UNIVERSITY OF
FORWARD
THINKING
WESTMINSTER⌗

Note: This job description does not form part of the employee's contract of employment but is provided for guidance. The precise duties and responsibilities of any job may be expected to change over time. Job holders should be consulted over any proposed changes in this job description before implementation.

Role Descriptors
Outputs and Requirements

Title: **Research Fellow**

Reports to: **Professor of Psychology**

Department: **School of Social Sciences**

Professional Values
All Research Fellows are required to demonstrate respect for individual learners and be committed to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and/or professional practice. All Research Fellows are required to be committed to the development of learning communities and encouraging participation in Higher Education, while acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity. It is also a requirement that all staff are committed to undertaking continuing professional development and evaluation of individual practice and that they are proactive in improving the student experience

Role Purpose
To develop research objectives, projects and proposals for individual or joint research projects ensuring that this activity and administrative duties are well managed, obtaining guidance if required. The focus of the postholder's work will be the Leverhulme Trust funded project "Motivations for sharing political disinformation on social media".

Principal Accountabilities

1. To build internal contacts and participate in internal networks for the exchange of information and to ensure that relationships are made and developed for future collaboration (s) and potential sources of funds are identified.

2. To be able to prepare the paperwork required for the submission of research proposals and research applications to external bodies or companies to secure funding or for contractual purposes.

3. To take the initiative and creativity to identify areas for research, develop new research methods and extend the research portfolio, identifying and using new research techniques and methods as appropriate to analyse and interpret research data and draw conclusions on the outcomes. Ensure that the outputs

of such activities are to a standard that will be recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

4. To be responsible for conducting individual or collaborative research projects and ensuring that results are written up for publication.

5. To be able to use research resources, laboratories and workshops as appropriate and ensure that personal research activity is planned and managed, taking into account the requirement, as necessary, to collaborate with others.

6. To be responsible for developing and maintaining a personal programme of Continuous Professional development (CPD) which ensures that you are continually up to date with developments, knowledge and understanding in your field or specialism and that you can translate this knowledge of advances in the subject area into research activity.

7. To attend and contribute to relevant internal and external meetings and to the decision making process in general, in a positive and collaborative manner.

8. To be involved and undertake the assessment of student knowledge, providing supervision of projects and assistance in the development of student research skills.

9. To have an understanding of individual health and safety responsibilities and an awareness of the risks in the work environment, together with their potential impact on both individual work and that of others.

10. To undertake any other duties within their competence, as required by the University.

CONTEXT

The postholder will be the primary researcher on the 24-month Leverhulme Trust funded project "Motivations for sharing political disinformation on social media", working with Professor Tom Buchanan (PI) and Dr Deborah Husbands. False political information on social media is a critical problem, with profound consequences for society. Much of the spread of false material is due to the actions of ordinary social media users who encounter it, then forward it on to their social networks. Little is known about people's motivations for doing this. This project will directly ask people why they have - deliberately or unwittingly - spread false information. We will examine competing explanations of such behaviour, and test whether key variables they identify actually predict real-world behaviour.

The research programme will comprise five studies, combining quantitative (psychological questionnaires) and qualitative (short-form online interview) work and analyses. All data collection will be conducted online, directly approaching individuals who have been observed sharing false information on social media, and also using participants drawn from paid research panels. The postholder will execute and analyse all the studies. They will prepare ethics applications, work on draft outputs, and be

responsible for data management and other project-related duties. They will be co-author on all outputs from the project, to be written in collaboration with the PI and CI.

Some information about the project can be found on the Leverhulme website https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/research-project-grants/motivations-sharing-political-disinformation-social-media , while prior publications directly underpinning it include https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0239666 and http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.111071

The postholder will possess sufficient breadth or depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline and of research methods and techniques to work within established research programmes. The postholder will be expected to engage on a programme of continuous professional development (CPD).

The postholder must be able to show consideration towards colleagues and work with them on joint projects as required and have the ability to collaborate with academic colleagues and students on areas of shared research interest. This will require the ability to balance the competing pressures of research and administrative demands and deadlines.

The postholder will be expected to deal with routine communication using a range of media and be able to communicate complex information, which may be of a specialist or highly technical nature, orally, in writing and electronically

The postholder has responsibility for ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken for the activities for which they are responsible and that measures to control risk are identified and implemented, and communicated to all affected.

They must ensure the provision of adequate supervision and training, to include: the responsibility to work with due regard for the health and safety of themselves and others; familiarity with actions to be taken in the event of emergency; and the duty to report accidents and hazards appropriately.

They will also require a thorough understanding of the diversity and equal opportunities issues.

Person Specification
Research Fellow

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		
Degree	E	
Post-Graduate Degree or Professional Qualification in Psychology	E	
PhD in Psychology or the equivalent in professional qualifications and experience	E	
Teaching Qualification		D
You will have proven experience and evidence of:-		
Proven record of successful experience in research	E	
Subject expertise that is up to-date, including awareness of research relevant to the specific research topic	E	
Contribution to design of research		D
Ability to design and deliver course materials		D

Skills		
High level analytical capability	E	
Fluent in relevant quantitative and qualitative research models, techniques and methods (e.g. multiple regression analyses using SPSS, mediation analyses or structural equation modelling; qualitative content analysis; online questionnaires using platforms such as Qualtrics) and able to devise new ones	E	
Working knowledge of up-to-date research practices, including data management planning, study pre-registration, data sharing	E	
Working knowledge of best practices in online data collection, including collecting data via social media and online research panels	E	
Ability to communicate information clearly	E	
Ability to encourage commitment to learn in others		D
Ability to assess and organise resources		D
Understanding of and ability to contribute towards broader management issues		D
Personal Attributes		
Fully committed to contributing to a stimulating learning and working environment which is supportive and fair, based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.	E	