

## 1 Advertisement

**Post Title: Research Assistant in HIV**

**School/department:** Brighton and Sussex Medical School

**Hours:** part time hours considered up to a maximum of 21.9 hours per week.

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

**Contract:** fixed term for 12 months

**Reference:** 9632

**Salary:** starting at £31,411 to £35,333 per annum, pro rata if part time

**Placed on:** 02 September 2022

**Closing date:** 04 October 2022. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

**Expected interview date:** 13 October 2022

**Expected start date:** TBC

The HIV group of the Brighton and Sussex Centre for Global Health Research is looking for a highly motivated research assistant to work as part of a team conducting and analysing clinical studies of people living with HIV

The successful applicant will have:

- An established record of qualitative research experience, preferably in both data collection and analysis;
- Experience recruiting in clinical settings
- Applicants must have an MSc or a higher degree in a relevant discipline (e.g. psychology, anthropology, sociology, global health, public health);
- The ability to work effectively in a multidisciplinary team;
- Excellent organisational and communication skills;

Experience in HIV research, advocacy, or support work is desirable.

Informal enquiries about the projects should be directed to Prof Jaime Vera Rojas ([j.vera@bsms.ac.uk](mailto:j.vera@bsms.ac.uk)). Candidates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the range of research activity undertaken from the HIV group and collaborators within BSMS.

**For full details and how to apply see:**

[www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs)

[www.brighton.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/jobs)

[www.bsms.ac.uk](http://www.bsms.ac.uk)

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 / Division

### HIV Clinical Research Group

Brighton has a high HIV sero-prevalence (13.7% in men who have sex with men) and has one of the largest cohorts of HIV positive individuals in the UK with over 2350 patients currently under follow up. Outpatient services are located at the Lawson Unit and inpatients are currently cared for in a 6-bedded ward – Howard 2. There are strong links with neighboring clinics via the Sussex HIV Network, including those in Hastings, Eastbourne, Crawley, Worthing and Chichester. The department has a large clinical research unit based in the Elton John Centre in Sussex House on the RSCH site. The Unit is nationally and internationally recognized for its contribution to HIV research and participates in a large number of HIV studies, both commercially sponsored and funded by external bodies supporting both local and collaborative studies, PhD students from both GUM/HIV and other disciplines which overlap, another clinical academic posts. The unit strives to collaborate further and proactively engage a Sussex research network. The department is managed by Lisa Barbour. The pharmaceutical clinical trial portfolio is led operationally by Dr Amanda Clarke, and the academic lead for HIV is Prof Jaime Vera Rojas. More information about the work in HIV and Sexual Health can be found here: <https://www.bsms.ac.uk/research/global-health-and-infection/research-areas/hiv-and-sexual-health.aspx>

HIV is one of the strongest research areas within the Kent, Surrey and Sussex. The current research portfolio centres around the following areas:

- HIV and ageing
- HIV and the Brain
- Global Health and HIV
- Phase 2/3/4 development of antiretroviral agents
- HIV prevention strategies
- COVID prevention, treatment and vaccine studies

### The Global Health and Infection Department

The department works in close partnership with our parent universities (the Universities of Brighton and Sussex) to develop novel opportunities for research in order to help improve health and health equity globally.

We collaborate with the [Centre for Global Health Policy](#) at the University of Sussex and with the prestigious [Institute of Development Studies](#) (IDS), on the University campus. Sussex, with IDS, was recently ranked the top University in Europe for Development Studies by the QS University World Rankings, second only to Harvard globally. Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues at these institutions are facilitated through a Global Health Network that meets regularly and organises a seminar series and an annual conference.

We also work in partnership with community organisations, universities and non-governmental organisations based locally and internationally. For instance, we have a Health Link with the Medical School and University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, Zambia, which supports educational activities such as staff and student exchanges, and we are now developing a similar link with the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

As part of the Brighton and Sussex Centre for Global Health Research we have research partnerships with academic institutions in seven countries  
<https://www.bsms.ac.uk/research/global-health-and-infection/research-areas/index.aspx>

We are responsive to the needs identified by our partners and strive to grow alongside our partners' in our capacity for research and research management.

### **3. Job Description**

Job Description for the post of: Research Assistant **in HIV**

**Department:** Global Health and Infection

**Section/Unit/School:** BSMS / HIV Unit

**Location:** Brighton and Sussex Centre for Global Health Research, BSMS, University of Sussex

**Grade:** 6

**Responsible to:** Professor Dr Jaime Vera Rojas, Chair in HIV Medicine

**Responsible for:** n/a

#### **Role description/purpose of the post:**

Research Assistant 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. Specifically, the post-holder will work primarily across two qualitative research studies that examine patient and healthcare providers views on injectable antiretrovirals and views on screening for cognitive impairments in people living with HIV

The work is funded by Gilead Sciences Ltd. And the national Institute of Health Research and will be undertaken within BSMS and University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust under the direction of Prof Jaime Vera (Chair in HIV Medicine) and Dr Kate Alford (Research Fellow in HIV and Neurology)

#### **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

1. To contribute to research activity from study set up, recruitment, data collection and management through to analysis
2. Collaborate with key stakeholders, including the research team in: development and sharing of study materials; delivery of research to deadlines; and dissemination of findings.
3. Undertake any other reasonable duties that may be requested by the study leads or head of division, as consistent with grade, including assisting with other projects.

#### **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **1. Research, Scholarship & Enterprise**

- 1.1 Conduct research projects individually and in collaboration with others
- 1.2 Recruit relevant participants for NHS organisations involved (N.B This may involve travel to other NHS sites in the UK)
- 1.3 Undertake qualitative interviews and focus groups with people living with HIV and relevant healthcare providers
- 1.4 Undertake transcription and analysis of qualitative interview data supported by NVIVO software for qualitative data analysis.
- 1.5 Analyse and interpret research findings and draw conclusions on the outcomes.
- 1.6 Contribute to the writing of reports and other dissemination activities
- 1.7 Contribute to the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, for example for funding purposes.

- 1.8 Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to form relationships and collaborations.
- 1.9 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in continuous 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**

- a. Attend and contribute to relevant School and project meetings.
- b. Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigator and/or Head of School.

## **4. Role-specific duties**

The post provides an outstanding opportunity for an early-careers researcher to apply to undertake clinical research in HIV. The post-holder will join a rich research environment within The Brighton and Sussex Medical School for Global Health, the Clinical Research facility located at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. They will be located at the Research Building of Brighton and Sussex Medical School, University of Sussex Campus at Falmer and the Royal Sussex County Hospital

The successful applicant will be expected to have an emerging record of qualitative research, and experience of qualitative research methods including interview skills and methods of analysis applicable to qualitative research. Applicants must have as a minimum a MSc in a relevant discipline. Relevant research experience, demonstrated by participation in research projects, specifically in HIV, health services research, or a related field is desirable.

The main priorities for the appointment are:

## **5. Research**

The applicant will undertake research relevant to the specified goals of the HIV group

1. Recruitment of participants, data acquisition via interviews and focus group discussions, data analysis, writing, presentation and publication of findings.
2. Collaborate with other clinical, health services and biomedical researchers within the Medical School and relevant NHS trusts (Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust). The postholder should be able to work closely and co-operatively with other researchers and clinicians, involving them as appropriate in the research projects.
3. To initiate and assist technically in the running and overseeing of specific research studies within The Brighton and Sussex Centre for Global Health
4. To assist with other studies when and if required

In addition to undertaking qualitative research on reported treatment outcomes in people living with HIV, the research associate will be expected to assist with aspects of research administration including application for ethical approval and ensuring compliance with data protection legislation. This will involve the ability to act as an independent agent in setting up appointments and telephone calls and in the general co-ordination of arrangements for research subjects and patients/carers involved in the study.

## **6. General**

- Ensure the highest standard of record keeping, maintaining accurate and appropriate research patient records, including strict confidentiality.
- Attend departmental and other meetings as appropriate.
- As duties and responsibilities change, the job description may be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post-holder.
- The postholder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager (Prof Jaime Vera Rojas).
- The postholder will actively follow BSMS policies of the Universities of Sussex and Brighton, including Equal Opportunities policies
- 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.

## **7. INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- Pursuing a line of independent research within a research group.
- Publishing 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.
- 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

## **5. Person Specification**

### **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

1. Educated to MSc or PhD (evidence of submission of a thesis), or other equivalent qualification, or appropriate level of experience, as appropriate to the discipline (see role-specific criteria below).
2. A degree in relevant area (e.g. health or social sciences or similar awarded to a high level)
3. Evidence of engagement in high-quality research activity in qualitative methods and analysis
4. Excellent presentation skills, with the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with students, colleagues and external audiences.
5. Ability to work individually on own initiative and without close supervision, and as part of a team.
6. Ability to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.
7. Excellent organisational and administrative skills.
8. Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.
9. Excellent IT skills.

### **ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA**

1. Experience of qualitative research methods including interview skills and methods of analysis;
2. Experience and confidence in clinical recruitment

3. Excellent research-related computing skills: word processing; reference management databases (Endnote, Zotero); and packages to support data analysis (e.g. NVIVO);
4. Research experience in health sciences;
5. Clear understanding of the sensitivities surrounding research with people living with HIV;
6. Research experience utilising qualitative methods.

#### **DESIRABLE CRITERIA**

1. Relevant research experience, demonstrated by participation in research projects, specifically in HIV, health services research, or a related field
2. Experience of undertaking research working with people living with HIV
3. Experience of working with clinical populations in a research setting.
4. Knowledge of quantitative methodologies and analysis inc. experience with SPSS.
5. Able to: prioritize competing workloads; grasp new information and learn new skills quickly; and be self-supporting