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| Last updated: | 23.10.2024 |

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| Post title: | **Research Fellow in Political Process Preferences in Europe (PoPPiE)** | | |
| Standard Occupation Code: (UKVI SOC CODE) | 2119 - Natural and social science professionals | | |
| School/Department: | Department of Politics & International Relations; School of Economic, Social and Political Sciences | | |
| Faculty: | Faculty of Social Sciences | | |
| Career Pathway: | Education, Research and Enterprise (ERE) | Level: | 4 |
| \*ERE category: | Research pathway | | |
| Posts responsible to: | Principal Investigator | | |
| Posts responsible for: | n/a | | |
| Post base: | Office-based | | |

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| Job purpose |
| To undertake research in accordance with the objectives of the “Political Process Preferences in Europe: Rethinking Conceptual, Ontological and Methodological Foundations” (PoPPiE) project. PoPPiE is a five-year project, funded by the European Research Council, with the aim of developing new ways of understanding how citizens and other political actors think their political institutions should function. Existing surveys like the European Social Survey show extremely strong support for liberal democratic values across Europe, yet people are increasingly voting for far-right parties that reject exactly these values. The project argues that, to make sense of this conundrum, we need to shift away from researching democratic attitudes as a choice between alternative normative models of democracy, such as representative democracy versus direct democracy. Instead, we require an approach that is psychologically more realistic and more closely approximates the reality of the complex democratic systems we inhabit, which do not correspond to the neat conceptual delineations of democratic theories. This entails both conceptual and methodological innovation to create and operationalise the new approach, as well as a more participatory approach to survey development than deriving questions top-down from democratic theory.  The main focus of this role is to develop and execute the new approach. It will require using mixed methods, for instance; focus groups and cognitive interviewing to better understand the nature and content of political process preferences, then using the insights from this work to create survey experiments that will test the new approach. The post-holder will take a role in all stages of this process, from conceptualisation to data collection and analysis, as well as writing up and presenting the findings. As such, there is scope for the post-holder to bring their own skills and interests to influence the study design. This work will be carried out under the supervision of Rikki Dean (principal investigator of the project). |

| Key accountabilities/primary responsibilities | | % Time |
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|  | To produce academic articles and book chapters on democratic preferences | 30 % |
|  | To develop and carry out an innovative mixed methods approach to researching political process preferences; for example, conducting and analysing a series of deliberative discussion groups, piloting new survey instruments, and cognitive interviewing of participants. | 30 % |
|  | Carry out administrative tasks associated with specified research funding, for example risk assessment of research activities, data management, organisation of project meetings and documentation. Implementation of procedures required to ensure accurate and timely formal reporting and financial control. | 15 % |
|  | To contribute to project knowledge exchange and impact activities, such writing policy briefings. | 10 % |
|  | To represent the project and present project findings to external audiences, such as at academic conferences | 5 % |
|  | To attend project meetings and workshops | 5 % |
|  | Any other duties as allocated by the line manager following consultation with the post holder. | 5 % |

| Internal and external relationships |
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| Direct responsibility to holder of research award (principal investigator).  May have additional reporting and liaison responsibilities to external funding bodies or sponsors.  Other members of the project team. |

| Special Requirements |
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| To be available to participate in fieldwork as required by the specified research project.  To attend national and international conferences for the purpose of disseminating research results.  Applications will be considered from candidates who are working towards or nearing completion of a relevant PhD qualification. The title of Research Fellow will be applied upon completion of PhD. Prior to the qualification being awarded the title of Senior Research Assistant will be given. |

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| Criteria | Essential | Desirable | How to be assessed |
| Qualifications, knowledge and experience | PhD or equivalent professional qualifications and experience in the social sciences or other relevant discipline  Detailed understanding and knowledge of the literature on political process preferences / public opinion research / political attitudes.  Capacity to work on both conceptual problems and conduct rigorous empirical political science analyses. | Enthusiasm for mixed methods research combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses.  Prior experience with focus groups/cognitive interviewing/survey experiments.  Good track record (relative to opportunity) of peer-reviewed publications in leading journals and /or book presses. | Application form, CV, references, and interview |
| Planning and organising | Able to organise own research activities to deadline and quality standards  Ability to flexibly adapt plan as a project develops. |  | Application form, references, and interview |
| Problem solving and initiative | Able to develop understanding of complex problems and apply in-depth knowledge to address them  Able to develop original insights and analyses, and innovative research designs.  Capacity to solve methodological challenges |  | Application form, references, and interview |
| Management and teamwork | Ability to undertake independent and collaborative research in accordance with a specified project objectives and as a research team member  Work effectively in a team, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of others to help teamwork development |  | Application form, CV, references, and interview |
| Communicating and influencing | Excellent academic writing skills, including ability to co-author academic publications  Communicate new and complex information effectively, both verbally and in writing, engaging the interest and enthusiasm of the target audience  Able to present research results at group meetings and conferences, including to non-academic audiences.  Work proactively with colleagues in other work areas/institutions, contributing specialist knowledge to achieve project outcomes. |  | Written application and interview |
| Other skills and behaviours | Understanding of relevant Health & Safety issues.  Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). |  | Written application and interview |
| Special requirements | Able to attend national and international conferences to present research results |  | Written application and interview |

**JOB HAZARD ANALYSIS**

**Is this an office-based post?**

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| Yes | If this post is an office-based job with routine office hazards (eg: use of VDU), no further information needs to be supplied. Do not complete the section below. |
| No | If this post is not office-based or has some hazards other than routine office (eg: more than use of VDU) please complete the analysis below.  Hiring managers are asked to complete this section as accurately as possible to ensure the safety of the post-holder. |

## - HR will send a full PEHQ to all applicants for this position. Please note, if full health clearance is required for a role, this will apply to all individuals, including existing members of staff.

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| **ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES** | **Occasionally**  (<30% of time) | **Frequently**  (30-60% of time) | **Constantly**  (> 60% of time) |
| Outside work |  |  |  |
| Extremes of temperature (eg: fridge/ furnace) |  |  |  |
| ## Potential for exposure to body fluids |  |  |  |
| ## Noise (greater than 80 dba - 8 hrs twa) |  |  |  |
| ## Exposure to hazardous substances (eg: solvents, liquids, dust, fumes, biohazards). Specify below: |  |  |  |
| Frequent hand washing |  |  |  |
| Ionising radiation |  |  |  |
| **EQUIPMENT/TOOLS/MACHINES USED** | | | |
| ## Food handling |  |  |  |
| ## Driving university vehicles(eg: car/van/LGV/PCV) |  |  |  |
| ## Use of latex gloves (prohibited unless specific clinical necessity) |  |  |  |
| ## Vibrating tools (eg: strimmers, hammer drill, lawnmowers) |  |  |  |
| **PHYSICAL ABILITIES** | | | |
| Load manual handling |  |  |  |
| Repetitive crouching/kneeling/stooping |  |  |  |
| Repetitive pulling/pushing |  |  |  |
| Repetitive lifting |  |  |  |
| Standing for prolonged periods |  |  |  |
| Repetitive climbing (ie: steps, stools, ladders, stairs) |  |  |  |
| Fine motor grips (eg: pipetting) |  |  |  |
| Gross motor grips |  |  |  |
| Repetitive reaching below shoulder height |  |  |  |
| Repetitive reaching at shoulder height |  |  |  |
| Repetitive reaching above shoulder height |  |  |  |
| **PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES** | | | |
| Face to face contact with public |  |  |  |
| Lone working |  |  |  |
| ## Shift work/night work/on call duties |  |  |  |