

Candidate Information

Position: Research Fellow (PQH)
School/Department: School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Reference: 26/113630
Closing Date: Monday 21 September 2026
Salary: £41,519 per annum.
Anticipated Interview Date: Thursday 8 October 2026
Duration: 36 months

JOB PURPOSE:

This project, led by Queen's and involving a consortium of the 4 NI HEIs, aims to deliver a research-informed and evidence-based development programme for school leaders that addresses the complex demands of education in Northern Ireland. By integrating research and practice with a leadership education approach, the programme will be designed not only to strengthen individual leadership capacity but also to drive NI school improvement and enhance educational outcomes for all pupils.

Structured across three progressive phases, the programme will deliver a robust leadership programme over 18 months, in keeping with the tender requirements. This will include: phase 1-design and development of the modules (6 months), phase 2 - pilot consultations with key stakeholders (12 months), and phase 3 - full implementation of the provision (18 months). The programme integrates theoretical knowledge with applied practice through a blended model comprising workshops, school-based placements, coaching and mentoring, Self-Directed Learning Sets (SDLS) as future communities of practice, 360-degree feedback and monitoring, and a whole-school leadership and change initiative.

The appointee will have responsibility for undertaking research relevant to the development of the programme and its delivery, supporting ongoing evaluation of programme implementation, and day to day management of the programme'

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Supporting the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators in delivering the programme.
2. Conduct comparative desk-based research and analysis related to excellence in school leadership across the UK, Ireland, and internationally.
3. Design and undertake empirical research relating to school leadership in NI that can inform the development of the pilot and full implementation phases of the programme.
4. Engage extensively with key educational stakeholders in NI, nationally and internationally, who may contribute to the programme delivery.
5. Undertake formative and summative research evaluation of pilot and full implementation phases, employing qualitative and quantitative methods.
6. Work with the Course Director to plan module and workshop delivery.
7. Manage day-to-day operations, programme administration, and scheduling.
8. Coordinate participant recruitment, induction, and communications.
9. Participate in project team meetings, both in person and online.
10. Contribute to the report writing relevant to each delivery phase and ensure adherence to timelines and milestones.
11. Any other reasonable duties as directed by the PI and Co-Is of the project.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. An upper second-class honours degree (or equivalent) or a master's degree in education, social science, modern languages, or another relevant subject.
2. Have or be about to obtain* a PhD, or equivalent, in education, social science or a cognate discipline (*must be obtained within 3 months of commencement of employment).

3. Proven experience with quantitative and qualitative research methods, including surveys, interviews, workshop design, and statistical techniques of data analysis.
4. Experience in planning, organising and managing projects/workshops involving a range of educational stakeholders.
5. Experience in education policy-related research and engagement with policymakers.
6. High-level, demonstrable knowledge of the NI education system and the challenges for school leaders.
7. Able to communicate complex information clearly.
8. Evidence of strong organisational and inter-personal skills.
9. Evidence of excellent academic English and report-writing skills.
10. Evidence of the ability to work flexibly and meet deadlines.
11. Able to deliver both independently and collaboratively as part of a distributed team.
12. Access NI Enhanced Disclosure.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Enhanced skills in quantitative research methods. A familiarity with at least one statistical software package or programming language such as R, SPSS, Stata, SAS, or Python.
2. Experience in public-facing communication, such as presentations, workshops and social media.
3. Experience of working with educational stakeholders in NI and nationally/internationally.
4. Familiarity with educational leadership research.
5. Current driver's licence and access to a car.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Informal enquiries can be directed to: James Nelson - J.Nelson@qub.ac.uk.