

Post Title: Research Assistant

School/department: Psychology

Hours: Full time considered up to a maximum of 1 FTE. Part time hours considered.

Requests for [flexible working](#) options will be considered (subject to business need).

Contract: fixed term for 12 months

Reference: 10411

Salary: Starting at £31,411 to £35,333 per annum, pro rata if part time

Placed on: 11 January 2023

Closing date: 13 February 2023. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected Interview date: Week Commencing 20 February 2023

Expected start date: 01 March 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter

A research assistant is needed to provide support for a portfolio of contracted research in the School of Psychology at the University of Sussex. We have a number of current research projects in the School, including examining the role of schools and peer relationships in mental health of children and young people, audience experiences of safety and atmosphere at music events, and testing links between empathy and reading. The work will involve supporting these and other research projects through assistance with ethical clearance, data management, liaising between co-investigators and partners, data sharing and compliance with open science practices (e.g., uploading data and pre-prints to open science platforms), transcription management, data cleaning, analysis, manuscript preparation, organizing and attending team meetings, managing research communications, and helping with impact activities.

The postholder will be line managed by Professor John Drury, Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange in the School of Psychology. They will work closely with a number of different principal investigators in the School, depending on which projects are live.

The University of Sussex is a leading teaching and research institution and is ranked within the top 200 in the world. The School of Psychology at the University of Sussex is one of the most academically diverse and influential centres for the study of psychology in the UK with considerable strengths in both research and teaching. We have a longstanding commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and we are proud to hold an Athena SWAN Silver Award (2020) for our work promoting gender equality. Psychology at Sussex was ranked 18th out of nearly 100 institutions in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework and receives excellent student ratings for its undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. We offer a very highly regarded undergraduate degree course and a suite of PGT courses, and we have a substantial group of doctoral students, supported in part by ESRC, BBSRC, and Leverhulme Trust funded doctoral training programmes.

Please contact Prof John Drury, email: j.drury@sussex.ac.uk for informal enquiries.

The University of Sussex is committed to equality of opportunity.

For full details and how to apply see our [vacancies page](#)

The University of Sussex believes that the diversity of its staff and student community is fundamental to creative thinking, pedagogic innovation, intellectual challenge, and our interdisciplinary approach to research and learning. We celebrate and promote diversity, equality and inclusion amongst our staff and students. As such, we welcome applications from all, regardless of personal characteristics or background. All roles are open to flexible work arrangements as part of the university's commitment to be flexible by default. Applications for a job share are welcome and would be considered fully for this role.

2. The School

Psychology at Sussex combines cutting-edge, discovery-oriented research and strong engagement with policy-makers in health and social care, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. In this way we tackle contemporary challenges in mental and physical health, social inclusion and well-being. Psychology at Sussex ranked 18th out of 93 in REF 2021, with 50% of research recognised as world-leading and a further 38% recognised as internationally excellent. Detailed information about the School is available at www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology.

Our flagship undergraduate programme is the BSc in Psychology, which takes more than 500 students per annum. We also offer a number of major/minor degree programmes via the University's pathway system. In order to expand, diversify, and secure the excellence of our undergraduate body, we launched a highly successful Foundation Year in 2016. Indeed, the central Foundation Year team were awarded a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence in 2019. We also recruit students to a number of high-quality postgraduate taught courses, and we have a vibrant community of doctoral students.

The School of Psychology has four research groups with a total of over 80 teaching faculty and a large number of PhD students. The research groups are:

- *Developmental and Clinical Psychology*: the core objective of the group is to translate research in human development to clinical, policy and public contexts. The group's work includes cognitive development, behaviour genetics, socio-emotional development, developmental and experimental psychopathology, and research on mental health in a variety of clinical and community settings.
- *Social and Applied Psychology*: the group focuses on group and intergroup processes, identity processes, culture, well-being and health psychology. It uses a range of methodologies in laboratory and field settings, with a focus on applied relevance.
- *Behavioural and Clinical Neuroscience*: the research interests of this group include addictions, aging/dementia, affect/emotion, learning/memory, reward/motivation, decision making. The group conducts non-human animal, human and clinical research, emphasising translational links.
- *Cognitive Psychology*: the group has broad interests in language and communication, learning, memory, attention, perception, problem-solving and consciousness, with approaches that range from classic experimental psychology through to cutting-edge cognitive neuroscience techniques.

These research groups are the primary vehicles for the exchange of new research ideas, the development and informal peer review of new grant applications and articles, and the mentoring and appraisal of staff. Typically, groups meet fortnightly to discuss forthcoming conference presentations, ideas for new projects and work-in-progress. All grant applications are reviewed by senior colleagues to increase their quality and likely success rates.

All research and teaching faculty have one primary research-group affiliation. However, consistent with the interdisciplinary and collaborative ethos of the School, in practice many actively participate in more than one grouping. Indeed, the five Strategic Focus Areas of research within the School span across these groups: 1) Neuroscience, 2) Mental Health, 3) Sensory Systems, 4) Applied Behavioural Science, and 5) Psychological Methods. We are also in the process of finalising a sixth Strategic Focus Area relating to 'Changing Societies'.

The quality of our research is evident from outputs in premier journals across neuroscience and medicine, through experimental psychology to social psychology, while also encompassing quantitative-behaviour genetics and developmental psychopathology. Reflecting their international prominence in their respective fields, researchers in these four groups published over 1300 peer-reviewed journal articles and received over 40 national and international prizes and eminent recognitions, winning research grants and consultancies to a value in excess of £19m over the census period for REF 2021.

Cross-School and cross-university research centres facilitate interactions between these research groups and with other researchers in the University. Such centres are established to nurture new research activity, build more effectively on areas of academic strength and enhance the vitality of our research environment. They run research colloquia and facilitate shared access to important research populations (e.g. clinical samples, children and young people, participants in disasters and emergencies) and major items of equipment. Centres in which members of the School of Psychology play a prominent role include the following:

- *Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY)*: based in the School of Education and Social Work, but with strong links to Psychology.
- *Clinical Imaging Sciences Centre (CISC)*: provision of multimodal imaging facilities, including an on-site Siemens 3T MRI scanner, with an emphasis on quantifying the function and structure of the brain.
- *Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science*: a unique interdisciplinary centre spanning informatics, engineering, psychiatry, psychology and cognitive science.
- *Sussex Addiction Research and Intervention Centre (SARIC)*: a merger of pre-clinical, clinical, and psychological research in drug addiction to pursue translational projects.
- *Sussex Neuroscience* pursues basic, translational and clinical neuroscience within the context of a vibrant collaborative research culture across Schools and Departments of the University of Sussex. It was established in 2013 following a £3M investment from the University of Sussex to unite neuroscience activities across campus, distributed across four Schools. It organizes various events, provides some advanced technical support, and funds a 4-year PhD program.
- *Sussex Centre for Research on Kindness* brings together an interdisciplinary team of academics and diverse community partners to explore, investigate, and illuminate kindness and its impacts on people and communities.

We work strategically and in close collaboration with the Brighton and Sussex Medical School on many of these research enterprises. In addition, the School has extensive and diverse links in the area of mental health with the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, including numerous research collaborations and clinical trials, as well as a portfolio of professional postgraduate courses.

The School has excellent laboratory facilities to support its research. Specialist facilities include:

- *Sussex Child Research Hub*: The hub comprises ten research rooms, including a child-interaction observation unit with one-way mirror, a room with CCTV for videoing child sessions, two rooms for experimental infant techniques with coding facilities, and a developmental psychophysics and eye-tracking room. The suite also includes multiple waiting and play areas appropriate for infants, toddlers and older children, and tea/coffee facilities for visiting parents.
- *Behavioural Neuroscience laboratories*: sole use of a microscopy and histological suite and two laboratories dedicated to electrophysiological studies in brain slices; shared use of molecular biology laboratories, all of which have seen significant recent investment. We are a major user of the University's animal unit, which comprises breeding, holding and experimental facilities for rodents and includes a surgery equipped with digital stereotaxic equipment for both rats and mice. The behavioural laboratories are equipped for sophisticated operant and observational studies with rats and mice.
- *Clinical Imaging Sciences Centre*: CISC is a research facility that houses 3T and 1.5T MRI Siemens scanners and a PET/CT scanner. CISC is staffed by a full complement of radiographers with on-site medical cover and capacity for experimental medical investigations. Structural, diffusion, neurochemical and functional MRI is supported by ancillary equipment that includes world-leading capacity for integrating functional MRI with multi-axis physiological and neurophysiological measurements. It is also a centre for scanning patients enrolled into Phase II and III interventional treatment trials for neurodegenerative and neuro-inflammatory disorders and, through clinical scanning of patients from memory clinics across Sussex, is building the UK's largest high-quality neuroimaging research dataset of patients at the onset of dementia.
- *Human Psychopharmacology laboratory*: two medical rooms, a wet lab, 12 specialised testing cubicles, Eyelink eye-trackers, and a fully equipped kitchen for the preparation of food for research on human ingestion.
- *Human Psychophysiology and Psychoacoustic laboratories (129 m²)*: six cubicles, two acoustic booths and a reception area. Equipment includes both Neuroscan and EGI rigs for EEG/ERP, a Magstim TMS rig, and three Eyelink II eye-trackers.
- *Vision laboratories*: A suite of six rooms – of which some are designed to exclude all natural light – include specialist equipment for presenting visual stimuli.
- In addition to these dedicated facilities, Psychology also has 85m² of new general-facility, bookable lab space, including 11 test cubicles for faculty and student

research projects and other research, a meeting-room, waiting area and kitchen facility.

Sustainability in the School of Psychology

We are committed to sustainability, and work proactively to support [university efforts to become one of the greenest universities in the UK](#), following the launch of the [Sussex Sustainability Strategy](#) in summer 2021.

We are embedding sustainability in all our School operations: from teaching provision on environmental psychology and greening our research activity, to the environmental impact of our buildings and facilities and in our working practices, policies and procedures. This is facilitated by the School's Faculty Green Officer, working together with academic and professional services colleagues and students across the School.

For more on our School sustainability commitments, [see our website](#).

Job Title:	Research Assistant in Psychology
Grade:	Research Assistant, Grade 6
School:	Psychology
Location:	Pevensey
Responsible to:	Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange
Direct reports:	n/a
Key contacts:	Principal investigators and Subject Group leads within the School and University
Role description:	Research Assistant is a pre-Doctoral career-grade research position. Post-holders will be expected to contribute to the work of the research team, and also to develop their research skills with support from more experienced members of staff.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To observe and assist with individual and/or collaborative research activity and contribute to the production of research outputs for publications, and / or reports / deliverables for external partners; and to develop knowledge exchange individually or in collaboration with others, as appropriate, depending on the size and scope of the project.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Research, Scholarship & Enterprise

- 1.1 With support and supervision from the Director of Research and Principal Investigators, conduct research activity, alone and in collaboration with others.
- 1.2 Assist with the analysis and interpretation of research findings and contribute to discussions on conclusions and outcomes.
- 1.3 Contribute to the writing of reports and other dissemination activities under the supervision of experienced researchers.
- 1.4 Contribute to the preparation of research ethics and data management strategies, under guidance from the DRaKE and Principal Investigators to ensure compliance with ethical approval and data protection legislation.
- 1.5 Present information on research progress and outcomes to relevant bodies under the supervision of Principal Investigators.
- 1.6 Plan own day-to-day research activity within the framework of the agreed programme.
- 1.7 Learn about the publication process and contribute to research outputs for publication in monographs or recognised high-quality journals, or performance/exhibition, as appropriate.
- 1.8 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in professional development.

2. Teaching & Student Support

- 2.1 Where appropriate and relevant for an ongoing research project, Assist in the supervision of student projects and provide guidance to those assisting in the research.

3. Contribution to School & University

- 2.1 Attend and contribute to relevant School and project meetings.
- 2.2 Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigators, subject group leads, DRaKE, and/or Head of School.

4. Role-specific duties

- 4.1 Support in gaining ethical clearance
- 4.2 liaising between co-investigators and partners
- 4.3 data management, data cleaning, and analysis (quantitative and qualitative) transcription management,
- 4.4 managing data sharing and compliance with open science practices (e.g., uploading data and pre-prints to open science platforms)
- 4.5 manuscript preparation
- 4.6 organizing and attending team meetings, and helping with impact activities.
- 4.7 managing research communications
- 4.8 supporting research centres and other strategic research priorities within the School by coordinating internal and external networks of researchers, and organising key events.

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Under the supervision of the Principal Investigators, conduct experiments/research to assist with project aims, with emphasis on training.
- Undertake research by preparing, setting up, conducting and recording the outcomes.
- Manage and analyse data, and prepare written reports and summaries.
- Maintain and store project files and equipment as per health and safety and data regulations.
- As part of career development, contribute to the preparation of journal articles based on the research with support from the Principal Investigators.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Normally educated to degree level, or other equivalent qualification, or relevant level of experience, as appropriate to the discipline of Psychology (see role-specific criteria below).
2. Good presentation skills, with the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with colleagues and external audiences.
3. Ability to work independently (under supervision by the Principal Investigator), and as part of a team.
4. Ability to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.
5. Excellent organisational and administrative skills.
6. Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.
7. Excellent IT skills.
8. Ability to follow guidance of team leaders.

ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Experience in ethics submissions for research.
2. Experience in data collection for psychological research studies.
3. Experience of managing datasets.
4. Experience of working as part of a research or University professional services team.
5. Excellent communication skills.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Experience of designing psychological research studies.
2. Experience of contributing to published research.

3. Expertise in open science practices.
4. Experience of impact and knowledge exchange activities, such as research dissemination events.
5. Experience of working in schools and/or other community settings.