

Research Associate (Everyday Misinformation Project)

Part-time (FTE0.6) and fixed term until 29th February 2024.

REQ230880

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Department summary:

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/online-civic-culture-centre/>

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/communication-media/>

Project Description

The Online Civic Culture Centre (O3C) at Loughborough University is seeking to appoint an enthusiastic and highly motivated postdoctoral researcher to work with Professor Andrew Chadwick and Professor Cristian Vaccari on the Leverhulme-funded *Everyday Misinformation Project* (<http://everyday-mis.info>)

Job Description

Job Grade: Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6, FTE0.6.

Job Purpose

The researcher's main responsibilities will be to contribute to project management; gather, organize, and analyze quantitative and some qualitative data; arrange events and meetings relating to research online and/or in person; and contribute actively to the writing and sharing of the research findings in high quality academic publications and public reports and at conferences and workshops. Quantitative skills, including experience of multivariate analysis of longitudinal survey data using regression with lagged variables, autoregression, and similar techniques, are essential. Experience of using either SPSS, STATA, or R is essential. Familiarity with NVivo for qualitative analysis is desirable but not essential.

Leverhulme-Funded Project

The successful candidate will primarily work with Professor Andrew Chadwick (Principal Investigator) and Professor Cristian Vaccari (Co-Investigator). They will also collaborate with the project's full-time postdoctoral researcher Dr Natalie-Anne Hall.

The successful applicant will be an experienced researcher with PhD-level social science training in either communication and media, political science, sociology, social psychology, or a cognate discipline or interdisciplinary field, such as behavioural science. They will have substantial knowledge of research on misinformation, be a team player, have excellent written and spoken English, presentational, and time management skills, be highly technologically literate, and be committed to the development of original social science theory and concepts. An awarded PhD **at time of application** is essential. This is not a remote working position, but requests to work away from campus will be considered in light of the University's Dynamic Working policies.

In the latest UK Research Excellence Framework (2021), Communication and Media at Loughborough was ranked 5th in the UK and submitted 40 researchers. Overall, 65% of its research was assessed as "world leading"—the highest possible rating of 4 stars. Its research environment and research impact were both awarded the maximum

possible rating of 100% 4-star quality. The department is ranked top in the Complete University Guide, and third in both the Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide and the Guardian guide.

Job Duties

Project Specific (organizational duties)

- Take shared and some lead responsibility for quantitative and some qualitative research on online misinformation.
- Manage and coordinate specific areas of the research including survey design, online and in person
- Sort and categorize quantitative datasets.
- Collaborate with the project's research team.
- Take some responsibility for negotiating and maintaining research contacts and relationships with research participants.
- Collaboratively manage and develop the project website, online materials, blog posts, and social media as appropriate.
- Participate in the analysis and presentation of findings online and in person.
- Manage, organize, and attend project meetings online and in person.
- Attend and contribute to meetings with survey companies, project partners, and other stakeholder organisations online and in person.
- Share research progress with the Investigators.
- Maintain and update an online repository of data and research notes.
- Write up regular progress reports and present outcomes to all Investigators and collaborators.
- Attend and contribute to regular weekly internal meetings online and/or in person.

Project Specific (research duties)

- Use quantitative skills, including multivariate analysis of longitudinal survey data using regression with lagged variables, autoregression, and similar techniques.
- Conduct literature searches and collect background information on the research area.
- Manage the design and delivery of nationally representative surveys.
- Negotiate with, and follow up, research contacts.
- Participate in research design and data collection using qualitative interviewing techniques online and in person.
- Participate in research design, data collection, and analysis using survey data.
- Engage with other relevant stages of data analysis.
- Contribute to the design and delivery of project events and associated scholarly activities (e.g. research symposia, conferences) online and in person.
- Manage the development of materials for knowledge transfer and networking.
- Co-author research articles suitable for publication in high quality academic journals.
- Lead on publications based on your own analyses of survey data gathered by the project.
- Present/co-present at conferences, seminars and related events, online and in person, including international conferences.
- Co-author public reports based on this research.

Other Duties

- Be responsible for ensuring the day to day running of the project, working with the PI, Co-I, and extant RA.
- Formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the project team.
- Attend and take part in continual University professional development events online and in person.
- Support the project team by enhancing relationships with existing collaborators and by assisting the establishment of relationships with new collaborators.
- Complete Loughborough University training on GDPR regulations and intellectual property (IPR) agreements and work with the University's Research Support Office to ensure project compliance.
- 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 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	Substantial and demonstrable knowledge of research on misinformation	1, 2, 3	
	Substantial and demonstrable knowledge of research on news and related public and political information	1, 2, 3	
	Experience of using quantitative research methods and multivariate analysis of longitudinal survey data	1, 2, 3	
	Experience of authoring, co-authoring, and publishing high quality, original work in peer-reviewed academic journals	1, 3	
	Experience of presenting research at conferences and symposia, including international conferences, in person and online	1, 3	
	Experience of using either SPSS, or STATA or R	1, 2, 3	
Skills and abilities	Ability to work independently <u>and</u> as part of a team and to collaborate with others	1, 3	
	Excellent written and spoken English	1, 2, 3	
	Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines	1, 2, 3	
	Excellent interpersonal, organisational, and collaboration skills	1, 2, 3	
	Ability to write project reports and make presentations in academic and public-facing settings	1, 2, 3	
	Excellent time management and ability to complete agreed work commitments on time	1, 2, 3	
	Competence in IT skills and digital media (e.g., website editing and updating, social media dissemination)	1, 3	
	Training	A willingness to undertake further training as appropriate and to adopt new procedures as and when required	1, 3
	Qualifications	Awarded PhD at time of application in a recognized social science discipline including communication and media, journalism studies, political science, sociology, social psychology, or a cognate interdisciplinary field, such as behavioural science.	1
	Other	A degree of flexibility and commitment to meet deadlines as appropriate.	3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Qualitative skills, including familiarity with Nvivo	1, 2, 3
	Working in a high-quality academic research environment	1, 3
	Experience of authoring or co-authoring public-facing research reports	1,3
Skills and abilities	Sensitive understanding of the complex and contentious issues raised by the project, and an ability to engage effectively with research participants who hold strong political views.	1,3
	A demonstrable commitment to advancing the study of online misinformation	1,3

Conditions of Service

The position is part-time (0.6 FTE) and fixed term from 18th September 2023 until 29th February 2024. Salary will be on Supporting and Specialist Academic, Grade 6 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/>