

Job Description

Research Associate

Salary:	Grade 7
Contract:	Part time, fixed term
School/Department:	School of Architecture and Arts
Location:	Canterbury Campus
Responsible to:	Senior Lecturer

Job purpose

School of Architecture and Arts, University of Kent invites applications for a Research Associate to work on the interdisciplinary 4-year Horizon Europe project GreenME (Advancing green care in Europe: an integrated multi-scalar approach for the expansion of nature-based therapies to improve mental health equity). Collaborating with Dr Silvio Caputo, you will have a key role in delivering the work package 4, led by the School of Architecture and Arts and in supporting work in other work packages. Work package 4 focuses on the development of spatial analyses in selected case studies as well as large-scale citizens' surveys on the use of green and blue infrastructures, the mental health benefits deriving from them, and people's perspectives on nature's health benefits and barriers individuals have to accessing nature. The spatial analysis also requires auditing a sample of green and blue spaces, therefore availability to travel within the UK to visit such spaces is necessary.

GreenME builds on the green care framework – including horticultural therapy – to develop nature-based, integrated and equitable prevention and non-medical delivery models. This job requires strong organisational skills, a good understanding of the debate and the actors around green social prescribing and/or nature and mental health and wellbeing. It also requires a confident use of GIS and statistical analysis. Together with the PI the successful applicant will collaborate on various outputs including research articles, analytical toolkits and reports for practitioners and/or policymaker.

You will manage your own academic research and administrative activities and represent the UK research team at external meetings and seminars. You will hold a relevant PhD (or equivalent), or be close to completion that has focused on nature and health, or urban ecosystem services from a public health or social sciences perspective. Experience of working in research projects either abroad and with multiple international partners is desirable. You must be a user of GIS and have prior experience of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis with statistical and other relevant methods (e.g. content analysis). You must also have strong communication and interpersonal skills, including the demonstrable ability to build relationships with a range of stakeholders (policymakers, community leaders, practitioners in the field of urban agriculture, and relevant NGOs).

The post requires travel to European countries occasionally for international project meetings as well as travel within the UK to visit national case studies.

Key accountabilities

- Participating in core GreenME (online and in person) project meetings and organising project meetings when held at the University of Kent
- Liaising with the project team as well as with key stakeholders, particularly with the urban farmers managing the farms selected for case studies
- Supporting the design and organisation of surveys, including contacts with local authorities and community groups to recruit participants to the surveys
- Gathering datasets to store and analyse in GIS for selected case studies

- Representing the research team at meetings with external stakeholders and disseminating project findings in academic and non-academic relevant events
- Supporting the financial management and wider administration of the project (e.g. through liaising with professional services to staff to manage grant claims and payments)
- Producing single- and co-authored academic outputs and contributing to the authoring and editing of other over-arching project outputs (methodological toolkit, briefing document, website, blog posts)

Key duties

The following are the main duties for the job. Other duties, commensurate with the grading of the job, may also be assigned from time to time.

- Supervising the data collection in case studies
- Designing and launching surveys; identifying local stakeholders and developing with them recruitment strategies/activities to recruit a sufficient number of participants
- Development of spatial analysis using UK and other European countries datasets
- Quantitative analysis of survey data
- Liaising and coordinating with the team at KSAP and the broader UK team
- Building relationships with a range of stakeholders (policymakers, community leaders, practitioners in the field of urban agriculture, and relevant NGOs)
- Documenting research findings through papers to be submitted to high impact journals

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Academic and professional services staff within the School of Architecture and Arts and wider University.

External: Members of the core research project team, individuals and organisations involved in delivery and collaboration with project activities, research participants and other national and international stakeholders.

Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

This job involves undertaking duties which include the following health, safety and wellbeing considerations:

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Working in confined spaces
- Vocational driving on & off campus (includes use of cars, vans, ride-on mowers, buggies)
- Prolonged weather hazard exposure – wind/rain/snow/pollen/UV & sun
- Working in isolation
- National and international travel
- Pressure to meet important deadlines such as might be inherent in high profile projects

Person specification

The person specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Applications will be measured against the criteria published below.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in an application, or cover letter (where applicable), which back-up any assertions made in relation to each criterion.

Essential Criteria:

- PhD or equivalent (completed or close to completion) in a field of study relevant to urban nature and mental health and wellbeing (A)

- Specialist knowledge relating to one or more of the following: nature and health, care farming, planning for urban green infrastructure, perceptions of urban nature (A, I)
- An understanding of aspects of green social prescribing and/or nature and mental health and wellbeing debate relevant to the project at a national and international level (A,I)
- Prior work experience of liaising with international researchers/research projects (A,I)
- Experience of communicating academic research to diverse audiences (A,I)
- Experience of having previously published academic research to a high standard (A,I)
- Confident use of GIS and statistical methods of analysis, and other qualitative methods of analysis such as content analysis (A,I)
- Good IT skills with a range of software programmes. Demonstrated use of statistical and spatial analysis software such as R, QGIS and ArcGIS would be plus (A)
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team (I)
- Analytical and writing skills appropriate to producing written research outputs of a high quality (A,I)
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing in ways that are accessible to wider public audiences (I)
- Ability to manage and complete complex and substantial projects to clear and agreed deadlines (I)
- Ability to build relationships with a range of stakeholders (policymakers, community leaders, practitioners in the field of care farming, and relevant NGOs) (I)
- Firm commitment to achieving the University's vision and values, with a passion for a transformative student experience and multidisciplinary, impactful research (I)
- Commitment to deliver and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity in the day to day work of the role (I)

Assessment stage: A - Application; I - Interview; T - Test/presentation at interview stage