1. Advertisement

Post title: Research Assistant in Clinical Aspects of Consciousness Science  
School/Department: BSMS Neuroscience  
Hours: full time or part time hours considered up to a maximum of 1.0 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).  
Contract: Fixed term until 31 December 2020  
Reference: 2560  
Salary: starting at £30,046 and rising to £33,797 per annum  
Placed on: 21 October 2019  
Closing date: 18 November 2019  
Expected start date: 1 January 2020

- Applications are invited for a highly motivated graduate to work as a Research Assistant within the Sackler Centre of Consciousness Science at the University of Sussex and Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

- The successful applicant will provide technical and research support on clinical projects led by Professor Hugo Critchley Chair in Psychiatry, and colleagues.

- The successful applicant will have technical and research skills at an appropriate level of qualification, with ambition to support and pursue high quality research in the neuroscience of consciousness. Previous experience in research governance processes, conducting clinical research, and familiarity with physiological recording equipment is highly desirable.

- Candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the research activity undertaken by Prof Critchley and colleagues at the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science - www.sussex.ac.uk/sackler). Informal enquiries about the post should be directed to Prof Hugo Critchley (h.critchley@bsms.ac.uk)

Role-specific information

The Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science, through Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), seeks to appoint a Research Assistant scientist to the Psychiatry group over an initial a 1-year fixed term. The post-holder will work with other team members on human experimental research that examines the neurobiological and psychological underpinnings of consciousness, and disorders of consciousness. The post provides an outstanding opportunity to develop research experience and skills in techniques including psychological testing, autonomic psychophysiology, combined brain stimulation / electroencephalography (TMS-EEG), and neuroimaging with MRI. The post-holder will join a vibrant research environment within BSMS Psychiatry and the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science. She/he will be located at the University of Sussex Campus at Falmer.

The successful applicant will be expected to have computational, technical, statistical and administrative skills applicable to human neuroscience and clinical experimental research. Applicants must have strong interpersonal skills to facilitate interaction with patient groups, carers and clinicians. Established technical skills including previous experience with physiological monitoring is highly desirable. Experience with working with patients is also desirable, particularly if relevant to people accessing neurological or mental health services.
The post-holder will work according an agreed plan to support the developing range of patient-focused research taking place through the Sackler Centre of Consciousness Science in collaboration with researchers in the Schools of Informatics and Psychology (University of Sussex) and clinical and research Staff within Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

For full details and how to apply see:

www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs       www.brighton.ac.uk/jobs       www.bsms.ac.uk

We are committed to equality of opportunity.
2. **Brighton and Sussex Medical School and partners**

**Brighton and Sussex Medical School** is an equal partnership between the Universities of Sussex and Brighton together with NHS organisations throughout the South-East region. Find out more at: [bsms.ac.uk/about](http://bsms.ac.uk/about)

**The Sackler Centre of Consciousness Science**, supported by a philanthropic donation from the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, applies consciousness science theory and methodology to enhance understanding and treatment of clinical disorders of consciousness, relevant particularly to psychiatry and mental health. The research is centred upon cognitive neuroscience and emotional psychophysiology and is conducted in collaboration with colleagues in the Schools of Informatics and Psychology and the University of Sussex.

**The University of Sussex** is a leading research-intensive university near Brighton, currently ranked top 20 in all major league tables. Find out more: [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/)

**The University of Brighton** is a complex and diverse institution with a long and distinguished history of applied research. Find out more: [brighton.ac.uk/about-us/](http://brighton.ac.uk/about-us/)

**Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust** is the regional teaching hospital working across two sites: the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton and the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath. Find out more: [bsuh.nhs.uk/about-us/](http://bsuh.nhs.uk/about-us/)

**Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** specialises in working with people who are experiencing mental health difficulties and those with learning disabilities, across Sussex, Kent and Hampshire. Find out more: [sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/about-us](http://sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/about-us)
3. Job Description

Job description for the post of: Research Assistant in Clinical Aspects of Consciousness Science.

Department: Neuroscience
Section / Unit: BSMS
Location: Trafford Centre for Medical Research
Grade: 6
Responsible to: Head of Department / Co-Director of Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science
Responsible for: N/A

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

Purpose of the post

The post-holder will be expected to contribute to the work of the research team, through coordination, technical and administrative support and experimental work. The post-holder will have the opportunity to develop her/his research skills with support from more experienced members of staff.

Specifically, the post-holder will work on a programme of clinical research undertaken through the Sackler Centre of Consciousness Science, University of Sussex (Co-Directors Prof Hugo Critchley and Prof Anil Seth). Characterising processes underpinning normal and abnormal expressions of consciousness relevant to psychiatry.

1. To observe and assist with individual and/or collaborative research activity and contribute to the production of research outputs for publications.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Research, Scholarship & Enterprise

1.1 With support from the Principal Investigator, develop research objectives and contribute to the planning of the research project
1.2 Provide technical coordination for the use of human experimental equipment within psychophysiological testing facilities. Including updating of standard operating procedures for experimental procedures

1.3 Conduct research activity under supervision of the Principal Investigator and team, and in collaboration with others.

1.4 Assist with the analysis and interpretation of research findings and contribute to discussions on conclusions and outcomes.

1.5 Contribute to the writing of reports and other dissemination activities under the supervision of experienced researchers.

1.6 Contribute to the preparation of research ethics and data management strategies, under guidance from the Principal Investigator to ensure compliance with ethical approval and data protection legislation.

1.7 Present information on research progress and outcomes to relevant bodies under the supervision of the Principal Investigator.

1.8 Plan own day-to-day research activity within the framework of the agreed programme.

1.9 Learn about the publication process and contribute to research outputs for publication in monographs or recognised high-quality journals, or performance/exhibition, as appropriate.

1.10 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in professional development.

2. Teaching & Student Support

2.1 Assist in the supervision of student projects and provide guidance to those assisting in the research.

3. Contribution to School & University

3.1 Attend and contribute to relevant School and project meetings.

3.2 Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigator and/or Head of School.

4. Role-specific duties

4.1 Assist in the coordination, technical support and conduct of human (patient and healthy control) experimental research within the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science and Psychiatry at BSMS.

- Contribute to the planning of human experimental and clinic-based research.
- Contribute to the technical support of experimental studies
- Undertake research by preparing, setting up, conducting and recording the outcome of questionnaire studies, psychological testing, and psychophysiological or neuroscientific investigations
- Liaise with research colleagues and support staff on routine matters.
- Present information on research progress and outcomes to relevant collaborators and interested groups, under the supervision of experienced researchers.
- Plan own day-to-day supporting and research activity within the framework of the agreed programme.
• Develop further skills in and knowledge of research methods and techniques.
• Co-ordinate own work with that of others to avoid conflict or duplication of effort.

4.2 Support clinical research efforts through research governance and ethics applications, liaison with associated bodies and NHS partners,
• Help with ethics applications and the securing and implementation of research governance arrangements
• Coordinate, where appropriate, with mental health service-user groups and the Research and Development Department at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

4.3 Set up appointments and make telephone calls to co-ordinate arrangements for participation of participants in the research studies:
• Organise appointments with research participants including controls and patients, which may require liaison with clinicians, support-workers and their carers
• Consent, interview and test participants with postdoctoral research fellow
• Arrange follow up interviews
• Complete follow up interviews

4.4 Enter data; create and manage datasets. Clean and summarise data.

4.5 Contribute to data analyses, writing of reports and other dissemination activities under the supervision of experienced researchers.

4.6 The post-holder is expected to assist with aspects of research administration including:
• Application for ethical approval
• Ensuring compliance with data protection legislation.
• Provide guidance as required to support staff and any students who may be assisting with the research.

4.7 The priority of the appointment is research. However, the post-holder may occasionally be required to contribute to aspects of the development and delivery of undergraduate and post-graduate education.

4.7 Ensure the highest standard of record keeping, maintaining accurate and appropriate research patient records, including strict confidentiality.

4.8 Attend group, departmental, Sackler Centre, and other meetings as appropriate.

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 Investigator, 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 Investigator.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Normally educated to degree level, or other equivalent qualification, or relevant level of experience, as appropriate to the discipline (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 and related technical skills.

8. Ability to follow guidance of team leaders.

ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Undergraduate degree in Psychology or the Biological Sciences with a significant human research component

2. Experience using standardised psychological assessments including questionnaires

3. Ability to work with people with mental illness

4. Ability to conduct systematic testing and interviews

5. Technical skills relevant to human psychophysiological recordings, including use of monitoring equipment

6. Ability to manage and analyse quantitative and qualitative datasets

7. Ability to write reports and project updates including summaries of datasets

8. Knowledge of psychological domains and tests

9. Knowledge of psychophysiological responses

10. Ability to complete assessment in a variety of settings including clinical sites

DESIRABLE CRITERIA
1. Experience of conducting research experiments.

2. Relevant MSc in Psychology or Biological Sciences or equivalent qualification or experience

3. Experience of working with people with mental or neurological illness

4. Experience of human experimental research

5. Knowledge of literature on consciousness science

Revised August 2019 (CLL)