



Candidate Information

Position:	Research Fellow, Complexity Science, Urban Environment & Public Health
School/Department:	Centre for Public Health
Reference:	21/108754
Closing Date:	Monday 10 May 2021
Salary:	£33,797 to £38,017 per annum
Anticipated Interview Date:	Wednesday 26 or Friday 28 May 2021
Duration:	Available until 15 May 2022

JOB PURPOSE:

This exciting position will allow the successful candidate to work on a new project funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC). The successful candidate will become a member of the QUB Epidemiology and Public Health Research Group in the Centre for Public Health working with Dr Ruth Hunter and Dr Leandro Garcia in the "Complexity Science and Public Health" thematic area. The programme of research is focused on developing interventions to reduce car dependency in Belfast, Northern Ireland. A brief overview of the rationale for the project and methods is provided below.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Work with other members of the research team in delivering a detailed project plan for the research, in accordance with Case for Support funded by the MRC grant, outlined above.
2. Work with other members of the research team and assist in the coordination of the activities of the project research team, with representation from key stakeholders, including Translink, Belfast Healthy Cities, the Innovation Lab, Sustrans, the Department for Infrastructure, Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency and other academics from QUB.
3. Develop and conduct semi-structured interviews with stakeholders to discuss strategies and policies for reducing car dependency in Belfast.
4. Develop and conduct participatory Group Model Building workshops with stakeholders in partnership with the Innovation Lab develop to produce visual diagrams of the 'system' of the various aspects that affect car dependency.
5. Develop and conduct citizen juries to 'sense-check' promising intervention approaches and policies to explore and ensure the acceptability, utility, affordability, feasibility and sustainability of new initiatives.
6. Develop and deliver a Future Pathways workshop in partnership with the project team with key stakeholders to discuss the study findings.
7. Carry out and support data analyses and critical evaluations using appropriate methodologies across all tasks in the project plan.
8. Present regular progress reports on research to members of the research group, other groups within the Centre/University, and to external audiences nationally and internationally to disseminate and publicize research findings.
9. Prepare, often in consultation with supervisor, material for publication in national and international journals and presentations at international conferences.
10. Assist grant holder in the preparation of funding proposals and applications as well as project progress reports to external bodies.
11. Carry out routine administrative tasks associated with the research projects/group to ensure that project are completed on time and within budget and that the group functions efficiently.
12. Carry out undergraduate/post-graduate student and visiting researcher training and supervision, demonstrating or lecturing duties within the post holder's area of expertise and under the direct guidance of a member of academic staff.
13. Read academic papers, journals and textbooks to keep abreast of developments in own specialism and related disciplines and engage in technical training as needed.
14. Participate and in some cases lead outreach activities on behalf of the group/Centre.

Planning and Organising:

1. Plan for specific aspects of research programmes and contribute to research group planning.
2. Plan for the use of research activities and workshops where appropriate.
3. Plan own day-to-day activity within framework of the agreed research programme.
4. Plan to meet deadlines for grant applications, journal publications and to prepare presentations and papers for conferences and meetings.
5. Coordinate and liaise with other members of the research group and collaborative research groups over work progress and management.

Resource Management Responsibilities:

1. Ensure research resources are used in an effective and efficient manner.
2. Provide guidance as required to support staff and any post-graduate/under-graduate students and visiting researcher who may be assisting with research.

Internal and External Relationships:

1. Liaise on a regular basis with supervisor, colleagues, students and collaborators.
2. Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks for the exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration.
3. Be prepared to travel to and present at scientific meetings and collaborative laboratories.
4. Join external networks to share information and ideas and help develop external collaborations, as appropriate.
5. Contribute to the School's outreach program by establishing links with local community groups, industries etc.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. Have, or about to obtain, a PhD in public health, social sciences or a related area.
2. At least 3 years of recent, relevant research experience, involving a range of qualitative methods and/or systems-thinking and complexity science methods.
3. Experience in qualitative research methods including data collection and analysis.
4. Publications commensurate with career stage.
5. Demonstrated experience in partnership working with multi-sectoral stakeholders.
6. Demonstrated skills in using at least one qualitative analysis method and capacity and willingness to learn others.
7. Familiarity with the governance and ethical arrangements for qualitative data.
8. Ability to contribute to broader management and administrative processes.
9. Willingness to contribute to the School's outreach program by links with industry, community groups etc.
10. Sufficient breadth and depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline and of research methods and techniques to work within established research programmes.
11. Ability to communicate complex information clearly.
12. Ability to build contacts and participate in internal and external networks.
13. Good team working skills in multiple team settings as well as leadership qualities.
14. Excellent problem-solving skills and able to use own initiative.
15. Must be willing to travel to national and international meetings and collaborative laboratories.
16. Irregular hours, including weekend working, might be a component of the research at times.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Experience working in public health or urban planning.
2. Experience working in active travel or related subject.
3. Experience of modern quantitative methods for complexity science such as participatory Group Model Building or citizen juries.
4. Grant, manuscript and abstract writing experience.
5. Research project management.
6. Demonstrated skills in systems-thinking and/or complexity science methods.
7. Willingness to teach postgraduate/undergraduate students.
8. Evidence of having presented at conferences (poster or oral).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Project Summary

In Northern Ireland, an average person does over 80% of their journeys by car. This is very high compared to other parts of the UK. It is, therefore, a growing issue in public health with more and more cities looking for solutions to help reduce our reliance on cars. However, solutions to such a problem are not simple as there are many different groups involved in or affected by the transport system.

Our project aims to co-develop sustainable and scalable policies and programmes that reduce the reliance on cars in Belfast. Our research includes the following steps:

1. We will undertake a survey using a technique known as Network Analysis to help us understand the network of stakeholders involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of programmes and policies to reduce car dependency and how they might best work together.
2. We will undertake a survey with road users in Belfast to evaluate and rank the importance of influences on car dependency and on alternative travel modes, using a technique known as Discrete Choice Experiments.
3. To develop agreement among stakeholders about the nature, ordering and relationships between programmes and policies of different organisations to reduce car dependency, we will develop visual diagrams of the 'system' of the various aspects that affect car dependency, using a technique known as causal loop diagrams.
4. We will host workshops with local citizens to 'sense-check' promising intervention approaches and policies to explore and ensure the acceptability, utility, affordability, feasibility and sustainability of new initiatives.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity and support to be creative and academically brave, add their own ideas and innovations to the project, and conduct high-quality research that will resonate at local, national, and global levels. We are particularly interested in working with someone with a passion for research involving a range of approaches related to systems-thinking, complex systems and/or qualitative research methods.