1 Advertisement

Post Title: Research Fellow in Social Innovation in Energy Transitions  
School/department: University of Sussex Business School, Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU)  

Hours: Full time or part time considered up to a maximum of 1 FTE. Full time for 13 months or part time for a longer duration. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).  
Contract: Fixed term contract until 31 July 2021 (13 months from start date), or longer if part time.  
Reference: 3712  
Salary: Starting at £33,797 to £40,322 per annum, pro rata if part time.  
Placed on: 5 May 2020  
Closing date: 5 June 2020. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.  
Expected Interview date: w/c 15 June 2020  
Expected start date: 1 July 2020 or ASAP

The Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex Business School is seeking to appoint a Research Fellow to join the EU Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme funded project on “Social Innovation in Energy Transitions” (SONNET), connected also with the Sussex Energy Group, interacting with a dynamic and inspiring community of energy researchers.

The SONNET project brings diverse groups together to make sense of how social innovation can bring about a more sustainable energy system in Europe. The Research Fellow will work closely with the Principal Investigator Sabine Hielscher to develop an understanding of social innovation in energy through qualitative data collection activities, transdisciplinary work, and literature on energy social science and social innovation research.

The main duties of the Research Fellow will be to undertake qualitative data collection, and subsequent data analysis, in the UK, using in-depth interviews, document reviews and participant observation with subjects in civil society, local government and other policy-makers. They will also collaborate in transdisciplinary research with the city lab in Bristol. The Research Fellow will interpret the findings by conducting thematic analyses of the qualitative data, and produce co-authored journal articles, conference presentations, blog posts and working papers.

Essential criteria for the post are:
- A PhD in a relevant social scientific area (e.g. energy social science research or other relevant social science research).
- Experience of conducting qualitative research work: document reviews, participant observation, workshops, and in-depth interviews.
• Appreciation and understanding of carrying out transdisciplinary research work.
• Experience of collecting, analysing and reporting on qualitative data.
• Knowledge of the social science energy literature.
• Excellent writing skills
• Willingness to travel frequently in the UK (subject to any travel restrictions that may still be in place due to Covid-19)

Please contact Dr Sabine Hielscher, S.Hielscher@sussex.ac.uk for informal enquiries.

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, Department and the SONNET Project

University of Sussex Business School
The University of Sussex Business School is a unique research-focused interdisciplinary school, which takes a strong policy-directed view on business practices while also developing the underlying core disciplines. It includes the Department of Accounting and Finance, the Department of Strategy and Marketing, the Department of Management, the Department of Economics and the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU).

As a dynamic, research-orientated and interdisciplinary School, we produce cutting-edge research that addresses real-world issues, pressing global policy agendas and business practices, whilst also being committed to developing the underlying core disciplines.

The School is committed to the University’s vision to understand and help address the grand issues of our time, by challenging conventional thinking and discourse, being creative and open in our approach and innovative in our methods in order to produce world-class research with impact.

Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU)
Founded in 1966 by Christopher Freeman, SPRU was one of the first interdisciplinary research centres in the field of science and technology policy. Today, with over 70 faculty members, SPRU remains at the forefront of new ideas, problem-orientated research, inspiring teaching, and creative, high impact engagement with decision makers across government, business and civil society. Our research addresses pressing global policy agendas, including innovation challenges posed by the digital economy, the future of industrial policy, inclusive economic growth, the politics of scientific expertise, energy policy, security, entrepreneurship, and pathways to a more sustainable future. SPRU researchers are driven by a desire to tackle real-world questions, whilst also contributing to a deeper understanding of how science, technology and innovation is shaping today’s world. With a community of over 140 MSc and doctoral students from all over the world, SPRU is also well known for its high quality, research-led teaching programmes.
Sussex Energy Group (SEG)
SPRU is part of the Sussex Energy Group, uniting researchers across the University of Sussex and the Institute of Development Studies working on energy issues. The Sussex Energy Group is one of the largest independent social science energy policy research groups in the world.

The Sussex Energy Group aims to understand and foster transitions towards sustainable, low carbon energy systems. Drawing from SPRU’s tradition, we undertake academically rigorous, interdisciplinary and world-leading research that is relevant to contemporary policy challenges. We also educate the next generation of energy policy professionals through our MSc and PhD programmes.

Our research is clustered under six broad themes: energy innovation and transitions; economics and finance; energy justice; energy demand and behaviour; smart infrastructure; and energy supply technologies. Our projects are both problem-oriented and applied, engaging with a range of contemporary UK and international policy debates. We work with policymakers, industry and civil society across the globe in order to open up routes to an inclusive and sustainable energy future.

The SONNET Project

The SONNET project brings diverse groups together to make sense of how social innovation can bring about a more sustainable energy system in Europe. Six cities and six research institutions in Europe are using an inter- and transdisciplinary research design - including ‘City Labs’, case studies, and more – to understand how we can help ensure that social innovations accelerate transitions to more sustainable energy system. In addition to its research, SONNET is hosting several regional, national, and European events to co-create knowledge on social innovation and energy transitions. For more information about the project: https://sonnet-energy.eu
3. **Job Description**

Job Description for the post of: Research Fellow in Social Innovation in Energy Transitions

**Department:** Science Policy Research Unit

**Section/Unit/School:** University of Sussex Business School

**Location:** Jubilee Building

**Grade:** 7

**Responsible to:** The Principal Investigator through to Head of School

**Responsible for:** n/a

**PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

1. 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.

2. To contribute to School teaching activities.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. **Research, Scholarship & Enterprise**

   1.1 Develop research objectives and proposals for own or joint research, at acceptable levels, with assistance if required.

   1.2 Conduct research projects individually and in collaboration with others.

   1.3 Analyse and interpret research findings and draw conclusions on the outcomes.

   1.4 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.

   1.5 Contribute to the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, for example for funding purposes.

   1.6 Individually or with colleagues, explore opportunities for enterprise activity, knowledge exchange income and/or consultancy, where permissible.
1.7 Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to form relationships and collaborations.

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

2. Teaching & Student Support

2.1 Undertake teaching duties, if required.

2.2 Assist in the assessment of student knowledge and supervision of student projects if required.

2.3 Assist in the development of student research skills, for example as part of a postgraduate supervision team.

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 Develop understanding of social innovation in energy through qualitative data collection activities, transdisciplinary work, and literature on energy social science and social innovation research.

4.2 Undertake qualitative data collection, and subsequent data analysis, in the UK.

4.3 Contribute to interdisciplinary conceptual development, in collaboration with the Principle Investigator and research team.

4.4 Co-author publications on this research.

4.5 Participate in national/international workshops and conferences.

4.6 Travel regularly around the UK for interviews and workshops.

4.7 Support the organisation of relevant workshops and other events.

The Research Fellow will work closely on these tasks with Dr Sabine Hielscher and SONNET partners.
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

- A PhD or equivalent scholarly or relevant professional activity
- Pursuing a line of independent research within a research group.
- Publishing research (either from a recently completed PhD or new original research).
- 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 bodies such as business and industry, the professions, community organisations and policy-makers.
- Evidence of successful engagement in teaching or supervision.

4. PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Normally educated to 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 on 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. Excellent IT skills.
ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. PhD in a relevant social scientific area (e.g. energy social science research or other relevant social science research).

2. Experience of conducting qualitative research work: document reviews, participant observation, workshops, and in-depth interviews.

3. Appreciation and understanding of carrying out transdisciplinary research work.

4. Experience of collecting, analysing and reporting on qualitative data.

5. Knowledge of the social science energy literature.

6. Excellent writing skills.

7. Willingness to travel frequently in the UK (subject to any travel restrictions that may still be in place due to Covid-19)

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

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

2. Experience of generating research or knowledge exchange income.

3. Experience of working within interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research project, including a wide range of stakeholders (in particular city administrations and community groups).

4. Knowledge of social innovation in energy (e.g. energy cooperatives and energy campaign groups) – preferably in the UK.

5. Knowledge of new institutionalism literature.

6. Technical knowledge of qualitative data analysis software programs, e.g. Nvivo.