

Research Associate in Open Book Futures

Full time, fixed-term

Job Ref: REQ250824

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

School Summary

The current post is a collaboration between the University library and the School of Design and Creative Arts. The University library enjoys a research culture of practitioner-researchers who collaborate with Loughborough's academic Schools on a regular basis. The SDCA has a vibrant interdisciplinary research environment that includes publishing, human-centred design, and open science.

Project Description

Open Book Futures (OBF) is an international partnership of researchers, universities, librarians, open access book publishers and infrastructure providers. It is building community-owned, open systems and infrastructures to enable open access book publishing to flourish. OBF is funded by both Research England and the Arcadia Foundation.

The landscape of open access book publishing stands at a crossroads: one avenue leads to the monopolisation of open access book publishing by commercial publishers and for-profit intermediaries while the other opens up a more diverse, scholar-led, community-owned, and not-for-profit publishing ecosystem.

OBF is a project dedicated towards supporting these second sets of possibility. It does so by delivering major improvements in the infrastructures used by open access book publishers and those publishers making a transition to open access books. OBF's innovations will enable more productive collaborations between people (including librarians, publishers, and researchers) in the open access landscape and expand opportunities to develop the skills necessary to run open access publishing operations.

Preservation and archiving are essential to ensuring long term open access to research outputs. The Research Associate will work alongside the existing RA based at Loughborough University and Prof. Jenny Fry (Loughborough University) and Dr Gareth Cole (University of Exeter). The RA will work on Work Package 7 of the OBF project (Archiving and Preservation). The main areas of work will be:

1. Conducting research on National Library (e.g. British Library) workflows and procedures to identify how Open Access books are digitally preserved within these libraries.
2. Conducting research on the digital preservation and archiving practices for doctoral theses.

The post-holder will also liaise closely with other researchers on the OBF project (based both at Loughborough and elsewhere) to ensure that the different work packages co-ordinate their activities.

Job Description

Job Grade: Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6

Job Purpose

The post-holder's main role will be to conduct research into identifying current practice for archiving and preserving open access books and doctoral theses, evaluating the technical/socio-technical challenges, and working with project partners to develop solutions and guidance.

Job Duties

- Conducting research on National Library (e.g. British Library) workflows and procedures to identify how Open Access books are preserved within these libraries.
- Conducting research on the preservation and archiving practices for doctoral theses
- To identify existing workflows for the archiving and preservation of open access books and to promote those created as part of the project.
- To identify and build relationships with existing projects working on archiving and preserving books.
- To write case studies of archiving open access books.
- To assist organising workshops and events to bring stakeholders together.
- To represent the OBF project at external events and conferences.
- To promote the OBF project to stakeholders.
- Be responsible for conducting the day-to-day research on the specified work package.
- To formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the project team.
- To feed back to the project team on progress and to make recommendations for next steps.
- Write up regular progress reports and present outcomes to all Investigators and Collaborators.
- Attend meetings and make presentations both within the project partners working group and to external stakeholders.
- To support the project team by enhancing relationships with existing collaborators and by assisting the establishment of relationships with new collaborators.
- To write research papers suitable for publication in high quality academic journals.
- To attend and contribute to conferences.
- To contribute to project promotion and public engagement events.
- Contribute ideas for new research and enterprise directions.
- To take the lead on ensuring that the project complies with relevant legal and ethical frameworks, including ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated.
- 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 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion 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

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	Recent research experience in Open Access publishing or related area	1, 3
	Experience of writing reports for specialist and non-specialist audiences	1, 3
	Recent experience of presenting complex information to a non-specialist audience	1, 3
Skills and abilities	Understanding of the publishing workflow	1, 3
	Understanding of Open Access publications	1, 3
	Understanding of Digital Preservation	1, 3
	Knowledge of working with metadata standards such as DataCite, ONIX, MARC	1, 3
	Ability to work as a member of a team with excellent interpersonal skills	1, 3
	Excellent time management, administrative, and organisational skills	1, 3
	Excellent written and oral communication skills	1, 3
	Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines	1, 3
	Ability to write project reports and make technical presentations to industrial and academic research groups	1, 3
Training	Demonstrate evidence of having undertaken further training	1, 3
Qualifications	Degree level or equivalent	1
Other	Knowledge and understanding of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policies	1, 3
	Willingness to adhere to and support the University's values	1

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Recent experience of working in the HE sector	1
	Recent publishing experience	1
	Working in a high-quality academic research environment	1
	Recent experience of working in or with Libraries or publishers	1
	Experience of open access repositories	1
	Authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference papers or technical reports	1

Other	Willing to travel for conferences and collaborations	1
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Conditions of Service

The position is FULL TIME and FIXED TERM for up to 6 months or until the end of the project (30th April 2026), depending on the contracted start date. Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6, (£35,116 - £37,174) 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/>