



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

CANDIDATE BRIEF

Research Assistant in Smart Travel Behaviour

Institute for Transport Studies, Faculty of Environment



Salary: Grade 6 (£26,052 – £31,076 p.a. pro rata)

Reference: ENVTR1044

Closing date: 28 May 2017

Interviews are expected to be held 27 June 2017

Fixed-term for three years (external funding), part time at 50% full time equivalent. Available from 1 August 2017.

Research Assistant in Smart Travel Behaviour Institute for Transport Studies, Faculty of Environment

Are you an early career researcher looking for your first challenge? Do you have a background in psychology, persuasive behaviour change or communications? Do you want to further your career in one of the UK's leading research intensive Universities?

Working with [Dr Kate Pangbourne](#), you will be involved with the “ADAPT fellowship: smart approaches to influencing sustainable behaviour change” which is funded by the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council \(EPSRC\)](#).

The project's vision is to develop more effective methods of influencing people to act voluntarily in relation to adapting to and mitigating environmental change. Focusing on the transport domain, the principal objectives are to investigate: patterns of argumentation in existing material aimed at influencing the public to change travel behaviour; whether this communication material can be improved and matched to individual preferences in relation to argument structure, content or framing, potentially by introducing evidence from digital-born Big Data; and to use these findings to create and test algorithms for use in public-facing websites or mobile apps for personalising persuasive arguments to support behaviour change.

Working primarily on the second of the above objectives, you will utilise the outcomes from the first objective to develop and test persuasive messages. Working in a small interdisciplinary team based in Leeds, and with external research collaborators and project partners, your work will provide a significant and valuable contribution to the project, which in turn supports the strategic objectives of the [Institute for Transport Studies](#) whose primary purpose is to advance the understanding of transport activity, operations and use, and to develop skills and best practice among transport professionals and decision-makers.

With a first degree or Masters in psychology, persuasive behaviour change or a closely allied discipline, you will also have a strong grounding in statistical analysis. Coding skills for programming experiments utilising common packages is desirable.



What does the role entail?

As a Research Assistant your main duties will include:

- Developing variants of persuasive messages from the analysis of the Sustainable Transport Communication Dataset (STCD) (a domain-based corpus of arguments for behaviour change from real-life public-facing sources (mostly web pages);
- Running message preference and message acceptability experiments, surveys and focus groups (including recruiting participants);
- Preparing, collating, analysing and interpreting results from the empirical activities (e.g. writing code for online experiments, storing data, cleaning data, planning and running focus groups and transcribing the data, undertaking statistical and qualitative analyses as appropriate);
- Helping to write reports and research articles, for publication in leading international journals;
- Helping to develop practical applications for the research findings, utilising persuasive technology approaches (anticipated to include Smartphone Apps);
- Contributing to the research culture of the Institute, where appropriate, e.g. participating in the research group and presenting research output where appropriate;
- Liaising, coordinating and collaborating with internal and external project partners;
- Contributing to the preparation and drafting of research bids and proposals;
- Continually updating your knowledge, understanding and skills in the research field.

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.

What will you bring to the role?

As a Research Assistant you will have:

- A first degree or Masters in psychology, persuasive behaviour change or a closely allied discipline;
- A background in psychology, linguistics or communications;



- A strong grounding in choice-based experimental design and statistical analysis;
- Evidence of some experience or understanding of qualitative research methods;
- Academic writing skills;
- Good interpersonal and communication skills, both written and verbal and the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders;
- Well-developed analytical skills;
- Good time management and planning skills, with the ability to meet tight deadlines;
- A proven ability to work well both individually and in a team;
- The ability to work unsupervised and to use your own initiative.

You may also have:

- Understanding of marketing and communications;
- Coding skills for programming experiments utilising common packages;
- Knowledge of the principles of persuasive technology and/or app design;
- An academic interest in sustainable transport, active travel, health and social justice.

How to apply

You can apply for this role online; more guidance can be found on our [How to Apply](#) information page. Applications should be submitted by **23.59** (UK time) on the advertised closing date.

Contact information

To explore the post further or for any queries you may have, please contact:

Dr Kate Pangbourne, University Academic Fellow in Smart Travel Behaviour

Tel: +44 (0)113 343 1552

Email: K.J.Pangbourne@leeds.ac.uk



Additional information

Find out more about the [Faculty](#) and our [Institute](#).

Find out more about our [Research and associated facilities](#).

Find out more about Equality and Inclusion and Athena Swan in the [Faculty](#) and the [University](#).

Working at Leeds

Find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area on our [Working at Leeds](#) information page.

Candidates with disabilities

Information for candidates with disabilities, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our [Accessibility](#) information page or by getting in touch with us at disclosure@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.

