Research Associate: Social Science in a Time of Change

Grade 6, 0.6 FTE, fixed term 7 months

Further Particulars

The Project Partnership

The Health of Social Sciences Project was conceived by the Academy of Social Sciences and is being led and delivered in partnership between the University of Lancaster and the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS).

The research, which began in autumn 2020, relates directly to and to the Academy’s role in promoting and safeguarding social science in the UK and CASS’s interest in supporting the intellectual vibrancy of the subjects. It is providing essential insights, for HE leaders and the community as a whole, for the Academy, and for UKRI and other funders, into the health of the social sciences in the UK over a period of significant potential challenge and opportunity. The challenge arises from the combination of unprecedented current contexts: Covid; Brexit and Government policy considerations including the long-awaited response to the Augar review. The opportunities arise, for example, from increased research funding for the social sciences linked to Covid and its impacts on individuals, communities and the economy.

The Project team comprises Dr Rita Gardner (AcSS, CEO), Sharon Witherspoon (AcSS, Head of Policy) and Professor Tony McEnery (CASS);. The project is supported by an Advisory Group, chaired by Prof. McEnery. Interviews for shortlisted candidates will take place online on XXX 2021.

The Post

We are seeking to appoint a part time (0.6 FTE) Research Associate (post doctoral) to undertake the day-to-day delivery of the final phase of the project. The post is for a fixed term of 7 months. It offers an unusual breadth of scope from planning and delivery of research and drafting the final project report to opportunities to gain experience in knowledge exchange and engagement with public policy.

The duties of the post focus on analysing, interpreting and sharing real time quantitative data on variables and indicators that capture the health of social science across different institutional settings and national contexts in England, Scotland and Wales. This will mesh with a qualitative understanding of factors ranging, for example, from institutional strategies to impacts on early career researchers which has already been gathered on the project.

You will have relevant applied research experience in a social science discipline, and be competent in quantitative research methods and analysis. You will be comfortable working across the breadth of the social sciences and confident in engaging the interest and input of senior figures in higher education and in learned societies, drawing on the well-developed contact networks of the Academy. An excellent communicator, with good interpersonal skills, and sound judgement, you will be adept at working as part of a small team and in a virtual setting. For much of your time you will be working closely with colleagues at the Academy, which for the foreseeable future is operating as a virtual organization. You may be based anywhere in the UK – you will be working from home for the duration of the contract.
Through this project, you will potentially gain significant experience in research impact, in depth insights into HE, a network of contacts across HE in the UK, and joint authorship of publication(s).

The institutions

AcSS

The Academy, and its Campaign for Social Science, promote social science by demonstrating the ways in which the social sciences enhance decision-making, society and lives; through advocacy, seeking to influence policy, funding and standing of the social sciences; in fostering dialogue across the research, practice and policy communities; and through the recognition of excellence in the social sciences, in academia and wider professional sectors. The Academy exists to serve the social sciences, and in doing so is aided by its 1400 elected Fellows of high standing from across the social sciences, and by collaborative working with its 46 affiliated learned societies.

The University of Lancaster

The University of Lancaster has a strong profile in the social sciences, covering areas including accounting, economics, educational research, geography, law, linguistics, psychology, social work and sociology. The University has a strong ethos of interdisciplinary working, with the social sciences making valuable contributions to the sciences at the University, notably in the Lancaster Environment Centre. This project is directly linked to the department of Linguistics and English Language, a world-leading department with strengths in applied linguistics and the quantitative analysis of large linguistic datasets. The PI in the department, Professor McEnery, has a broadly based view of the UK HE sector, having been Director of Research at both the AHRC and ESRC.

Contact

For more about the Academy, see the website http://www.acss.org.uk. For more about CASS and the Department, see the web pages at http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk. If you want to discuss the post, please e-mail Dr Rita Gardner, at r.gardner@acss.org.uk or Professor Tony McEnery, at a.mcenery@lancaster.ac.uk