

**UKRI Post-Doctoral Research Associate**

<b>Ref Number:</b>	<b>LSSJ-194-022</b>
<b>Salary Scale:</b>	<b>Grade 7: £36,386 per annum</b>
<b>Contract:</b>	<b>For a fixed term period of 42 months, full-time</b>
<b>School/Department:</b>	<b>Kent Law School (KLS), Division of Law Society &amp; Social Justice (LSSJ)</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>University of Kent, Canterbury Campus</b>
<b>Responsible to:</b>	<b>Dr Connal Parsley</b>
<b>Expected start date:</b>	<b>December 2022</b>

**The Role**

The successful candidate will join the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship project 'The Future of Good Decisions: An Evolutionary Approach to Human-AI Government Administrative Decision-Making', under the supervision of Dr Connal Parsley. The project will investigate how our ideas of 'good decisions' can evolve for the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), where technology, human agents, information, system design and evaluation processes including judicial review are understood as part of an adapting ecology. The project begins from the premise that existing evaluative criteria, grounded in a liberal legal understanding of decision-making and the rule of law, may not be appropriate to the ecology of the emerging social 'information communication infrastructure'. In years 1-4, when this role will be active, the project will seek alternative conceptions of decisions and their quality, address the interaction of these conceptions with contemporary legal theory, and articulate the normative principles that ought to inform the design, execution and evaluation of administrative decisions. It will use prefigurative 'Live Action Role Play' methods to model alternative decision-making practices, observe emerging techno-social normativity, and test suggestions for the reform of both deliberative protocols and the law governing the review and evaluation of administrative decisions. Some further details about the project are available here: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ukri-future-leaders-fellow-dr-connal-parsley-good-connal-parsley/>

Reporting to Dr Connal Parsley (Kent Law School, University of Kent), the successful candidate will work with Dr Parsley, professional services staff, and selected collaborators across the full spectrum of activities scheduled for project years 1-4. The focus for this post is on integrating knowledge from across diverse fields of scholarship with legal theory and doctrine, and using prefigurative participatory methods to model new decision design and evaluation principles; resulting in well-theorised potential decision-making practices with a robust normative underpinning. The successful candidate will have knowledge of two or more fields of research relevant to the project, experience of qualitative approaches, and a commitment to co-production / co-design in research and the acquisition of new knowledge and competencies as necessary. There may be scope to specialise within the project remit, depending on the existing strengths and professional development needs of the successful candidate.

## Key Accountabilities / Primary Responsibilities

- To carry out high quality research
- To undertake specific projects as agreed involving, for example, qualitative research tasks, event organization, research dissemination, and intellectual community-building.

## Key Duties

- In collaboration with the project leader, plan, develop and undertake research on administrative decision-making in light of the advent of Automated Decision-Making. As required, develop literature reviews, research protocols and ethics submissions; conduct primary research; develop original analysis and argumentation; synthesise diverse relevant literatures; organise, accurately record and analyse data collected; assist in preparing data for archiving; and prepare reports of research findings and other outputs, tailoring content to meet the requirements of a varied audience and readership
- Collaborate effectively with colleagues, including in other universities and legal or creative industry partners, for the organisation of events, the development of publications, and the collation and synthesis of relevant materials from international projects and contexts
- Work effectively with project leader, collaborators and professional services colleagues as required for the organisation of research meetings including workshops, Live Action Role Play events, project development meetings, advisory board meetings, reading groups, and dissemination events
- Acquire new disciplinary knowledge, research methods, and intellectual capacities as necessary for carrying out the research project to a high standard, including via formal training, eg in research methods
- Ensure key research contributions are successfully completed within allocated resources
- Keep progress under regular review in consultation with team leader and others involved in conducting and steering the research project, via regular meetings
- Keep clear and secure records, collate information efficiently, arrange meetings as required and keep records of all activities; perform other administrative duties as required
- Comply with all Kent Law School reporting arrangements and contribute as required to data validation, auditing and quality requirements. Assist in safeguarding and preserving research data in agreed formats, working within the University of Kent data management protocols
- Contribute effectively to academic publications of exceptional quality, to include co-authored papers in peer-reviewed journals, a co-edited collection, industry-facing publications, and other agreed outputs including documentation associated with Live Action Role Play events
- Present the results of the research at academic and policy conferences and other events, complying with agreed protocols for acknowledging sources of funding, colleagues' contributions and the roles of programme partners
- Make innovative use of web platforms and social media, and develop multimedia outputs to secure wide dissemination
- Keep abreast of relevant academic and policy developments, including by reading academic and industry papers, journals and textbooks
- Manage your own work effectively, using discretion to determine priorities while ensuring there is cohesion with the wider research programme
- Assist in identifying research risks, monitoring, taking action and seeking advice as appropriate, collaborating with others and applying research safety and ethics protocols
- Contribute as required to research proposals designed to develop the work of project

Such other duties commensurate with the grading of the post that may be assigned by the project leader.

## Health, Safety & Wellbeing Considerations

This role involves undertaking duties which include the Health, Safety and wellbeing issues outlined below. Please be aware of these, when considering your suitability for the role.

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment

## Internal & External Relationships

**Internal:** KLS, LSSJ.

**External:** UKRI FLF project partners, colleagues, collaborators, advisory board members, key stakeholders and funders.

## Person Specification

The Person Specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Please be aware that your application will be measured against the criteria published below.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in your application, or in your cover letter where applicable, backing up any assertions you make in relation to each criterion.

Qualifications / Training	Essential	Desirable	Assessed via*
A PhD in law, the humanities or social sciences – awarded or near completion (or equivalent experience)	✓		A

Experience / Knowledge	Essential	Desirable	Assessed via*
Knowledge of qualitative approaches to research and previous experience of applying them	✓		A, I
Relevant knowledge in at least one of the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal and political theory</li> <li>• Philosophy of technology and technosocial ecologies</li> </ul>	✓		A, I
Relevant knowledge in the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical, critical and ethical approaches to Artificial Intelligence, data science, and Automated Decision-Making</li> <li>• Media theory</li> <li>• AI system engineering / design</li> <li>• Administrative law</li> <li>• Decision system design</li> <li>• Prefigurative and participatory research methods</li> </ul>		✓	A, I

Previous experience of undertaking research projects through to completion		✓	A, I
Experience of cross-disciplinary research	✓		A
Track record of research publications appropriate to career stage	✓		A

Skills / Abilities	Essential	Desirable	Assessed via*
Excellent research skills	✓		I
Excellent communication skills (verbal and written)	✓		A, I
Excellent interpersonal skills	✓		I
Ability to communicate research findings to other disciplines and non-academics	✓		I
Proven ability to work effectively as part of a team, and to work towards project aims and objectives, and their associated deadlines	✓		I
Ability to work independently, seeking guidance where appropriate	✓		I

Additional Attributes	Essential	Desirable	Assessed via*
Commitment to co-production and involvement of a range of partners in research	✓		I
Willingness to acquire new disciplinary knowledge, and to learn new skills and methods	✓		I
Flexible approach	✓		I
Willingness to travel to project meetings and conferences as required	✓		I

**\*Criterion to be assessed via:**

**A = application form or CV/cover letter**

**I = interview questions**

**T = test or presentation at interview**