

Job Description

Research Associate

Salary:	Grade 7
Contract:	Full time, fixed term until 30 September 2028
School/Department:	School of Computing
Location:	Canterbury Campus
Responsible to:	Professor Jim Ang

Job purpose

This role focuses on gaining in-depth understanding of the creative process through which resilience is built by the wider team within coastal community contexts. The Research Associate (RA) will help design and test digital and AI-enabled prototypes that can meaningfully observe, interpret, and potentially track creativity as a process. The successful candidate will work across disciplines, bringing together qualitative field methods (e.g. observation, interviews, narrative analysis) with state-of-the-arts AI tools (e.g. large language models, image analysis, AI agents). Research sites will be based in Kent, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex, with opportunities for international collaboration.

We are seeking an interdisciplinary RA to join ARISE, a UKRI-funded research programme focused on building resilience in the UK's coastal seas and communities. This 30-month post forms part of an exciting strand of work exploring the role of creativity in education, healthcare, and well-being within coastal communities, and aims to develop innovative, ecologically valid methods for understanding and supporting evaluation of creative processes. Central to this role is the design of a suite of digital systems for this evaluation, including AI, that are not only technically robust but also inclusive and grounded in real-world human experience.

For further information about the project please see <https://easternarc.ac.uk/arise>

Key accountabilities and Duties

- Co-lead the development of a novel mixed-methods framework that combines qualitative insight with scalable digital methods.
- Design and prototype tools that integrate accessible AI technologies for creativity interpretation and tracking.
- Support the design and implementation of qualitative fieldwork, including observations, interviews, and documentation and analysis of creative tasks with multi-generational participants
- Conduct in-depth qualitative analysis (e.g. thematic and narrative coding) to understand creative processes.
- Collaborate with external partners (educators, artists, healthcare workers, technologists) in co-designed research and evaluation.
- Support the writing of high-impact academic publications and the development of further grant applications.
- Contribute to the analysis and interpretation of creativity-related data to explore its impact on key outcomes around coastal resilience.
- Assist with ethics applications, project reporting, and knowledge exchange.

Internal & external relationships

Internal: Wider research team, academic supervisor/principal investigator, support staff, students

External: External researchers/collaborators, funding bodies, project participants, external institutions/organisations where necessary

Health, safety & wellbeing considerations

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

- Regular use of Screen Display Equipment
- Repetitive limb movements
- Pressure to meet important deadlines such as might be inherent in high profile projects
- Ability to occasionally travel in a timely and efficient manner between campuses

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:

- A relevant postgraduate degree (PhD) or equivalent in a related field of study (Human-Computer Interaction, Psychology, AI and Society, Digital Humanities, Creative Arts) (A)
- Proven experience in conducting research projects, including observational and interpretive methods, data collection and analysis (A,I,T)
- Practical experience of using digital audio-visual equipment for still and moving image documentation purposes (A,I)
- Practical experience using and integrating AI tools or APIs (e.g. NLP models, computer vision, AI agents) into research prototypes or applications. (I)
- Experience in interdisciplinary or co-produced research involving creative or community-based work. (I)
- Ability to work on-site across Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Kent as well as remotely. (I)
- Demonstrated ability to write and publish research findings in peer-reviewed journals (A,I)
- Experience working collaboratively in a research or academic setting, contributing to joint projects and initiatives (A,I,T)
- Familiarity with relevant research methodologies and tools specific to the field (A,I,T)
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to convey complex information clearly to diverse audiences (I,T)
- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to manage multiple tasks and meet deadlines (I,T)
- Commitment to continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism (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 equality, diversity and inclusivity in the day-to-day work of the role (I)

Desirable Criteria:

- Familiarity with more specialised or advanced research methods (A,I)
- Understanding of participatory research practices. (I)
- Experience working in community, educational, or health/social care settings. (I)

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