

Research Associate in Sociology

Project Title: After Last Orders?: A biographical exploration of the impact of UK pub closures

The position is full-time (FTE1.0) and fixed term from 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2025.
REQ230558

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/about/>

Project Description

Dr Thomas Thurnell-Read has received funding from the Leverhulme Trust to explore the causes and impacts of pub closure in the UK from a social and cultural perspective. The reasons for the long-term trend in pub closures is varied and complex. Pub closures may represent a loss of local social and cultural infrastructure which has a profound and lasting impacts on local communities. Yet, very little is known about the lasting long-term social and cultural impacts of pub closures and existing statistical data fails to capture the unique social connections and cultural meanings lost when pubs close. The research will gather detailed accounts of pub closures and use an innovative biographical approach to 'tell the stories' of the people (staff and customers) and places (specific venues and surrounding communities) affected. The project will utilise the widespread closure of British pubs to bring into dialogue concepts and debates relating to closures, endings and social change. The findings will inform enhanced understandings of the impact of pub closures at a personal, social and cultural level.

The appointed Research Associate (RA) will work closely with Dr Thurnell-Read to design and implement data collection, analyse data and produce and disseminate findings. The RA will lead two research strands within the wider project: a systematic review and narrative analyse of news content relating to pub closures; and a series of pub closure case studies involving interviews, focus groups, site visits and the collection and analysis of textual materials drawn from archives, local news site and social media content. The RA will co-author a series of 'long read' narrative case studies and co-produce a podcast series, with these being used as primary means of disseminating findings alongside more traditional routes such as publications in academic journals. The RA will also assist in the coordination of an Academic Advisory Panel and an Industry and Stakeholder Advisory Panel.

Job Description

Job Grade: Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6

Job Purpose

To conduct research examining the social and cultural impacts of pub closures. To be responsible for the development and implementation of data collection using an innovative biographical approach. This will entail research visits to locations across the East and West Midlands, as well as other parts of the UK. To participate in various forms of dissemination of research findings. Other tasks include: reviewing and evaluating existing academic literature and additional source materials; contributing to the design of the research and the research instruments; ethical approval and task relating to ensuring research ethics and standards; data preparation, analysis and writing up, including conference presentations, reports and publications.

Job Duties:

- To maintain an up-to-date awareness of current and emerging research relevant to the project.
- Be responsible for conducting the day to day running of the project.
- To formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the project team.
- To collaborate with the investigators in the design and implementation of the research project.
- To feed back to the project team on progress, to make recommendations for next steps.
- To conduct a systematic review of media content relating to pub closures using appropriate data bases (e.g. *Nexus UK*).
- To collect qualitative data using semi-structured interviews and focus groups.
- To plan and carry out site visits involving observations, photography, mapping and video making where appropriate.
- To collaborate with the Principal Investigator in the preparation and analysis of multiple method data using appropriate software (e.g. *NVivo*).
- To participate in the public dissemination and impact plans linked to the project, including presenting key research findings to relevant (non) academic stakeholders.
- To write research papers for publication in high quality academic journals.
- To write up regular progress reports and present outcomes to the Principal Investigator and to both Advisory Panels.
- Travel to attend meetings and make presentations to external stakeholders.
- To attend and contribute to conferences.
- To contribute to project promotion and public engagement events.
- To undertake initial and/or further training relevant to the aims of the project and to engage in training programmes in the University (or elsewhere) that are consistent with the needs and aspirations of the project and those of the Department.
- Undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post

Points To Note

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equality & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Reports to the Principal Investigator

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed with respect to meeting the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Your application will be reviewed against the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Application
- 2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Interview

Essential Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Background in Sociology or other relevant social science (e.g. leisure studies, social geography)	1,2,3
	Working/engaging with individuals, groups and communities	1,2,3
	Qualitative data analysis	1,2,3
	Understanding of and/or interest in social and cultural aspects of leisure and consumption	1,2,3
Skills and abilities	Excellent written and oral communication skills	1,2,3
	Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines	1,2,3
	Excellent interpersonal, and organisational skills	1,2,3
	Excellent time management skills and ability to complete agreed work commitments on time	1,3
	Ability to write project reports and make presentations to stakeholder groups, including children	1,2,3
	Knowledge of relevant Ethical issues	1,2,3
	Demonstrate evidence of having undertaken further training	1,2,3
Qualifications	PhD (or nearing completion) or other relevant qualifications and/or experience	1,2,3
	Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times.	1,2,3
Other	Ability and willingness to travel to engage in site visits in varied locations	1, 3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Working knowledge of issues relating to alcohol, pubs, breweries and/or drinking culture	1,3
	Experience in blogging and/or podcasting	1,3
	Authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference papers or technical reports	1,3
Skills and abilities	Critical literature review writing	1,3
Skills and abilities	Authoring original work, in the highest quality refereed academic journals	1,3
	A publication track record	1,3

Conditions of Service

The position is FULL TIME and FIXED TERM from 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2025.

Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic Salary Grade 6 (£33,348 - £43,155), at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment. The appointment will be subject to the University's Terms and Conditions of Employment for STAFF GRADES 6 AND ABOVE, details of which can be found [here](#).

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which can be found [here](#).

The University offers a wide range of employee benefits which can be found [here](#).

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/childcare-information---page.html>)

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements.

We also strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/>