

Policy and Strategic Projects Consultant

Postdoc Academy

23 October 2024

Job Reference: AI42720



Policy and Strategic Projects Consultant

Salary:

£45,585 - £57,696

Contract:

Fixed Term secondment, internal applicants only

Location:

Cambridge

Faculty / Department:

Postdoc Academy, HR Division

Responsible to:

Head of Postdoc Academy

Working Pattern:

Full Time

Role overview

The Policy and Strategic Projects Consultant is a member of the University's Postdoc Academy, which comprises a team of thirteen staff and sits within the Human Resources Division. The role reports to the Head of the Postdoc Academy and is part of the Management Team. The role holder is expected to cultivate and grow wide-reaching relationships with academic, research, and professional services colleagues across the University.

The mission of the Postdoc Academy is to enable all of Cambridge's 4000+ postdoctoral research staff to achieve their potential, irrespective of their personal ambitions and the paths their future careers may take. There are four key pillars to this work: provision of accurate, just-in-time information to help postdocs navigate the collegiate University and get the help they need; building and developing postdoc communities, particularly through departmental structures and the Postdocs of Cambridge Society; delivery of a diverse range of high-quality personal, professional, and career development opportunities; and policy and strategic

project work, to drive change in the everyday lived experience of postdocs, enabling them to thrive in a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment.

Purpose of the role

The Postdoc Academy has approval for a series of strategic projects to design, deliver, and evaluate key changes in both the policy and day-to-day practice of postdoc career progression and development, particularly in the areas of annual career development reviews and professional development planning. In so doing, the Postdoc Academy will support the University in achieving its aspirations under the People Strategy and Institutional Research Culture Action Plan as well as fulfilling its commitments under the *Researcher Development Concordat* (2019) and towards the (still to be finalised) People, Culture & Environment obligations as part of REF2029. In this way, the role will make a vital contribution to wider research culture initiatives in the University and will work closely with other teams engaged in this work.



Key responsibilities

Develop and deliver strategic projects

Design, develop, and promote strategic projects supporting the University's postdoc community, working closely with central services (such as HR teams, EDI, Research Culture) and academic/research departments to ensure alignment with existing policy and practice as well as identifying priorities for change.

- Undertake benchmarking and research, e.g. wider policy affecting research and innovation, best practice within and outside the academic sector, feedback from postdoc stakeholder groups.
- Contribute to the design, implementation, and evaluation of associated cultural change projects to effectively embed best practice into day-to-day operations of the University, at all stages of the postdoc lifecycle.
- Conduct regular reviews of existing policy and associated guidance for postdocs, and update as required.

Project Management

- Lead and coordinate cross-functional working groups to undertake strategic projects and develop new policy and cultural change initiatives with a range of stakeholders.
- Develop clear, timely and succinct project plans and timelines, and communicate effectively to key stakeholders and committees as required.
- Ensure projects are delivered on time, within budget and to agreed success criteria.

- Manage risk effectively and develop approaches for mitigating risk as relevant to the policy area.

Stakeholder Engagement, Consultation and negotiation

- Lead and facilitate formal communication, consultation, and negotiation processes with researcher and professional services colleagues, including senior leadership teams in the central University, Schools, and Colleges, using appropriate sensitivity and diplomacy.
- Prepare and present committee papers, consultation documents, management information, business cases, reports, and internal or external publications as required.
- Develop and, in partnership with the Communications team, implement plans to ensure that the outputs of strategic projects are promoted effectively and taken up across the University.
- Support and implement event management, workshops and promotional campaigns.

Training and Other Duties

- Design and deliver training and briefing events related to postdoc policies and strategic initiatives to staff at all levels.
- Liaise with internal and external providers for the provision of training and undertake procurement exercises.
- Other work as required to support the Postdoc Academy and/or wider HR Division in pursuit of its strategic objectives.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education and Qualifications		
A good general education to degree level, or equivalent level of experience in a policy/ER role.	✓	
Doctoral-level qualification or equivalent research experience		✓
CIPD or equivalent experience.		✓
Experience		
Experience of drafting a range of policies relevant to a complex public sector environment like the University.	✓	
Experience of briefing senior leaders, committees, and other governance bodies; and of writing and preparing reports to a high standard for publication.	✓	
Understanding of research policy and practice within the UK, particularly how this impacts postdocs and other early career researchers.	✓	
Excellent understanding of HR policies and procedures, particularly regarding professional and career development.	✓	
Experience of managing consultations with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including trade unions.	✓	
Skills		
Exceptional negotiation skills.	✓	
Exceptional standard of written English and the ability to communicate clearly in spoken and written English.	✓	
Good data manipulation skills including excel spreadsheet skills e.g. able to work with formulae, graphs and manipulate data.	✓	
Diplomatic communicator, sensitive to the needs of different groups (e.g. trade unions, staff, internal and external customers).	✓	
Professional and discrete.	✓	
High degree of initiative and a proactive approach.	✓	
Self-motivated and well organised	✓	

Terms of Appointment

Tenure and probation

Appointments will be made on a fixed-term basis for a period of up to two years. This is due to limited funding for a specific purpose. This role is open to internal candidates who wish to take the role as a secondment.

Hours of Work and Working Pattern

37 hours full time per week, although applications for part time and flexible working options are welcome.

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

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 <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/disabled/>

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 office.pda@admin.cam.ac.uk