

1 Advertisement

Post Title: Research Fellow in Rewilding & Community Agriculture

School: School of Life Sciences

Hours: full time

Contract: fixed term for 12 months with possibility of extension

Reference: 2579

Salary: starting at £32,548 and rising to £38,833 per annum

Closing date: 20 October 2017. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected start date: 1 January 2018

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.

Delivering food security, community resilience, and biodiversity through rewilding and community agriculture

Applications are invited for a Research Fellow for the project “Delivering food security, community resilience, and biodiversity through rewilding and community agriculture”. We will compare and contrast the role of large herbivores in community agriculture and rewilding projects, determining how landscapes develop under varying management regimes and exploring how the public values these landscapes. This timely, interdisciplinary project will explore novel approaches and aims to inform post-Brexit agri-environment policies.

The project is funded by the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP), a collaborative initiative by the University of Sussex and Institute of Development Studies to develop interdisciplinary research in sustainability.

The post holder will work within an interdisciplinary team led by Dr Christopher Sandom (Life Sciences) and Dr Adrian Ely (Science Policy Research Unit).

We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed scientist who will play a key role in research design, data collection (both desk and field based), data analysis, literature reviews and dissemination activities, alongside general day-to-day project management, and to contribute energetically to wider SSRP activities. The successful candidate will be based in the School of Life Sciences and the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU).

Informal enquiries may be made to Christopher Sandom (c.sandom@sussex.ac.uk).

The School 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 and engineering 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 is committed to equality of opportunity

2. The School/Division

The School of Life Sciences is the largest School in the University in terms of research activity with an annual research income of over £12m, and one of the largest in terms of student and staff population. The School has a teaching and research faculty of nearly 70, 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 when Professor Laurence Pearl FRS was appointed as founding Head of the new School. Under his leadership the School adopted a unified structure with no formal departments. Instead there are 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 six Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS) and seven Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences (FMedSci) on its Faculty.

The University has committed to building a new teaching and research building, which will bring life scientists from all disciplines together. Planning for this building is well under way and will provide both academic and social spaces to improve the culture and interaction in the School. The building is scheduled for delivery in 2017-18.

The School admits around 400 undergraduates each year on to a range of BSc and MSci degrees, with around 75 students on post-graduate taught degrees in Genetic Manipulation and Cell Biology, Cancer Cell Biology and Neuroscience. 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 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. The first intake on the MPharm is in October 2016.

We have a large and vigorous post graduate research community with over 170 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.

School of Business, Management and Economics

The School of Business, Management & Economics (BMEc) is comprised of three academic departments, each internationally renowned for its research and teaching excellence. These are: the Department of Business and Management; the Department of Economics, and SPRU (the Science Policy Research Unit). The School provides leadership in the development and dissemination of sustainable business and management practices, informed by sound economic logic and a deep understanding of policy making. With a new, state-of-the-art academic building at the heart of the campus, BMEc is a vibrant, ambitious and dynamic School with a strong research focus.

More information at www.sussex.ac.uk/bmec.

3. 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.

Sussex Sustainability Research Programme

The Sussex Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP) was founded in 2015 and spans four of the University's Schools (Business, Management & Economics; Global Studies; Life Sciences; Law, Politics & Sociology) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), to build on distinctive Sussex strengths in sustainability research and policy engagement. The programme aims to create a research environment which will enable Sussex to achieve a step change in research income generation and impact. The sustainability of human life on Earth has attracted enormous attention around the world, and this continues to grow as more States seek to develop rapidly on a finite planet. Beginning with social and political questions that the challenge of sustainability reveals, SSRP addresses complex socio-economic, technical and environmental challenges and is developing problem-focused research across disciplines in the natural and social sciences.

The programme's activities aim to enhance both the understanding of complex sustainability challenges, and the approaches through which more sustainable development pathways may be negotiated. Sussex will become a clearly identifiable global sustainability hub which fosters strategic international partnerships and is a source of advice to governments, funders, industry and non-governmental organisations. Beyond the sustainability brief, the programme will be a flagship initiative for promoting Sussex strengths in policy-engaged, academically rigorous, interdisciplinary research.

SSRP will:

- Establish Sussex firmly as 'the go-to place' for interdisciplinary research to understand complex sustainability challenges

- Develop a collective 'sustainability' identity across the Sussex campus
- Substantially increase research and 'soft' income, and consolidate and maximise the return on recent investments
- Deliver research output of the highest international quality
- Enhance the impact of Sussex research for future Research Excellence Framework submissions
- Provide a focus and drive for the University strategy of embedding sustainable development in teaching.

More information at www.sussex.ac.uk/ssrp.

5. The research project

Agriculture and nature conservation often come into conflict, but does this need to be the case? Rewilding is gaining momentum as an exciting new initiative in conservation that seeks to restore nature to a more self-sustaining state that does not require perpetual human management to preserve biodiversity. It seeks to achieve this by restoring ecological processes, such as grazing, by returning appropriate species to ecosystems, such as large herbivores. But, if we give more land to wilder nature will this negatively impact food security? Demand for locally and sustainably produced food has increased significantly in recent years, as has civic participation in community agriculture initiatives such as city farms, community gardens, and food co-operatives. 'Sheep-Share Brighton and Hove' and other community-connected farming initiatives in the South East of England involve livestock grazing as part of their business models. Rewilding projects and community agriculture are linked by their use of large herbivores. This project will consider how these objectives of nature conservation and sustainable food security can be reconciled in heavily populated urban and rural landscapes in the South East of England. We will compare and contrast the use of large herbivores in community agriculture and rewilding, determining how the public values the different landscapes produced by different herbivore regimes, and comparing the different sites with respect to the quality and quantity of local food provision, cultural services provided by nature, opportunities for community development, and economic and political feasibility of wide implementation. The project will engage local stakeholders from the outset and build towards public policy-focussed impact, legacy and further research. In particular, it aims to contribute to current debates relating to the UK's post-Brexit agri-environment policies and developing sustainable landscapes.

6. Core Job Description

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| Job Title: | Research Fellow in Rewilding & Community Agriculture |
| Grade: | Research Fellow I, Grade 7 |
| School: | School of Life Sciences |
| Location: | EBE, School of Life Sciences & SPRU, University of Sussex, Falmer |
| Responsible to: | Principal Investigator through to Head of School |
| Direct reports: | n/a |
| Key contacts: | Members of research group, members of faculty within the School and University. |

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

1. To undertake individual and collaborative team activity to fulfil the aims and objectives of the research project.
2. To contribute to the development of research funding and knowledge exchange applications related to the research project.
3. To contribute to EBE, School of Life Sciences and SPRU, and to the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme.
4. To contribute, where appropriate, to School teaching activities.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Research, Scholarship & Enterprise

- 1.1 Conduct research individually and in collaboration with others.
- 1.2 Analyse and interpret research findings and draw conclusions on the outcomes.
- 1.3 Produce high-quality research outputs for publication in recognised high-quality journals, and contribute to the School's REF submission at acceptable levels of volume and academic excellence.
- 1.4 Develop research proposals for future research in collaboration with others.
- 1.5 Individually or with colleagues, explore opportunities for enterprise activity, knowledge exchange income and/or consultancy, where permissible.
- 1.6 Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to form relationships and collaborations.
- 1.7 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in continuous professional development.
- 1.8 Contribute to the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, for example for funding purposes.

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, SSRP 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 Conduct field and desk-based research (including literature review, GIS analysis, site based ecological data collection).

4.2 Organise meetings and workshops with key stakeholders.

4.3 Disseminate findings through conference and workshop presentations, academic and professional/technical publications, blogs and other appropriate channels.

4.4 Assist in identifying future funding opportunities, developing fund-raising concepts and strategies, and writing funding proposals.

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.

7. 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 interdisciplinary 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 any natural science or geography.
2. Quantitative research experience (e.g. data science, statistical analysis, GIS, macroecology, scientific computer modelling, including experience using R)
3. Strong interdisciplinary, creative, and innovative thinker
4. Familiarity with scientific literature on ecological restoration, rewilding, conservation, and/or agriculture.
5. Strong writing (e.g., reports, papers) and communications skills.
6. Experience writing research grants
7. Ability to organise and lead project meetings that cross disciplines.

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.

DESIRABLE ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Understanding of ecological-social interactions in landscapes.
2. Experience in collecting, organising, and analysing spatial ecological data (including LiDAR, vegetation mapping, mammal surveying techniques)
3. Familiarity with the Sustainable Development Goals.
4. Experience working at the intersection of disciplines, specifically working closely with a team from Life and Social Sciences
5. Experience of interviewing and case study style research
6. Knowledge about or experience of southern England.