

## Postdoctoral Research Associate (Finland focused)

**Project Title: Geographies of example: Finding the example within the exception and beyond (GeoEx)**

**REQ260192**

### School Summary

The School of Social Sciences and Humanities is a diverse and inclusive School delivering excellence in learning and teaching, research, and enterprise across the Social Sciences and Humanities. Inter-disciplinarity and international encounters are fostered across six departments: Communication and Media; Criminology, Sociology and Social Policy; English; Geography and Environment; International Relations, Politics and History and Law. Geography and Environment is consistently ranked within the top 10 of UK university rankings, and has a thriving, inclusive, research community and culture housed within the new 'Morag Bell' Building. Geography and Environment is internationally recognised for its research in geographies of children, youth and families.

**Geography and Environment:** [Geography and Environment | Loughborough University](#)

### Project Description

“Why and how are some lives depicted and positioned as expendable while others are deemed not just worth protecting but also of exemplary treatments?” is the question that broadly drives this project given the starkly differentiated regards for human lives and rights on a planetary scale. While existing scholarship offers an answer, it fails to differentiate between the expendable and the exemplary lives; instead, it dilutes both within the same framework of the exception primarily inspired by Giorgio Agamben’s reading of the state, sovereignty, biopolitics, and the exception (1998, 2005). Read accordingly, although the example operates on a similar assumption but in the opposite manner, has remained unexamined in political geography and other cognate disciplines. The project stems from such observations that “the sovereign’s power is manifested not only via the production of a state of exception but also equally through the creation of a state of example” hence, remains underpinned by the production of both a homo sacer and a homo exemplar (Ferdoush, 2025, p. 1). It aims to pursue one overarching goal which is to answer: Why, where, how, on whom, and for how long does the sovereign decide to display its power of the example? This is informed by three specific objectives:

1. To spatially locate the example within and beyond the exception,
2. To identify how time is used in the creation and treatment of exemplary cases and,
3. To investigate the arbitrary power of the sovereign in treating categories as exemplary or exceptional as it wills.

The project will primarily use ethnographic and participatory approaches including tools such as interviews, FGDs, and observation along with auto-photography and activity-journals with marginalised communities across Bangladesh, Finland, and the UK. The PDRA will be largely responsible for the Finnish site conducting ethnographic fieldwork while will also be required to visit other field sites briefly as part of the broader design of the project inspired by co-creative approaches. The interview transcripts will be subject to systematic qualitative analysis in order to ensure the rigorous interpretation of the data. Project results will be disseminated to multi-disciplinary academic and policy audiences.

The research is funded by a Leverhulme Trust Research Leadership Award. It is a multi-year and multi-sited collaboration between different team members of the project. The successful candidate will play a full role in the design, execution and dissemination of the research under the guidance of Dr Azmeary Ferdoush, Geography and Environment, School of Social Sciences, Loughborough University.

## Job Description

**Job Grade:** Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6

### Job Purpose

To design, conduct, analyse and disseminate research about geographies of example, undertaking primary data collection in Finland with numerous categories of protection seekers and relevant stake holders both independently and as a team member. The post will be based at Loughborough University but will entail data collection in Helsinki, Joensuu, and other relevant Finnish cities along with a brief visit to the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh accompanied by other team member(s).

### Job Duties

- To conduct qualitative research with numerous protection seekers and stake holders in Finland.
- To be responsible for conducting the day to day running of their part of the project.
- To formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the PI.
- To feed back to the PI on progress and to make recommendations for next steps.
- To undertake a literature review.
- To complete the ethical clearance forms.
- To design interview schedules.
- To negotiate access to research participants.
- To travel to and undertake the interviews with research participants.
- To organise transcription and check transcript quality.
- To design coding system and code transcripts in NVIVO and analyse outcomes.
- To analyse material for publications.
- To plan press releases; run project social media; prepare and maintain project webpage.
- To write reports for key stakeholders in public and third sector to disseminate research.
- To attend and present at academic conferences.
- To help plan and organise academic conferences in Loughborough and photo-exhibitions in relevant project sites.
- To write research papers suitable for publication in high quality academic journals and books.
- To write up regular progress reports and present outcomes to all team members of GeoEx.
- To travel to meetings and make presentations both with the advisory committee and to external stakeholders.
- To enhance relationships with existing collaborators and establish relationships with new partners.
- To formulate ideas for new research and enterprise directions.
- To maintain confidentiality at all times and ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated.
- To engage in training programmes in the University that are consistent with the needs and aspirations of the project and those of the School.
- To be aware of, and work within, relevant University Health and Safety Policies.
- To undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.
- Maintain an up-to-date awareness of current and emerging research relevant to the project.

### 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 outlined in the document.

### Organisational Responsibility

Reports to the: Primary Investigator

### Person Specification

Your application will be assessed based on the essential and desirable criteria listed below.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to explicitly demonstrate how they meet each essential (and desirable) criteria at the application stage. The criteria that you need to demonstrate in your application will be listed as Stage 1 in the table below.

Stages of assessment are as follows:

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

### Essential Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage	
Experience	Using qualitative research methods.	1, 3	
	Negotiating access to research participants.	1	
	Conducting qualitative research with marginalised communities	1, 3	
	Creative methods such as auto-photography and activity journal	1	
	Coding and analysing qualitative data.	1	
	Authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference presentations, and/or policy reports.	1	
	Excellent interpersonal skills with ability to develop rapport with marginalised and vulnerable communities	1, 3	
Skills and abilities	Ability to work within established ethical frameworks and maintain confidentiality.	3	
	Excellent written and oral communication skills.	1, 3	
	Ability to think critically and analytically.	1, 3	
	Working knowledge of NVivo.	1	
	Competence in IT skills, web-page production, maintenance, and digital media.	1	
	Ability to write research for, and present to, different audiences.	1, 3	
	Ability to work independently and as part of a team.	1, 3	
	Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines.	3	
	Excellent organisational and administrative skills.	3	
	Training	Demonstrate a willingness to undertake further training and to adopt new procedures as required.	1
	Qualifications	PhD (or near completion) in Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, or other cognate disciplines relevant to the project	1, 3
Other	Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times.	1	
	An ability and a willingness to conduct field work outside normal office hours (with time off given in lieu).	1, 3	
	Willingness to relocate to Loughborough or surrounding area.	3	

## Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Knowledge of literature on migration, refugee, borders especially in the Finnish and the EU context	1, 3
	Close familiarity with Finland demonstrated via previous research/ experience is necessary.	1, 3
	Experience of researching with protection seekers	1
	Proven ability to publish in academic journals and popular platforms	1
	Managing a research project.	3
Skills and abilities	Working knowledge of Mendeley and SPSS.	1
	Language requirements: Finnish, Russian, and/or Ukrainian would be an asset.	1, 3

## Conditions of Service

The appointment will be subject to the [University's Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) relevant to the job grade.

## Shared University Responsibilities

As a member of the Loughborough community, you are expected to:

- Take reasonable care of yourself, others and the environment, and to prevent harm by your acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability Policies & Procedures.
- Support and contribute to the University's commitment to principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) while carrying out all duties, behaving in a manner that treats others with dignity and respect and upholds every persons right to lawful freedom of expression, freedom of speech and academic freedom. Further information about EDI at Loughborough and our strategic aims is available on our website.

## Our Purpose, Vision, and Values

Our purpose, Vision and Values underpin all that we do and shape how we work together at Loughborough.

We're proud to promote our values: **Adventurous, Collaborative, Creative, Authentic** and **Responsible**. Our people bring these values to life every day, and they are central to the positive and supportive culture that makes Loughborough unique.

If you join us, you'll be encouraged to bring these values to life in your own work and contribute to the positive, supportive culture that makes Loughborough unique.

Read more about our [vision and values](#).

## Our Accreditations



We 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.



We are proud to be a [Race Equality Charter Member](#). The Charter aims to improve the representation, progression and success of all minority ethnic staff and students within higher education and address issues of racism within higher education institutions (HEIs).



We are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer and have adopted a proactive approach to employing disabled people and to creating a more diverse workforce. We ensure that our recruitment processes are inclusive and accessible. We guarantee to offer an interview to all applicants who have declared themselves with a disability, provided they meet the essential criteria for a role. We proactively anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments and support existing employees who acquire a disability or long-term condition to thrive in the workplace.



We are a real living wage employer, and our Living Wage Employer Mark shows our commitment to paying our staff according to the cost of living.



We are proud supporters of the [City of Sanctuary movement](#) and delighted to be recognised as a University of Sanctuary. This national network brings together, university staff, lecturers, academics and students, who together work to make Higher Education institutions place of safety, solidarity and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary.

**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.**