

Research Assistant/Associate (Part Time Fixed Term)

Faculty of Education

Closing Date: May 12th 2024

Job Reference: JR41443



Research Assistant/Associate

Salary:

£ £29,605 - £33,966 pro rata
(Research Assistant) or
£ £36,024 - £44,263 pro rata
(Research Associate)

Contract

(0.5 FTE) 18.5 hours fixed term,
for 10 months in the first
instance to start as soon as
possible.

Location:

Cambridge

Faculty:

Education

Responsible to:

Professor Joanne Dillabough,

Working Pattern:

Part Time

The Role

The Faculty of Education is looking to recruit a part-time 18.5 hours **(0.5 FTE)** fixed term post-doctoral researcher to work on the ESRC funded research project 'Higher Education, States of Precarity and Conflict in the 'Global North' and 'Global South': UK, Hungary, South Africa, and Turkey.'

The postholder will play a significant role in conducting a programme of research within the Faculty of Education developing and leading research on HE in crisis and states of conflict in at least two of the four case studies: Turkey, Hungary, UK and South Africa. Experience conducting research in the South African Higher Education context would be particularly helpful.

The postholder will also play a leading role in ensuring that high impact writing, publications and events are developed from this large ESRC research programme on Higher Education and Crisis, and associated activities in its final year of operation.

The postholder will also play a role in overseeing part of the research grant portfolio and will provide some research support to group leaders, research committee meetings, research activity and case study planning.

The postholder will join an existing research group studying higher education and crisis and will have access to a community of researchers working on the project; they will have the opportunity to advance their expertise in strengthening their competences in working in this exciting interdisciplinary field.

Responsibilities of the Post

- Engage in the research process of the project, including liaising with case study collaborators to build cases, organising links between the study team and cross-national impact facilitators to enable policy impact writing.
- analysing case study data; conducting archival research; writing literature reviews
- Building a repository of methodological innovations that will be used for doctoral training, drafting of research outputs leading to co-authored publications.
- Conducting case study research in two of four of the case studies (UK and South Africa) and drafting of blogs, reports and articles.
- Support existing project management where required. This will involve liaising regularly with the existing project manager, relevant research partners, supporting smooth communication channels and managing information repositories (including for documentation, correspondence, data etc)
- some IT/ digital website management.
- Perform any additional duties as may reasonably be required within the general scope and level of the post.

The Study

The post is part of an ESRC-funded research project entitled 'Higher Education, States of Precarity and Conflict in the 'Global North' and 'Global South': UK, Hungary, South Africa, and Turkey.'

A recent call by the British Academy has identified education and learning in crises as one of its new strategic aims in response to the rapidly changing political character of nation-states. The project responds directly to such strategic aims, taking HE and conflict as a primary focus, thereby clarifying threats and risks, both present and future, to HE's mission integrity, its autonomy, its capacity for reducing conflict, enhancing learning, and building public trust.

This three-year ESRC study will assess these pressures and outcomes for HE public missions through a comparative investigation across four national contexts: the UK, Hungary, South Africa, and Turkey. These four states are nominally 'democratic', but each is also undergoing different 'crises of the state', recasting public missions in different ways.

The study will explore, across time, the articulations of such crises with changes in the 'public mission' and institutional autonomy of HE.

The project aims to:

- 1) Identify historical and contemporary political, cultural and transnational HE pressures.
- 2) Investigate how such pressures impact understandings of university missions
- 3) illuminate the experiences of, and responses to, these pressures on the part of HE actors and civic groups. Methodologically, we will undertake comparative case studies that bring together rich sets of empirical data, including: historical and archival policy documents; quantitative profiles of institutional demographics; records of academic dismissals and other threats to academic freedom; a ethnography tracing the presentation of universities in news sources

and social media; and interviews and focus groups at two universities in each of the formal case study sites.

Through comparative analysis, this project will generate new policy insights to inform stakeholders in defending the university's role in promoting democratic pluralism, pursuing independent knowledge production, and contributing to social mobility.

To achieve this, the project will develop a comparative knowledge base to identify global and local threats to HE integrity as an educational space contributing to conflict reduction; civic stability and development; the assurance of social mobility; new methodological and conceptual models addressing the risks that such conflicts pose for the integrity of HE.

Key beneficiaries include actors involved with public mission activities, such as academic managers, student unions, public mission professionals, and civic actors. Beneficiaries will have access to an evidentiary base to advance policy reforms to mitigate negative pressures on HE, including the exigencies of war.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria	Application	Interview
Education		
A PHD in the one of the areas Sociology, Sociology of Education, Politics, or other relevant discipline; or equivalent experience (or close to completion)	✓	
Relevant Experience and Skills		
Evidence of an interest and understanding of the research topic around higher education, populism and political crises.	✓	✓
Evidence of drafting reports and academic outputs to a high standard.	✓	✓
Good people skills and the ability to liaise with a range of professionals across diverse settings.	✓	✓
The capacity to manage own workload and work independently to tight deadlines within the guidelines provided.	✓	✓
Expertise with qualitative methods, particularly archival research, policy analysis and interviewing skills	✓	✓
Evidence of initiating and conducting independent research is also required, together with evidence of preparing texts for academic publication to a high standard.	✓	✓
Evidence of a strong interest in and understanding of learning research, and a clear interest in working in an interdisciplinary context.	✓	✓
<p>Some or all the following <u>desirable criteria</u> may be used for shortlisting if there are large number of candidates. Please ensure you demonstrate fully in your application how you meet any or all of these criteria.</p>		
Some experience of supporting research teams in reaching impact outcomes		
Some experience of working in a research team and experience of project management		

The Faculty of Education



Background

The Faculty of Education is a member of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) at the University of Cambridge. It is one of the largest groups of educational researchers and teacher educators in the country. Currently, the Faculty has an academic staff of 23 Professors and over 35 Assistant and Associate Professors, and over 60 research and other teaching staff. There are approximately 71 assistant staff in support of teaching, research, outreach projects, finance, library, IT, audio-visual, buildings, etc.

The wide range of academic expertise covers all stages of formal education from the early years to the primary and secondary stages of schooling. We are therefore well placed to make major contributions both to the advancement of knowledge and practice about issues of contemporary significance and to the development of individuals and educational institutions.

The Faculty occupies modern, purpose-built accommodation on a single site at Hills Road. It offers excellent facilities to

support teaching and research, including a library service offering one of the best education collections in the UK, an extensive Learning Resource Centre, teaching rooms, offices, and social facilities.

Research and Teaching

Research at the Faculty

The policy of the Faculty (and of the University) is that all University Teaching Officers should be active researchers. This activity is regularly audited by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework, REF 2021, the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge, based on Power Ranking scores, placed 4th overall. The research environment score for the Faculty as part of REF2021 attained the maximum score of 100%, with the profile of "world leading" outputs and impact case studies was among the strongest in the UK.

Within the Faculty, a flexible approach to forming research teams is encouraged, with colleagues working together as appropriate, within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and across Departments and Schools at the institutional level. Collaborations outside the University contribute 28% to our Research income.

Currently (May 2023), the Faculty is undertaking 31 externally funded research projects with a combined value of £13 million. Major sponsors in the recent past have included the Economic and Social Research Council, government departments, and a range of charitable trusts as well as other educational organisations. Recent major successful bids include: "Learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness for children facing multiple disadvantages, including those with disabilities: India and Pakistan" (ESRC-DFID); "Exploring the malleability of executive control" (US Department of Education); and the PEDAL Centre on the role of play in young children's learning and development (LEGO Foundation).



Teaching and Learning at the Faculty

The Faculty has a portfolio of Masters and Research degrees and attracts outstanding students from both the UK and overseas. It is recognised by the ESRC as providing one of the highest quality educational research training programmes available anywhere in the UK and has been highly successful in obtaining studentships from the ESRC and other funding bodies. The Faculty also offers a PGCE programme which is consistently recognised by Ofsted as being of outstanding quality (grade 1). This involves a close working relationship with some 250 schools in the region, enabling about 300 students to prepare for careers in primary or secondary schools each year. In September 2015, the University of Cambridge opened a new primary school with strong links to the Faculty. The Faculty also offers a three year BA degree in Education studies combining study of core Education papers with three pathways: Education, Policy, and International Development; Education, Psychology and Learning; and Education, English Drama and the Arts.

Terms of Appointment

Tenure and probation

The appointments will be made on a **fixed-term** basis for a period of **10 months**.

Appointments will be subject to satisfactory completion of a **three-month** probationary period.

Appointment to Research Associate

Appointment as Research Associate is dependent on having a PhD, including those who have submitted but not yet received their PhD (in which case appointment will initially be made at Research Assistant and amended to Research Associate when the PhD is awarded).

Hours of Work and Working Pattern

18.5 hours (0.5FTE) working Monday to Friday . Day will be discussed with your line Manager

Pension

You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) – a hybrid pension scheme. For further information please visit: www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/.

Annual leave

Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 41 days inclusive of public holidays. For new part-time employees, annual leave will be pro rata'd based on days worked.

General information

Pre-employment checks

Right to work in the UK

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK before you can start working for us. If you do not have the right to work in the UK already, any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon you gaining it.

Health declaration

Once an offer of employment has been made the successful candidate will be required to complete a work health declaration form.

Qualifications

The person specification for this position lists qualifications that are essential and/or desirable. Please note that if you are offered the post, you will be asked to provide your relevant original certificates of these qualifications.

References - offers of appointment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references.

Information if you have a disability

The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. We will make adjustments to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability wherever it is reasonable to do so and, if successful, to assist them during their employment. Information for disabled applicants is available at [\[r/staff/ disabled/\]\(#\)](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/h</p></div><div data-bbox=)

We encourage you to declare any disability that you may have, and any reasonable adjustments that you may require, in the section provided for this purpose in the application form. This will enable us to accommodate your needs throughout the process as required. However, applicants and employees may declare a disability at any time.

If you prefer to discuss any special arrangements connected with a disability, please contact, the HR team responsible for recruitment to this position by email recruitment@educ.cam.ac.uk.

The University

The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and most successful universities. We are a renowned centre for research, education, and scholarship that makes a significant contribution to society. The University is consistently ranked amongst the top universities in the world. Our affiliates have won more Nobel Prizes than any other University.

Our sustained pursuit of academic excellence is built on a long history of world-leading teaching and research within a distinctive collegiate system. For eight centuries our ideas and innovations have shaped the world. Our principal goal is to remain one of the world's leading universities in an increasingly competitive global higher education sector. Today the University of Cambridge is at the centre of a cluster of over 4,300 businesses employing 58,000 people.

Our capital investment projects include academic and commercial growth at both the West Cambridge Innovation District, and the Biomedical Campus in the south of the city. Eddington, in North West Cambridge, is a mixed-use development including key worker housing for staff, a community centre and a new primary school, managed by the University. Through these projects, the University is deeply embedded in, and committed to serving, our local community. These are all conspicuous signs of a University that is not only adapting to new needs, but also anticipating the future.

Our mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence. Our core values are:

- freedom of thought and expression; and
- freedom from discrimination.



About Us

The University is one of the world's leading academic centres. It comprises 150 faculties and departments, together with a central administration and other institutions. Our institutions, museums and collections are a world-class resource for researchers, students and members of the public representing one of the country's highest concentrations of internationally important collections.

The University has an annual income of £2 billion. Research income, won competitively from the UK Research Councils, the European Union (EU), major charities and industry, exceeds £500 million per annum and continues to grow.

The Colleges and the University remain committed to admitting the best students regardless of their background and to investing considerable resources both in widening access and financial support. The 31 Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities which appoint their own staff. Many academic staff are invited to join a College as a Teaching Fellow, which provides a further social and intellectual dimension. The Colleges admit undergraduate students, provide student accommodation and pastoral support, and deliver small group teaching for undergraduates.

The University awards degrees and its faculties and departments provide lectures and seminars for students and determine the syllabi for teaching.

Our instinct for seeking out excellence and setting up enduring and mutually beneficial collaborations has led us to establish strategic partnerships across the globe. Whether it is the successful Cambridge-Africa Programme involving universities in Ghana, Uganda and elsewhere on the African continent; or the close association with the government of India to pursue new research in crop science; or the creation, with Germany's Max Planck Institutes, of a Cambridge-based centre for the study of ethics, human economy and social change – international partnerships are now an inextricable part of the University's make-up.

“Cambridge graduates and researchers have made – and continue to make – a colossal contribution to human knowledge and the understanding of the world around us. Their work touches on the lives and livelihoods of everyone from patients diagnosed with life-threatening diseases, to residents of areas critically affected by climate change, to children growing up in conflict zones. It has a lasting impact on our society, our economy, and our culture: the world is truly a better place thanks to their efforts.”

Stephen Toope, Vice Chancellor 2019



Working at the University

Working at Cambridge you will join a diverse, talented and innovative community, with more than 23,000 students and over 16,000 staff from all walks of life and corners of the world.

The University continually explores strategies to attract and retain the best people. It is committed to supporting its staff to achieve their best. We are a fair, diverse and inclusive society and we believe our staff are our greatest asset. There is strong commitment to developing institutional leadership and supporting and encouraging staff development at all levels.

We offer a variety of roles including academic, research, professional, managerial and support roles. We also offer extensive benefits and excellent learning opportunities within a stimulating working environment.

The University's estate is undergoing the most significant transformation in its history. Cambridge has been able to create a science and technology campus to the west of the city centre, and is expanding further to the north west of Cambridge including investing in affordable homes for University key workers and community facilities. Even with our continued development, the University remains within walking or cycling distance across the campus. The University is a major partner on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and we continue to redevelop our historic city centre sites demonstrating our determination to ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.



Equality & diversity

The University has built its excellence on the diversity of its staff and student community. We aim to be a leader in fostering equality and inclusion, and in promoting respect and a sense of belonging for all. We encourage applications from all sections of society. All appointments are made on the basis of merit. We have an Equal Opportunities Policy, along with a range of diversity groups, including the Women's Staff Network, Race Equality Network and LGBT+ Staff Network. More details are available here:

<http://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

The University has a bronze Race Equality Charter award, with a framework for improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. Furthermore, the University's silver Athena swan award recognises and celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting gender equality.

Living in Cambridge

Cambridge is rich in cultural diversity. From beautiful University and College buildings, museums and art galleries, quaint gardens and punts on the River Cam, to a vibrant restaurant and café scene, our employees are surrounded by the wonderful features of this unique city.

You can find a wide-range of high street shops and 3 shopping centres, with independent alternatives at the historic market and nestled within the passageways in the city centre. You will find a cinema, bowling alley, a nightclub and various live performances at the Cambridge Leisure Park, with further entertainment options at the Corn Exchange, Arts Theatre and the ADC Theatre. Further information can be found on the Visit Cambridge website.

If you prefer the faster pace of life, London is a 45 minute train journey away. For those travelling from overseas, Stansted Airport is just 45 minutes away and Heathrow Airport under 2 hours away. The University is a short distance from a host of other attractions such as Ely Cathedral, Newmarket Races and various wildlife parks and stately homes. Cambridge is also within easy reach of the beautiful Broads and coastlines of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Relocation Support

The University recognises the importance of helping individuals to move and settle into a new area. We provide support and guidance to those relocating internationally or domestically to take up a post at the University of Cambridge, liaising with other University offices and selected partners to ensure comprehensive relocation support is available. This includes accommodation, childcare, schools, banking, immigration and transport. If you would like further information, please visit <https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/RelocationService/>. The Shared Equity Scheme and the Reimbursement of Relocation Expenses Scheme provide financial assistance to qualifying new members of staff with the costs of relocating to Cambridge.

Accommodation Service

The University Accommodation Service helps staff, students and visiting scholars who are affiliated to the University in their search for suitable accommodation in Cambridge. The dedicated accommodation team can provide access to a wide range of University-owned furnished and unfurnished properties and has a database of private sector accommodation available for short and long-term lets. For further information and to register with this free service please visit <https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/>



What Cambridge can offer

We offer a comprehensive reward package to attract, motivate and retain high performing staff at all levels and in all areas of work.

The University offers a wide range of competitive benefits, from family leave entitlement, to shopping and travel discount schemes. Our generous annual leave package contributes to the positive wellbeing of our University employees. Sabbatical leave enables academics to focus on research and scholarship, whilst still maintaining their full salary. The University also has a [career break scheme](#) for academic and academic-related staff, with additional flexible working policies for all other staff.

Pay and benefits

The University salary structure includes automatic service-related pay progression in many of its grades and an annual cost of living increase. In addition to this, employees are rewarded for outstanding contribution through a number of regular pay progression schemes. The University offers attractive pensions schemes for employees, with an additional benefit of a salary exchange arrangement providing tax and national insurance savings.



CAMbens employee benefits

The University offers employees a wide range of competitive benefits, known as CAMbens. CAMbens offers something for everyone across a range of categories, including:

- Financial Benefits, including shopping discounts (both local and national) and a Payroll Giving scheme.
- Relocation and Accommodation Benefits, including relocation assistance and interest-free Rental Deposit Loans.
- Travel Benefits, including Cycle to Work, discounts on train season tickets and interest-free Travel to Work loans.
- Family Friendly and Lifestyle Benefits, including support with childcare and family friendly policies.
- Health and Wellbeing Benefits, including a University Staff Counselling Service, discounts at the University Sports Centre, and other local gyms, and healthcare schemes.



What Cambridge can offer

Family-friendly policies

The University recognises the importance of supporting its staff. We have a range of family-friendly policies to aid employees' work-life balance including a generous maternity, adoption and shared parental leave entitlement of 18 weeks full pay, and paid emergency leave for parents and carers.

Other family-friendly support includes:

Our highly regarded workplace nurseries, a childcare salary exchange scheme and a high quality holiday Playscheme may be available to help support University employees with caring responsibilities (subject to demand and qualifying criteria). Further childcare information can be found here:

<https://www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

The [Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group](#) is an organisation within the University run by volunteers whose aim is to help newly arrived wives, husbands, partners and families of Visiting Scholars and members of the University to settle in Cambridge and give them an opportunity to meet local people. The Postdoc Academy supports the postdoctoral community within Cambridge. Further details are available here: <https://www.postdocacademy.cam.ac.uk/>

Your wellbeing

The University's Sport Centre, Counselling Services and Occupational Health are just some of the support services available to University employees to promote their physical and mental wellbeing. The University delivers The Festival of Wellbeing annually, which is a programme of stimulating talks and activities, which aim to promote wellbeing and good mental and physical health. The University also hosts the [Cambridge Festival](#), which is a great opportunity to get your first taste of public engagement, through volunteering, supporting hands-on activities or proposing a talk.

Development opportunities

We support new employees to settle in through various activities as well as supporting their professional and career development on an ongoing basis. Our Personal and Professional Development (PPD) team provide development opportunities for all University employees, including face-to-face sessions, online learning modules and webinars. All employees also have unlimited access to LinkedIn Learning to support their development. Both new and existing employees can undertake funded Apprenticeships, which lead to a range of vocational and professional qualifications. We offer reduced staff fees for University of Cambridge graduate courses and the opportunity to attend lectures and seminars held by University departments and institutions. A range of University training providers also offer specialist learning and development in their own areas e.g. teaching and learning, digital literacy, finance, health and wellbeing, safety.



How to apply

Applications should be submitted online via the University of Cambridge jobs page www.jobs.cam.ac.uk by clicking “Apply online” in the job advert. You will need an email address to register for our online system.

Conversations about flexible working are encouraged at the University of Cambridge. Please feel free to discuss flexibility prior to applying (using the contact information below) or at interview if your application is successful.

Informal enquiries are welcomed and should be directed to:

Dr Jo-Anne Dillabough

Tel: 01223 767630

Email: jd217@cam.ac.uk

If you have any queries regarding the application process, please contact the Faculty of Education HR team via email:

recruitment@educ.cam.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is 12 May 2024

Interviews are planned for the week beginning 27 May 2024