

Research Associate in History of Sino-African Relations

Project Title: Competing Socialisms and African Agency: The Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Tanzania during the Cold War, 1950s–1990

Job Ref: REQ250375

Full-time, Fixed Term starting on 1 October 2025 until 30 September 2027

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Project Description

The full-time Research Associate (RA) will join a three-year UK-German project, Competing Socialisms and African Agency: The Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Tanzania during the Cold War, 1950s–1990, funded jointly by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). This project examines the competition between the Soviet and Chinese models of socialism in Africa. It uses Tanzania as a case study to examine the connection between global and local factors, analyse tangible interactions "on the ground" and highlighting the agency of African actors and their ability to navigate between the two socialist powers and use them to their own ends. Moreover, it draws attention to the fact that in forging ties with Africa, the Soviet Union showcased its Central Asian republics as models for a successful socialist modernisation. We will contrast this with the PRC's focus on highlighting the commonalities of the Chinese and African experiences, such as the trauma of imperialism/colonialism, anti-imperialist resistance and developmental models.

The PI is Dr Thoralf Klein (Loughborough U.) and there are two international project co-leads (PCL(I)), Dr Kirsten Bönker (North East Institute, Lüneburg, Germany), and Dr Andrea Azizi Kifyasi (U. of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania). Two PhDs have been recruited on the German side. The RA will be undertaking independent research in support of the project, with time scheduled for this, as well as supporting the research and publication activities of the research team as a whole. The post is based in International Relations, Politics and History within the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at Loughborough University.

Recognising that a diverse workplace is a better, more successful workplace, applications are especially welcome from underrepresented groups including women and people of colour, people with disabilities, and LGBT candidates.

Job Description

Job Grade: Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6

Job Purpose:

The Research Associate will work in close collaboration with the Project Investigator (PI). The RA will take responsibility for an independent sub-project; carry out independent archival research; organise and conduct interviews as appropriate; support other team members with their research; organise and facilitate project meetings and a workshop and conference as appropriate; disseminate findings both independently and in collaboration with other team members; and grow internal and external networks for sharing information and ideas.

Job Duties

- To be responsible for conducting the day-to-day running of the project, including carrying out an independent sub-project titled "Trade, Aid and Diplomacy in Sino-Tanzanian Relations, 1961–1990".
- To formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the project team.
- To conduct archival research in China, Tanzania, the UK and the US. To organise and conduct interviews as appropriate.
- To feed back to the project team on progress, to make recommendations for next steps
- To contribute to the organisation of project meetings and a workshop and conference as appropriate.
- To support the PI and other team members with their research.
- To publish analysis of the research undertaken in print and at conferences, independently and in collaboration with the team.
- To contribute ideas for new research and enterprise directions.
- To travel to conduct research, attend meetings (as appropriate) and make presentations both within the team and advisory group, at academic conferences and (where applicable) to external stakeholders.
- To contribute to project promotion and public engagement events.
- To support the implementation of the data management plan and to ensure compliance with Loughborough, UKRI, and GDPR data management requirements and with all other ethical requirements.
- To maintain confidentiality at all times and ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated..
- 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.
- To 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 Project Lead (PL).

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	Background in Chinese or African history.	
	Knowledge and experience of working in Chinese archives.	1, 3
	Authoring original work for academic journal articles, book chapters and/or conference papers.	1, 3
Skills and abilities	Ability to conduct archival research.	1, 3
	Excellent written and oral communication skills in English.	1, 3
	Excellent written and oral communication skills in Chinese.	1, 3
	Ability to write project reports and make presentations to academic research groups and stake-holders.	1, 3
	Excellent time management skills and ability to complete agreed work commitments on time.	1, 3
	Excellent interpersonal and organisational skills.	1, 3
	Ability to work independently <u>and</u> as part of a team and to collaborate with others.	1, 3
	Knowledge of relevant ethical issues.	1, 3
	Knowledge of relevant Health & Safety issues.	1, 3
Training	Willingness to undertake further training, such as mandatory training.	1, 3
Qualifications	PhD in a relevant area, such as modern Chinese or African history.	1, 3
Other	Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times.	1, 3
	Willingness to travel nationally and internationally.	1, 3

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Working in a high-quality academic research environment.	1, 3
	Dissemination of research at high-profile conferences and workshops.	1, 3
Skills and abilities	Ability to develop innovative methods of accessing primary sources, especially with a view to research in China.	1, 3
	Willingness to conduct interviews and to undertake training activities in relation to this part of the project.	1, 3
	Willingness to conduct research in Tanzania.	1, 3

	Ability to author independent work, in the highest-quality refereed academic journals and/or for academic presses.	1, 3
Other	Ability to travel independently.	1, 3

Conditions of Service

The position is FULL TIME and FIXED TERM. Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6, £35,116 - £45,413 per annum, 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/>