



1 Advertisement

Post Title: Project Officer

School/department: School of Psychology

Hours: 4 days a week

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

Location: Falmer, Brighton, United Kingdom

Contract: fixed term until 28 February 2026 (with 2.5 days running until 28 February 2026 and with 1.5 days potentially extendable until 31 August 2025)

Reference: 10737

Salary: starting at £27,131 to £31,411 per annum, pro rata

Placed on: 25 January 2023

Closing date: 16 February 2023. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected interview date: To be confirmed

Expected start date: ASAP

We are seeking to hire a Project Officer to assist in the management and co-ordination of two separate large-scale research projects. The first is a comparative, multi-site research project on the topic of honour and social interactions (“HONORLOGIC”), led by Professor Ayse K. Uskul. The second aims to understand how humans understand and remember everyday situations (“EVENTS”), led by Professor Chris Bird. Both projects are funded by 5-year European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grants. The post will be split with approximately two thirds of the time spent on HONORLOGIC and one third on EVENTS.

The successful candidate will work with both Principal Investigators and their teams of post-and pre-doctoral researchers within the School of Psychology, University of Sussex, UK. The HONORLOGIC project additionally involves a large international team and their local research assistants in different countries.

The successful candidate will be responsible for overseeing the logistical and financial aspects of the projects. Tasks include regular communication with team members on administrative matters, organizing travel to project meetings and conferences, arranging contracts of and payments to research assistants to be hired in different locations, overseeing the budget and staff hiring, helping prepare the grant reports and visuals (e.g., slides, charts) for the project, and managing the project’s webpage and the project’s social media accounts. Other duties, commensurate with the grading of the post, may also be assigned from time to time.

Please contact Prof Ayse K. Uskul at a.k.uskul@sussex.ac.uk and/or Prof Chris Bird (chris.bird@sussex.ac.uk) for informal enquiries.

The University is committed to equality and valuing diversity, and 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.

“Please note that this position may be subject to [ATAS clearance](#) if you require visa sponsorship.”

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.

Please note: The University requires that work undertaken for the University is performed from the UK.

2. The School / Division

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 over 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 75 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.
- 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 Centre for Research on Kindness: interdisciplinary research centre based in the School of Psychology with a focus on illuminating the nature of kindness and the role it plays in people's lives and communities.
- 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.

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.

3. Job Description

Job Description for the post of: Project Officer

Section/Unit/School: School of Psychology

Location: Falmer Campus, Brighton

Grade: Grade 5

Responsible to: Principle Investigator of Project

Responsible for: N/A

Key contacts: Other members of the project team including Professor Uskul will be two postdoctoral researchers, a large international team of researchers and research assistants, and students and interns who may join the team throughout the course of the project.

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Academics, Professional Services Staff within Divisions; Staff at all levels within Professional Services departments (e.g., finance, human resources, research services).

External: Relevant external bodies - public, private and third sector organisations; specialist consultants; other HEIs, international team members and their research assistants.

Role description: The Project Officer will provide assistance and co-ordination in the management of two large-scale research projects funded by a European Research Council Consolidator Grant. The role holder will develop, maintain and support effective, two-way channels of communication for the projects and its stakeholders, with the aim of improving engagement from staff and therefore facilitating successful delivery of objectives.

The HONORLOGIC project budget is €1,959,568 and the project will run until **28 February 2026 and the 2.5 days of this post will be running until this date**. Studies in four different work packages involve data collection in 12 different locations, located primarily around the Mediterranean: Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Lebanon, Egypt, and Tunisia, as well as Korea, Japan, the UK, and

the US. Research assistants hired locally are responsible for data collection in each of the 11 locations outside of the UK, supervised by a local team member.

The EVENTS project budget is €1,947,983 and the project will run until **30 September 2024 covering 1.5 days of this post** – with a likely extension to **30 September 2025**. All research will be carried out within the UK.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are the main accountabilities for the job.

1. Provide proactive, timely administrative support and coordination for all aspects of project activity to ensure the efficient running of the project and support with the delivery against key milestones and within available resource. This includes producing and managing project and delivery plans, tracking activities, reporting progress and following up on action points arising from meetings, as appropriate.
2. Act as the first point of contact for the project, responding in a timely fashion to, and proactively following up on, incoming enquiries.
3. Produce project reports and briefings at timely and regular intervals, identifying areas of concern or the need for further resources or focus, ensuring that the project lead and/or sponsor is kept updated and informed.
4. Support project related communication activity by liaising with stakeholders to ensure that they are kept fully informed and engaged with the process through the timely provision of information.
5. Coordinate and promote project events and prepare briefings/communications for stakeholders to ensure appropriate participation, and to raise the profile of the project so that all stakeholders understand the project deliverables and how it may affect them. This may involve facilitating events.
6. Support the effective monitoring and evaluation of the project through devising and developing evaluation and tracking tools, analysing data, and keeping accurate records to enable stakeholders and the project lead to assess the impact of the project and engagement activities (e.g., surveys, data collection).
7. Provide budgetary and financial administrative support ensuring that the project's finances are administered in line with University procedures and any relevant regulatory requirements.
8. Contribute to the continuous improvement of the project and its processes.

ROLE SPECIFIC DUTIES

1. The Project Officer will act as the main point of contact for the project and will meet regularly with a broad range of staff within the Divisions and Professional Service Directorates to ensure that the project is progressed in alignment with agreed dates. They will be required to build and maintain good working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders – internal and external to the University.
2. The role holder will need to be able to work independently without close supervision from the project lead, progressing agreed tasks and work to ensure

- the delivery of a first-class service to all stakeholders.
3. The role holder will need to manage a range of conflicting priorities and demands on time and resources, deciding how best to plan and organise own workload to ensure the best possible outcomes and to ensure that an efficient, effective and robust service is provided in support of divisional/directorate objectives.
 4. In order to identify areas of concern and risks, the role holder will require the ability to understand and convey information that may be complex and that may need explanation or interpretation to help others understand.
 5. The role holder will be required to develop a good understanding of the principles of project management and University specific procedures relating to the project.
 6. Pressure to meet important deadlines such as might be inherent in high profile projects.
 7. May be a requirement to work evenings or weekends depending on time zone differences and project-related travel.

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.

4. Person Specification

Working with limited supervision, the ability to organise, evaluate, plan and implement improvements will be critical to the success of the role. As an effective team player, with strong influencing skills, you will work with others to drive forward actions to achieve successful project outcomes.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Educated to A level standard or equivalent.
2. ECDL or equivalent IT qualification or experience.
3. Substantial experience in a similar role providing project administrative support and coordination.
4. Experience of setting up administrative systems and procedures for a new project.
5. Excellent IT skills, particularly in the use of MS Office packages.
6. Experience of using Excel spreadsheets and databases to manage data and information on a regular basis.
7. Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including clear and effective facilitation and presentation skills and the ability to produce clear and concise written materials.
8. Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with a wide range of staff across the University and the project team.
9. Good project management skills with the ability to plan and manage multiple projects and workload whilst taking account of conflicting demands and deadlines.
10. Ability to research, digest, analyse and present material clearly and concisely.
11. Excellent organisational skills with experience of managing own workload, prioritising tasks as appropriate and effectively dealing with competing priorities.

12. Meticulous attention to detail and high levels of accuracy.
13. Ability to work effectively with minimal supervision and guidance as well as collaboratively as part of a team.
14. Ability to assess outcomes of work and constantly review processes to improve them.
15. Firm commitment to achieving the University's vision and values, with a passion for a transformative student experience and multidisciplinary, impactful research.
16. Commitment to deliver and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity in the day-to-day work of the role.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Degree in a relevant discipline or relevant professional qualification/experience.
2. Understanding and/or appreciation of the Higher Education sector and the key challenges facing the sector.
3. Experience of managing/monitoring project budgets.
4. Experience in organising and delivering project related workshops and events.
5. Ability and interest in working as part of an international team.
6. Experience of digital communications including website development and professional social media use.
7. Experience with literature search and using reference manager (e.g., Zotero).