

**Job Description**

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| Job Title: | Post-doctoral Research Associate |
| Faculty/Professional Directorate: | Faculty of Health Sciences |
| Subject Group/Team: | Psychology |
| Reporting to: | Dr Richard O’Connor and Prof Kevin Riggs |
| Duration: | 36 months Fixed Term (External Funding) |
| Job Family:  | Academic |
| Pay Band: | 7 |
| Benchmark Profile: | Research Band 7 |
| DBS Disclosure requirement: | No |
| Vacancy Reference: |  |

**Details Specific to the Post**

**Background and Context**

The post-holder will work full-time alongside Dr Richard O’Connor and Prof Kevin Riggs on the Economic and Social Research Council funded project “Beyond belief: knowledge and ignorance processing in adults”, starting in autumn 2025 and running for 3 years. The terms of the grant that fund this position require that employment commences no later than 1st November 2025.

Psychology is a well-established department within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Hull, comprising approximately 25 academic staff, two technical staff and about 400 students. Psychology’s overall research profile in the REF2021 was 84% world leading or internationally excellent and was ranked 36 out of 93 institutions in the Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience UoA. The post-holder will join the Understanding Other Minds and Communication research group, which has a track-record of conducting high-quality research and securing external research funding.

**The project**

This project will investigate the cognitive processing underlying our ability to understand who is knowledgeable, and who is ignorant. This ability is crucial for social interactions, as it enables us to predict and interpret others’ actions, communicate effectively, and, more generally, facilitates the accumulation and transmission of our culture through learning from each other.

Yet despite the centrality of knowledge processing to our social lives, theory of mind research has largely neglected investigation of knowledge and ignorance. Indeed, the past 40 years of theory of mind research have been dominated by the investigation of how we process the *beliefs* of others. Recently, there has been a call-to-arms for psychologists, neuroscientists and philosophers working in theory of mind to start studying knowledge as seriously as we have previously studied beliefs (Phillips et al., 2021: *BBS*).

The proposed research responds to this call. By adapting lab-based, behavioural tasks that our research group has recently used to investigate how we process other peoples’ beliefs (O’Connor et al., 2024: *JEP:G*), this project will investigate both explicit and implicit knowledge processing in healthy adults. Our experiments will provide the first systematic test from cognitive psychology of recent theories claiming that knowledge processing is the basic foundation from which humans build our understanding of others’ mental states. If correct, this claim has important implications across the variety of disciplines investigating theory of mind, including developmental and comparative psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy. By testing these theories, this project will therefore generate new insights into knowledge and ignorance processing in adults, addressing a significant gap in our understanding of this fundamental theory of mind ability.

### Specific Duties and Responsibilities of the post

The post-holder will have responsibility for conducting the experiments of the proposed research, working alongside Dr Richard O’Connor and Prof Kevin Riggs. Duties will include the preparation of experimental computer scripts and stimuli, recruitment of participants, and the collection and analysis of reaction time data. The post-holder will be required to manage the project research data in line with ESRC policy. The post-holder will also contribute to the dissemination of findings through preliminary reports, publications and conference presentations, and through pathways to impact activities, such as science communication events and managing the project webpage.

To discuss this role informally, please contact Dr Richard O’Connor, richard.oconnor@hull.ac.uk and Prof Kevin Riggs, k.riggs@hull.ac.uk

In your covering letter please refer directly to the criteria given in the person specification below. Applications are assessed by the selection panel according to these criteria.

**GENERIC JOB DESCRIPTION**

The job duties and responsibilities listed below are intended to describe the general nature of the role. The duties and responsibilities and the balance between the elements in the role may change or vary over time depending on the specific needs at a specific point in time or due to changing needs in the department. Candidates should note that there may not be an immediate requirement to carry out all the activities listed below.

### Overall Purpose of the Role

The researcher at this level will be:

* An experienced and professional researcher and will be a subject specialist, drawing upon knowledge gained from postgraduate research and/or working within a Research Band 6 role.
* Associated with a particular project (or projects) and will contribute ideas, and/or enhancement of techniques or methodologies and be expected to take significant initiatives in their work and consult with the Principal Investigator over the details of the project. They will work under supervision and receive academic, pastoral support and guidance which may include specific training, career opportunities and mentoring.

They may contribute to the Department’s teaching, through supervision of projects, overseeing practical classes, or taking small group tutorial classes.

The main focus of the work will involve conducting individual and collaborative research projects under the general guidance of a senior academic or Principal Investigator using new research techniques and methods, analysing and interpreting data and writing up research for publication.

**Main Work Activities**

1. Conduct individual and collaborative research projects to include:
* Using expertise to carry out projects they are working on.
* Contribute to the preparing proposals and applications for external bodies, e.g. for funding and contractual purposes with appropriate support or contribute to the writing of collective bids.
* Use new research techniques and methods.
* Analyse and interpret research data.
* Write up research work of the project and its dissemination through seminar and conferences presentations and publications.
1. Responsible for the management of projects to include:
* Plan and manage own research activity in collaboration with others.
* Manage administrative activities with guidance if required.
* Plan and monitor the work of the project or projects if applicable.
1. Assist with teaching and learning support in own area of study to include:
* Assist in the development of student research skills.
* Assess student knowledge and supervision of projects.
* Supervise and guide final year students.
1. Develop and initiate collaborative working internally and externally to include:
* Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks for exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration and to progress their research.
* Develop links and join external networks to share information and identify future potential sources of funding.
* Work with colleagues on joint projects as required.
* Attend and contribute to relevant meetings.
1. Demonstrate evidence of own personal and professional development to include:
* Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism.
* Appraisal, induction and performance reviews.
* Participate in training and development activity.
* Maintain links with professional institutions and other related bodies.
* Collaborate with academic colleagues on areas of shared research interest.

### Additionally the post holder will be required to:

* Fulfil the employees’ duties described in the University’s health and safety policies and co-operate with the health and safety arrangements in place within the department. May be required to undertake specific health and safety roles on request e.g. Display screen equipment assessor, departmental safety officer, fire warden etc.
* Show a commitment to diversity, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices this includes undertaking mandatory equality and diversity training.
* Comply with University regulations, policies and procedures.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION – Research Band 7**

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| **Specification** | **Essential**  | **Desirable** | **Examples Measured by** |
| **Education and Training**Formal qualifications and relevant training | * A PhD, or close to completion, in a relevant discipline e.g., Cognitive Psychology
 |  | ApplicationInterview  |
| **Work Experience**Ability to undertake duties of the post | **Evidence of:*** Experience of cognitive psychology data collection, statistical analysis and interpretation
* An emerging track record in an appropriate research field, which may be evidenced by scientific publications, conference presentations, contributing to grant applications etc.
 | **Evidence of:*** Experience of conducting psychological experiments online
* Experience of open science practices
 | ApplicationInterview  |
| **Skills and Knowledge**Includes abilities and intellect | **Evidence of:*** Knowledge of theory of mind research
* Technical ability to generate high-quality experimental stimuli and scripts for the purpose of theory of mind research
* Ability to use, or quickly learn to use, R or an equivalent statistical programming language
 |  | ApplicationInterview  |
| **Personal Qualities**Includes any specific physical requirements of the post – (subject to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010) | * Evidence of working in an open and transparent way, providing information clearly and communicating effectively with colleagues and the wider research community
* An expectation to contribute to university activities and initiatives such as science communication events
 |  | ApplicationInterview  |