

Job title	Research Assistant in the Ng'ipalajem Project (Fixed Term)
Grade	Research Assistant, Grade 5
Salary range	£32,296-£34,866 per annum
Staff Group	Research
Department / Institution	McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research

Role Summary

Applications are invited for a 24-month, full-time, Research Assistant. The role-holder will work with the project's research team carrying out research under the direction of the project's PI, Prof. Marta Mirazón Lahr, to include data collection, analysis and some interpretation, including participation in and contribution to scientific publications.

Starting Date: no later than 15 January 2025.

Background and Context

Applications are invited for a Research Assistant position on the NG'IPALAJEM project, funded by the ERC, to work with Prof Marta Mirazón Lahr within the framework of a collaborative research project to investigate the evolution of modern humans in Africa. The project aims at collecting new palaeontological, archaeological and geological data in the field and in museums to tackle questions about human evolution in Africa in the last million years. Further information about the project and its collaborative partners can be found at: <https://www.palaeotrails.org/current-projects/ngipalajem/>.

The successful candidate will join the NG'IPALAJEM team, assisting the PI in the planning of the project's activities and implementation of the project's research and communication strategy. In particular, we seek someone who will be able to coordinate between the NG'IPALAJEM Cambridge team and collaborating researchers/institutions to ensure the successful running of the different research strands of the project, as well as to contribute to data collection, the maintenance of the project's digital output and documentation, and develop the project's social media strategy.

The position advertised is initially for 24 months, with the possibility to renew the contract for the duration of the project. The successful applicant will be based at the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, and be prepared to spend time in Kenya assisting in the collection of data or during the project's fieldwork.

Job description

This is a key position in the project. While unpredicted duties and responsibilities may arise and be needed as the project develops, the position involves responsibilities towards for main aspects of the NG'IPALAJEM project – (1) Management, (2) Administration, (3) Research, and (4) Communication. The key duties within each of these are outlined below:

1. Project Management:

- To assist the PI, Prof. Marta Mirazón Lahr, in the running of the project and implementation of the project's strategy;
- To manage timelines and deliverables across NG'IPALAJEM'S research lines;

- To provide quarterly reports on the progress of the different research streams within NG'IPALAJEM.

2. Project Administration:

- To be responsible for communication with the institutions which fund and partner the project;
- To prepare and maintain timesheets of the project's personnel;
- To collate/submit receipts to the University's Finance Office, and monitor and keep a record of the project's expenditure;
- To assist in the preparation of applications for the necessary research permits and licences, including country-specific import-export permits;
- To assist in the organisation and planning of fieldwork and all project travel;
- To draft reports to funding and other bodies.

3. Project Research:

- To assist in the 3D scanning of fossils (learning and training available as part of the induction to the role)
- To work, under the PI's supervision, towards the development and maintenance of the project's database;
- To work with the PI on the development of an open, online platform, for the project's data;
- To keep a record of all geological, palaeontological and other samples collected during the life of the project, and to prepare these to be sent for analysis when appropriate;
- To assist the PI and others in the collection of palaeoanthropological data relevant to meet the project's objectives.
- To assist and in the completion of the project's scientific and outreach outputs.

4. Project Communication:

- To assist the PI in the development and implementation of the project's social media strategy;
- To assist the PI in the maintenance and update of the project's website;
- To assist the PI and other project members in the development and delivery of outreach activities.

Qualifications and Experience

Applicants should have a degree in archaeology, palaeontology, biology or a related field, excellent organisation skills, attention to detail, ability to work on their own initiative and as part of a team, excellent interpersonal skills, familiarity with field science in human evolution, computer skills (spreadsheets and databases), and excellent written and oral communication skills.

The position offers an opportunity to develop key skills in project management, digital data management, science communication (both to public and academic audiences), and research skills in human evolutionary biology and palaeontology, geology and/or archaeological sciences, including the writing of academic papers for publication. The successful candidate will join a team of researchers who are passionate about the subject, and are committed to open access and open data in science and improving inclusion and diversity in research. The role is suited to an individual interested in pursuing a career in research related to human evolution, or in research project management, or in science communication.

Selection criteria

Essential

- BA or BSc degree in archaeology, palaeontology, biology, or a related field **or** 3 excellent A-levels (A/A*) or equivalent qualifications;
- Ability to synthesise key information from a broad range of published and unpublished sources;
- Evidence of excellent writing skills in English;
- Evidence of excellent computer skills and familiarity with standard office software;

- Excellent organization skills in managing deliverables, researching and identifying priorities, drafting, reviewing and critiquing project reports and documents;
- Evidence of a strong sense of order, ability to work systematically alone and with others;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Evidence of ability to complete tasks in accordance with a realistic timetable;
- Willingness to spend periods of time abroad if needed.

Desirable

- Interest in human evolution, and African palaeontology and prehistory;
- Interest and experience in relational database construction/maintenance;
- Interest and experience with website design and maintenance;
- Interest and experience in 3D morphometric capture and analytical techniques;
- excavation or other relevant fieldwork experience;
- knowledge of other languages, particularly Swahili;
- a valid driving licence.

Work Environment

The Department of Archaeology at Cambridge comprises approximately 35 permanent academic staff, 50-60 postdoctoral researchers, and nine major laboratories, as well as the world-renowned McDonald Institute, Duckworth Laboratory and Cambridge Archaeological Unit. The McDonald Institute hosts an exceptionally dynamic community of internationally leading researchers, resident and visiting. Laboratories, library and other resources are world-class in quality and extent. The Department currently teaches approximately 70 undergraduates across several Triposes (Archaeology, Human Social and Political Sciences, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences, and Natural Sciences), and some 150 graduate students (reading for Masters and doctoral degrees). The resultant community is one of the most vibrant and interdisciplinary of its kind in the UK and internationally, and Cambridge is consistently ranked as among the best in the world across the breadth of the Department's constituent fields.

Terms and Conditions

Location	Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, Department of Archaeology, Henry Wellcome Building, Fitzwilliam Street, Cambridge
Working pattern	Full time, 37 hours per week
Hours of work	Exact working patterns should be agreed with the project's PI
Length of appointment	This is a fixed term appointment for 24 months, due to limited funding
Probation period	6 months
Annual leave	Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 41 days inclusive of public holidays. This entitlement is pro rata in the holiday year of commencement of employment and in the year your employment terminates.
Pension eligibility	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/
Retirement age	The University does not operate a retirement age for research staff.

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.

Application Process

To submit an application for this vacancy, please click on the link in the 'Apply online' section of the advert published on the University's Job Opportunities pages. This will route you to the University's Web Recruitment System, where you will need to register an account (if you have not already) and log in before completing the online application form.

Applicants should submit a cover letter, of not more than 500 words, detailing how the relevance and appropriateness of their training, research background and experience meet the advertised specifications, how they meet the qualifications and their motivation for applying for the position. This should be accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- A Curriculum Vitae organised in the form of: educational background and degrees, other relevant formative experiences, previous employment (if appropriate), publications (if appropriate), grant track record (if appropriate), previous relevant research experience
- The names and contact details of **two** professional referees who can comment on the applicant's academic experience and research outputs.

The closing date for applications is 25 November 2024.

Selected candidates will be invited to an online interview to discuss aspects of the submitted documents.

Please address all enquiries about this vacancy to Prof. Marta Mirazón Lahr at mbml1@cam.ac.uk.

The Department of Archaeology

The Department of Archaeology has approximately 35 academic staff with specialist interests in Archaeology, Biological Anthropology, Assyriology and Egyptology. The Department, along with Social Anthropology, Sociology, and Politics and International Relations, forms the Faculty of Human, Social and Political Science. In addition to a large number of post-doctoral research associates and PhD students, there are a number of Junior Research Fellows working in Cambridge, attached to colleges, who contribute to the life of the Department. The Department of Archaeology includes the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, the Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies and the Duckworth Laboratory.

Research and teaching in Biological Anthropology, the disciplinary context of this position, covers all the main fields of the discipline. Major fields of research currently active include human evolutionary studies, behavioural ecology, primatology, evolutionary genetics, cultural evolution and population dynamics, and human health and disease, past and present. The research and teaching in Biological Anthropology is closely aligned with that of the broader Department of Archaeology, particularly in Archaeological Science, Bioarchaeology and Palaeolithic studies.

There is a strong and large graduate body in the Department. The MPhil cohort is between 35-40, while the PhD body comprises more than 90 research students. MPhil and PhD students are admitted by the Department which arranges all their teaching and supervision. Lectures are open, so that students can take advantage of courses offered at several levels. There are three Biological Anthropology-based masters programmes – Human Evolutionary Studies and Biological Anthropological Science (the last is entirely by research thesis).

Information if you have a Disability

The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities and 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 the HSPS HR team on hr@hsps.cam.ac.uk.

The University

The University of Cambridge is consistently ranked one of the best universities in the world, achieving academic excellence through its Faculties, Departments and other Institutions, together with the 31 Colleges.

The University is renowned for its record of discovery and innovation. It is one of the great institutions, with a regional, national and global reach, attracting the very best and brightest minds. Our staff and students shape the world around us for the better: we attract and partner with like-minded people.

Whether contributing to the development of new anti-cancer drugs, adding to the understanding of how black holes are formed, revolutionising the study of ancient settlements, convening academic expertise to offer solutions to the climate crisis, or analysing public attitudes towards democracy around the world, the University's research is remarkable in its breadth, quality and impact. The University also sits at the heart of Europe's largest technology cluster and has catalysed more than 1,500 high-tech companies. And yet what inspires our 24,000 students and 13,000 staff is not what has already been achieved, but what is possible in the future.

The education and experience of our students, based on a partnership between the University's academic Departments and Faculties and the 31 Colleges, is second to none. Every student is a member of one of the Colleges, each a community of students, academics and staff drawn from across the University's comprehensive range of subject areas.

The University is a self-governing community, with a system for decision-making that provides a high degree of accountability and transparency to its members. Each Department and Faculty is part of one of six academic Schools, but each of them, and



each individual academic, has a great deal of autonomy. The Colleges are independent and self-governing, working in a symbiotic relationship with the University.

The University has a number of Institutions that are independent of any Faculty or Department and are not part of the academic Schools. These include the Institute of Continuing Education (which provides high-quality education to adults throughout their lives), the Fitzwilliam Museum, Kettle's Yard (an historic house and gallery that holds important collections of modern art) and the University Library. In addition to their diverse contributions to University and public life, these non-School Institutions are also important centres of teaching and research.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment provides academic publishing, examinations and learning materials worldwide, supporting the dissemination of research, academic development at school and in higher education, and international student mobility. Legally, the Press & Assessment is a department of the University. It provides very important funds to invest in the academic purposes of the University.

The University has made truly remarkable contributions to the sum of human understanding, with breakthrough ideas and discoveries that have changed the way we understand ourselves, our planet, and the universe around us. Yet the global and national contexts in which it operates are fast-changing and increasingly filled with uncertainty. In a world that is becoming - politically, economically, socially, and technologically – ever more interconnected but even less equal, the University's mission – “to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the

highest international levels of excellence” – has never been more relevant.



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.

“Through its outstanding education, research and innovation, the University of Cambridge has made – and continues to make – a lasting contribution to human knowledge and is flourishing. By working at the University of Cambridge, you will be joining a vibrant community of students, scholars and professional services staff committed to supporting and enhancing the University's mission to contribute to society.”

*Professor Deborah Prentice,
Vice Chancellor 2023*



Working at the University

Working at Cambridge you will join a diverse, talented and innovative community, with more than 24,000 students and over 13,000 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.

The University offers 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 their 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 continues to redevelop its historic city centre sites demonstrating a clear determination to ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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

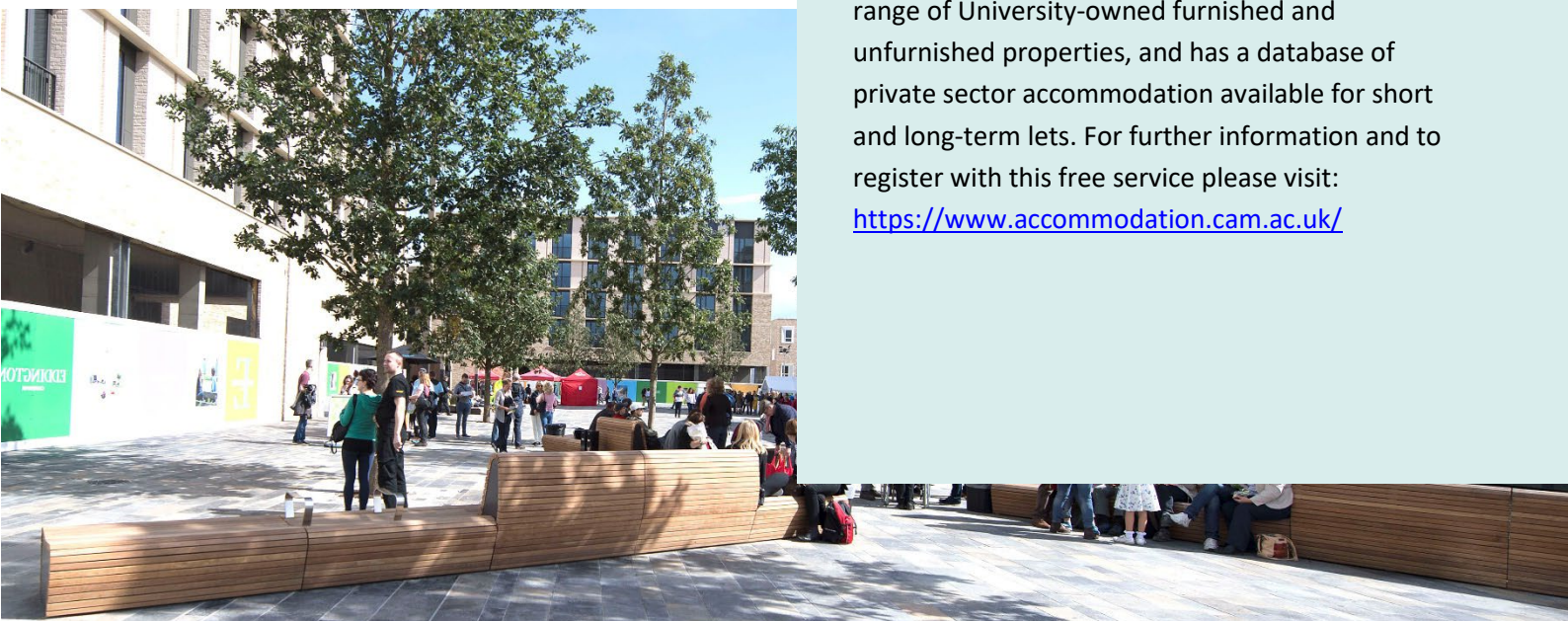
The University recognises the importance of helping individuals to move and settle into a new area. We provide support and guidance to those relocating internationally or domestically to take up a post at the University of Cambridge, liaising with other University offices and selected partners to ensure 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 26 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 are 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 (<https://www.nvs.admin.cam.ac.uk/>) is an organisation within the University that welcomes the partners and families of visiting scholars and new members of the University. Run by volunteers, the group offers opportunities to visit interesting Cambridge venues, learn about the community, take part in social events and gain local knowledge while developing a strong support network of both residents and other newcomers.

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.

