



Further Particulars

This document includes information about the role for which you are applying and the information you will need to provide with the application.

1. Role details

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| Vacancy reference: | 7487 |
| Job title: | Research Associate: Social Learning Analytics & Recommender Services |
| Reports to: | Associate Director (Technology) KMi |
| Salary: | Ranging from £29,972 – £35,788 |
| Terms and conditions of service: | Full time Research Staff |
| Grade: | AC2 |
| Duration of post: | Until 31 st July 2012 |
| Working hours: | Full time – 37 hours per week |
| Location: | Knowledge Media Institute of The Open University |
| Closing date: | 22 nd September 2011 |
| Type of application form accepted: | Standard form |
| Number of referees required: | Three |
| Unit recruitment contact: | Ortenz Rose |

2. Summary of duties

The Open University's Knowledge Media Institute has an opening for a *Research Associate: Social Learning Analytics & Recommender Services*. The *SocialLearn* project is investigating the future of online social learning, and draws on expertise from across the OU [www.open.ac.uk/sociallearn]. Your responsibility will be to use your understanding of analytics and recommendation engines to improve the SocialLearn user experience. You will work closely with the SocialLearn team and report to the Associate Director (Technology) KMi.

The appointment will be made on the Academic Grade 2 Salary Scales for Research Staff, ranging from £29,972 – £35,788 pa depending on qualifications and experience. Appointment as a Research Associate requires a PhD or three years equivalent in quality of achievement.

Job Description

- In collaboration with other members of the SocialLearn research and technical team, develop a development strategy to improve SocialLearn's Learning Analytics and Recommender Services, with particular emphasis on approaches based on the learning sciences and applied to online learning on social media platforms.
- Critically assess existing approaches and techniques for learning analytics and recommenders, for their potential to add value to social learners.
- Design and implement new learning analytics and recommenders, e.g. in topic discovery, community detection, text mining.
- Contribute to advancing the design of the SocialLearn architecture.
- Represent SocialLearn in meetings and collaborative research projects with both internal and external partners.
- Disseminate results to the international community through online channels.

3. Person specification

Essential Skills

- A PhD or equivalent, e.g. in learning sciences, computational linguistics, social network analytics, data mining, web analytics, recommendation engines, user modelling, adaptive hypermedia.
- Proven experience in designing and implementing computational services which analyse online user activity for patterns, ideally, at scale, and within a learning context (please detail your technical skills).
- National/international research profile appropriate to a post-doctoral researcher with your qualifications and experience.

Desirable Skills

These skills will be an added advantage, but are not essential:

- Experience in designing and/or developing visual analytics user interfaces, in order to deliver the results in comprehensible ways to end-users.
- Experience in working on open source projects.

Personal Skills

- Excellent interpersonal, visual, oral and written communication skills, both offline and online.
- A team player, excited by working in a cross-disciplinary team, and able to give and receive constructive feedback.
- Initiative and ability to work independently, managing your own research and administrative activities.
- Ability to work accurately, methodically and speedily, sometimes under pressure to meet deadlines.

4. Role specific requirements e.g. Shift working

n/a

5. About the unit/department

The Knowledge Media Institute (KMi) of the UK's Open University is a highly successful interdisciplinary research centre founded at The Open University in 1995, and located in attractive premises at The Open University's main campus in Milton Keynes, UK. We offer a stimulating environment, widely acknowledged to be at the leading edge of European research and development, particularly in semantic web technologies, multimedia and information systems, new media systems, and scholarly hypermedia. The style, impact and content of our work are described in detail in our Web pages at <http://kmi.open.ac.uk/>

6. How to obtain more information about the role or application process

If you would like to discuss the particulars of this role before making an application please contact Dr Simon Buckingham Shum by email s.buckingham.shum@open.ac.uk; or Tel: +44 (0)770 212 5734.

If you have any questions regarding the application process please contact Ortenz Rose on +44 (0)1908 654774 or email o.rose@open.ac.uk

7. The application process and where to send completed applications

Please ensure that your application reaches the University by: **22 September 2011**

Post it to:

Name/Job title: **Ortenz Rose – Senior Staffing Coordinator**

Department/Unit: **Knowledge Media Institute**

Address: **The Open University
Walton Hall
MILTON KEYNES
Bucks**

Post Code: **MK7 6AA**

Or e-mail your application to: kmi-recruitment@open.ac.uk

8. Selection process and date of interview

The interview panel will be chaired by Dr Simon Buckingham Shum. Other members of the interview panel will include members of the SocialLearn project team. Interviews will be arranged as soon after the close date as is possible.

NB: There will be a requirement for you to present a portfolio of recent project work at the interview.

The selection process for this post will be by review of applications by the head and selected members of the interview panel. There may be a telephone interview before a formal interview.

We will let you know as soon as possible after the closing date whether you have been shortlisted for interview, together with details of the interview format.

Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.