Successful applicants will, ideally, be in post as soon as possible.

The Requirements

Essential:

1. **Qualifications**
   - A good first degree in Psychology or a cognate discipline relevant to mental health.

2. **Experience**
   - Experience of writing content for non-academic audiences

- Experience in conducting basic academic research or providing research assistance, including the use of standard research methods.
- Demonstrable ability to produce concise and well-written reports for a range of stakeholders.
- Experience in reviewing and evaluating research literature.
- Experience of engaging non-academic audiences

3. **Skills**
   - Excellent written communication skills, including the ability to write clearly and concisely for a wide range of audiences
   - Demonstrable ability to work cooperatively as part of a team, including participating in research meetings.
   - Ability to manage time effectively and work to strict deadlines.
   - Excellent interpersonal skills.
   - Ability to liaise with a range of stakeholders.

Desirable:

4. **Qualifications**
   - A master degree in Psychology or a cognate discipline relevant to mental health.

5. **Experience**
   - Experience of conducting high quality academic research on topics relating to mental health.
   - Experience of blogging and writing content for the web
   - Experience of working with vulnerable people
   - Experience in science or health communication

6. **Skills**
   - Ability to contribute to the planning and management of research and engagement activities.
   - Ability to write engagingly on clinical or scientific topics for the general public.

How to Apply

For informal enquiries please contact Dr Victoria Patton (victoria.patton@durham.ac.uk). All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence.

We prefer to receive applications online via the Durham University Vacancies Site. https://www.dur.ac.uk/jobs/. As part of the application process, you should provide details of 3 (preferably academic/research) referees and the details of your current line manager so that we may seek an employment reference.

Applications are particularly welcome from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in the University.

What to Submit

All applicants are asked to submit:

- A CV and covering letter which details your experience, strengths and potential in a point-by-point manner, addressing the requirements set out above.

<u>Next Steps</u>

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview and assessment late January 2019.