CANDIDATE BRIEF

Research Assistant, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Cultures, School of Languages, Cultures & Societies

Salary: Grade 6 (£33,951 - £39,906 p.a)

Reference: AHCLC1240

Full time, Fixed-term for 12 Months – 1.1.2026 – 31.12.2026 To complete a specific task or time limited work

This role will be based on the university campus, with scope for it to be undertaken in a hybrid manner.   We are also open to discussing flexible working arrangements

Overview of the role

Are you an ambitious researcher looking for your next challenge?
Do you possess a Master Degree in Computational Linguistics or related area?
Do you have a keen desire to further our understanding of Natural Language Processing? Are you committed to Open Science? Do you want to further your career in one of the UK's leading research intensive Universities?

Project: iDem, Inclusive Democratic Spaces for Deliberation and Participation

iDEM aims at addressing the barriers in deliberative and participatory democratic practices by using natural language processing methods as enablers in addressing political inequality for deliberation and participation in democratic spaces. In collaboration with other EU partners, we will develop techniques to detect difficult words and constructions in the texts of the target domain and for the target audiences by means of fine-tuning large language models. The research objective for this task is aimed at addressing the following problems: (i) the need to transfer prediction models across different user groups and domains, often with small amounts of training data; (ii) the need to deal with multiple languages; and (iii) the need to combine heterogeneous levels of annotation on the levels of words, passages, sentences or texts, often with noise and inconsistent annotations. We will also focus on experimenting with explainable AI, so that the classifiers can provide explanations to ensure that the right choices are made for the right reasons.

What we offer in return

- 26 days holiday plus 16 Bank Holidays/days that the University is closed by custom (including Christmas) – That is over 40 days a year!
- Generous pension scheme – the University contributes 21.6% of salary
- Health and Wellbeing: Discounted staff membership options at The Edge, our state-of-the-art Campus gym, with a pool, sauna, climbing wall, cycle circuit, and sports halls.
- Personal Development: Access to courses run by our Organisational Development & Professional Learning team, and self-development courses including languages, Creative Writing, Wellbeing Therapies and much more.
- Access to on-site childcare, shopping discounts and travel schemes are also available.

And much more!

If you are looking for a role that will challenging and fast paced apply today.

To explore the post further or for any queries you may have, please contact:
Serge Sharoff – Professor of Language Technology
s.sharoff@leeds.ac.uk

Main duties and responsibilities

As a Research Assistant, your main duties will include:

- Contributing to the 'iDem, Inclusive Democratic Spaces for Deliberation and Participation' project, as directed by Professor Serge Sharoff;

- Being an active researcher, conducting research and analysing data;

- Planning and managing your own research activity in collaboration with the Principal Investigator throughout the remaining project duration, and engaging in impact and knowledge exchange activities as appropriate;

- Preparing and collaborating on publications;
- Communicating research results through publications, conference presentations or other recognised forms of output as required;
- Balancing the competing pressures of research demands and deadlines.

These duties provide a framework for the role and should not be regarded as a definitive list. Other reasonable duties may be required consistent with the grade of the post.

Qualifications and skills

Essential:

- A Masters in computational linguistics (or near to completion meaning the initial version of the thesis has been submitted) or another discipline relevant to the project;

- Advanced quantitative analysis skills and a desire to learn more;

- Excellent qualitative analysis skills;

- Demonstrated experience of conducting quantitative data science research;

- Proven ability to write to the standard required for research reports and international publications;

- Excellent organisational and project management skills, with the ability to meet tight deadlines and work effectively under pressure;

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills including presentation skills and the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders;

- A proven ability to work well both individually and in a team, with an open mind-set.

Desirable:

- Experience in fine-tuning large language models

- Experience in text simplification or in developing chatbots

- Experience in Bayesian techniques for uncertainty quantification

How to apply

You can apply for this role online; more guidance can be found on our How to Apply information. Applications should be submitted by **23.59** (UK time)

Additional information

Working at Leeds
We are a campus-based community and regular interaction with campus is an expectation of all roles in line with academic and service needs and the requirements of the role. We are also open to discussing flexible working arrangements. To find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area visit our Working at Leeds information page.

Our University

As an international research-intensive university, we welcome students and staff from all walks of life. We foster an inclusive environment where all can flourish and prosper, and we are proud of our strong commitment to student education. Within the Faculty/School of Languages, Cultures & Societies we are dedicated to diversifying our community and we welcome the unique contributions that individuals can bring, and particularly encourage applications from, but not limited to Black, Asian, people who belong to a minority ethnic community; people who identify as LGBT+; and disabled people. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.

Information for disabled candidates
Information for disabled candidates, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be foud on our Accessibility information page or by getting in touch with us at hr@leeds.ac.uk

Criminal record information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

Any offer of appointment will be in accordance with our Criminal Records policy. You can find out more about required checks and declarations in our Criminal Records information page.