1. Advertisement
Post Title: Research Fellow in Mental Health and Well-being
School: School of Life Sciences (and School of Psychology)
Hours: part time hours considered up to a maximum of 0.6 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need). For further details regarding flexible working please follow this link - flexible-working.
Contract: fixed term, from 1 September 2019 until 30 November 2021
Reference: 1863
Salary: starting at £33,199 to £39,609 per annum, pro rata
Placed on: 22 July 2019
Closing date: 5 August 2019
Expected Start date: 1 September 2019

The School of Life Sciences is at the forefront of research in the biological sciences in the UK, coming in the top 10 in the REF 2014.

We are seeking to appoint a postdoctoral research fellow to work on the Office for Students (OfS) SITUATE (Students In Transition at University: Aiming To Enhance mental and social health and wellbeing) project. This project is focused on understanding the mental health and well-being of students, and is funded through the OfS Challenge Competition: Achieving a step change in mental health outcomes for all students.

The SITUATE project is specifically aimed at students undergoing a transition within their educational journey. The project is particularly concerned with the transition from further education (pre-university) to higher education (university), and the transitions between years whilst students are in higher education. The project incorporates research into the causes of student difficulties associated with transitions in education, including the impact of transitions upon students' social networks.

The project also aims to produce several interventions that help students to deal with educational transitions. The main intervention is a peer-to-peer psycho-education programme that will incorporate the project’s major research findings. This intervention will be developed in conjunction with the Mental Health Foundation (MHF), the UK’s oldest mental health charity.

The post holder will be supervised by Dr Jeremy Niven (Project Lead, School of Life Sciences), and will work closely with other members of the research team including Prof. Robin Banerjee, Dr Clio Berry and Dr Matt Easterbrook at the School of Psychology. The post holder will also work closely with the project coordinator and professional services staff at the University of Sussex, and with our network of partner organisations, which include the MHF and sixth form colleges in the local vicinity of the University of Sussex. The post will involve local travel to these sixth form college and to other sites for training and monitoring purposes.

Key requirements
This post is suitable for someone who has completed a PhD/DPhil in psychology. Previous experience of working on child or adult mental health and/or in implementing interventions would be a distinct advantage. The candidate should be able to demonstrate that they have excellent communication and presentation skills, enthusiasm for the project, experience of
quantitative analysis, and the ability to organise and motivate others flexibly/confidently whilst working within an academic team setting.

For more information, please email Dr Jeremy Niven (j.e.niven@sussex.ac.uk).

Please include with your completed application form a CV, cover letter indicating both motivations and aspirations, and the contact details of two referees.

The School of Life Sciences is committed to equality and valuing diversity, and currently holds an Athena SWAN Silver Award. Applications are particularly welcomed from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics (STEMM) at Sussex. The School of Life Sciences welcomes applications to academic posts from candidates who wish to work part-time or as job-sharers.

The University offers various schemes to provide real benefits to parents, these can be found at Family Friendly Policies.

For full details and how to apply see our vacancies page.

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.

2. The School of Life Sciences
The School of Life Sciences is the largest School in the University in terms of research activity with an annual research income of over £13m, and one of the largest in terms of student and staff population. The School has a teaching and research faculty of nearly 80, over 150 research fellows and technicians, and a small professional services team. Life Sciences have played a major role in the research and teaching of the University of Sussex since 1961. The original School of Biological Sciences (BIOLS), founded by John Maynard Smith FRS, trained some of the world's leading biologists and biomedical scientists, and was a beacon of innovation and creativity in its integrated approach to research and teaching.

The current School of Life Sciences was formed in 2009; it has six research subject groups – Neuroscience; Evolution, Behaviour and Environment; Genome Damage and Stability; Biochemistry and Biomedicine; Chemistry and the Sussex Drug Discovery Centre. Each research subject group is chaired by a prominent scientist, who is responsible for research leadership in their subject. The School currently has five Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS) and six Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences (FMedSci) on its Faculty.

Professor Sarah Guthrie was appointed Head of School in September 2017, and the School will continue to develop under her leadership. The University has committed to building a new research building, which will bring life scientists from all disciplines together. Planning for this building has been approved.

The School admits more than 600 undergraduates each year on to a range of BSc and MSci degrees, with around 80 students on post-graduate taught degrees in Genetic Manipulation and Cell Biology, Cancer Cell Biology, Neuroscience and several postgraduate degrees in Conservation and Ecology. Taught programmes are firmly based on our research excellence, and offer students substantial opportunities for personal research experience along with conventional lecture, seminar and tutorial teaching. We offer 3-year BSc and 4-year integrated Masters degrees (MSci) in Biochemistry, Biomedical Science, Biology, Ecology, Genetics,
Neurosciences, and Zoology, and Royal Society of Chemistry accredited BSc and MChem degrees in Chemistry and Chemistry and Drug Design. We offer an MPharm degree which has passed stage 5 of accreditation. We also offer a Foundation Year in Biological Sciences which is ideally suited for students whose A-level (or equivalent) qualifications don’t meet the requirements for direct entry on to our BSc/Masters degrees.

We have a large and vigorous post graduate research community with over 160 PhD students undertaking cutting-edge research across all our areas of interest. As well as standard PhD programmes in all the Subject Groups, we also offer a highly interdisciplinary 4-year Neurosciences PhD incorporating a first year with laboratory rotations, run in partnership with the Schools of Psychology and Engineering and Informatics, and the Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

In the REF2014 more than 96% of the School’s research was rated as ‘world leading’, ‘internationally excellent’, or ‘internationally recognised’. Our Biological Sciences research in particular was ranked 10th in the UK overall, and 8th on quality of our research outputs – putting us comfortably above the majority of Russell Group institutions.

The University of Sussex is a medium sized research intensive University based on a single campus in Falmer, just outside Brighton in East Sussex. The University has ambitious plans to develop its teaching and research; for example, to move from a taught student population of c13,000 to one of c18,000 by 2018.

3. The School of Psychology

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 10th out of 82 in REF 2014 (7th for impact), with 100% of research rated as internationally recognized or better, and 45% of research recognized as world-leading. Detailed information about the School is available at www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology.

The School of Psychology has four research groups with a total of nearly 60 teaching faculty and nearly double that number of PhD students. The research groups are:

- Behavioural and Clinical Neuroscience: this group focuses on addiction, ageing and learning. It 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, visual perception, problem-solving and cognition and consciousness, with approaches that range from classic experimental psychology through to cutting-edge cognitive neuroscience techniques.

- Developmental and Clinical Psychology: the core objective of the group is to translate research in human development to clinical, policy and public contexts. Its work spans developmental and experimental psychopathology, quantitative behaviour genetics, and the development of cognition.

- 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.

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. The quality of these groups 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 have published over 700 articles and 17 books, and have won research grants and consultancies to a value in excess of £12m over the census period for REF 2014.

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 with which the School of Psychology collaborates include:

• 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 on-site fMRI, with an emphasis on quantifying the function and structure of the brain.

• Rudd Centre for Adoption Research and Practice: developing new insights into the cultural, social-relational, cognitive and emotional processes in the development of adopted children.

• 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 preclinical, clinical, and psychological research in drug addiction to pursue translational projects.

• Sussex Neuroscience: a cross-university centre to develop the scientific and educational strategy for basic and translational neuroscience.

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

• 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 houses a 1.5T Siemens MRI and PET/CT scanners, but a 3T scanner is being installed within the next 18 months. CISC hosts an autonomic psychophysiology laboratory that extends to 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.

• 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.

• 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 85 m² 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.

4. Senior Leadership and Management
The Vice-Chancellor (Professor Adam Tickell) is the senior academic officer and, as Chief Executive, is responsible to the University Council for management of the University. He is supported by an executive group which includes the three Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance and the Director of Human Resources. The Heads of the Schools of Studies at Sussex report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

The Registrar and Secretary heads the Professional Services of the University. In addition, under the University Statutes, the Registrar and Secretary is Secretary to the University Council. The Director of Finance reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The Director of ITS reports to the Registrar and Secretary, and the Librarian reports to one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

5. Job Description and Person Specification

Job Title: Research Fellow in Mental Health and Well-being
Grade: Research Fellow I, Grade 7 (spine point 30)
School: Life Sciences (and Psychology)
Location: CRPC, School of Life Sciences, Neuroscience Division, CRPC, BN1 9QG, Brighton.
Responsible to: Principal Investigator through to Head of School
Direct reports: n/a
Key contacts: Dr Jeremy Niven, Dr Clio Berry, Dr Matt Easterbrook, Prof. Robin Banerjee
Role description: Research Fellow I is an early 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
To engage in individual and/or collaborative research activity resulting in high-quality publications; and to develop research funding and knowledge exchange income individually or in collaboration with others, as appropriate, depending on the size and scope of the bid.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Research, Scholarship & Enterprise
   ▪ Develop research objectives and proposals for own or joint research, at acceptable levels, with assistance if required.
   ▪ Conduct research projects individually and in collaboration with others.
   ▪ Analyse and interpret research findings and draw conclusions on the outcomes.
   ▪ Produce high-quality research outputs for publication in monographs or recognised high-quality journals, or performance/exhibition, as appropriate, and contribute to the School’s REF submission at acceptable levels of volume and academic excellence.
   ▪ Contribute to the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, for example for funding purposes.
   ▪ Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to form relationships and collaborations.
   ▪ Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in continuous professional development.

2. Contribution to School & University
   ▪ Attend and contribute to relevant project and university meetings.
   ▪ Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigator.

3. Role-specific duties
   ▪ Design and execute surveys of student mental health and well-being.
   ▪ Statistically analyse quantitative data from surveys.
   ▪ Conduct focus groups to obtain qualitative data.
   ▪ Extract key findings from quantitative and qualitative data to inform interventions.
   ▪ Design and execute the evaluation of interventions linked to the project or that are already running within the university.
   ▪ Assist with general running of the project.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
 ▪ Pursuing a line of independent research within a research group.
 ▪ Presenting research linked to the project at conferences and/or workshops.
 ▪ Publishing research linked to the project in internationally recognised journals.
 ▪ Other forms of externally recognised professional practice of creative output of a standing equivalent to regular publication of original research.
 ▪ Initiating, developing or participating in links between the University and external stakeholders including the OfS and Vitae, community organisations and policy-makers.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
ESSENTIAL CRITERIA
1. Educated to the doctoral level, or other equivalent qualification or appropriate level of experience, as appropriate to the discipline (see role-specific criteria below).

2. Evidence of engagement in high-quality research activity.

3. Excellent presentation skills, with the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with students, colleagues and external audiences.

4. Ability to work individually under own initiative and without close supervision, and as part of a team.
5. Ability to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.

6. Excellent organisational and administrative skills.

7. Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.

8. Outstanding verbal and written communication skills.

ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA
1. Design of online surveys assessing mental health and well-being.

2. Statistical analysis of quantitative data obtained from surveys.

3. Design, execution and analysis of focus groups.

4. Interpretation of quantitative and qualitative research findings for use in psychological interventions.

5. Experience of evaluating psychological interventions.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA
1. Excellent IT (word processing, database etc.) skills.

2. Prior experience of working on projects engaged with mental health and well-being.

3. Emerging track record of high-quality publications in reputable journals and other appropriate media of similar standing.