UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Job Summary

Job Title: Research Associate in International Space Law
Grade: 7
Salary: £40,704 per annum, pro-rata if part-time
Department: Leverhulme Centre for Humanity and Space (LCHS), Based at Space Park Leicester
Hours/Contract: Full Time or part-time, fixed term contract from 01 February 2027 to 31 January 2030
Job Family: Teaching and Research
Reference: 14134

Role Purpose

The Leverhulme Centre for Humanity and Space (LCHS) has been awarded up to £10m for 10 years to transform the academic landscape when it comes to our understanding of Space through the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The LCHS will support cohorts of interdisciplinary postdoctoral and doctoral researchers alongside Leicester's existing staff and Centre collaborators to develop new intellectual insights, innovate new methodological approaches, and build new collaborations. LCHS is based at Space Park Leicester, where the Centre's researchers work alongside physical research scientists, start-up space companies, business and governmental bodies.

As part of this vibrant programme, we are seeking to recruit a postdoctoral/research fellow in the area of international space law (also known as the law of outer space), to work with the first cohort of new staff at the LCHS. We are particularly looking for applications that seek to examine the responsibility of private actors under international law for activities in outer space. This might include, but is not limited to, international litigation concerning environmental protection, sustainable space exploration, space resource utilization and property rights.

The LCHS also encourages projects that engage with the Centre's partners beyond the University of Leicester, see: https://le.ac.uk/research/centres/humanity-space.

The successful applicant will be expected to conduct specific research projects, contribute to the development of new approaches, methodologies, and techniques, and play a role in the shaping the intellectual environment of the Centre. The LCHS will provide mentorship to postdoctoral researchers, access to ring-fenced seed-funding and support for research and impact projects, as well as opportunities for professional development, opportunities to lead events, and to develop your own research and leadership skills. LCHS researchers will participate in a rich programme of events, seminars, and impact alongside pursuing their own research projects.

We welcome proposals for a full or part-time programme of work over 36 months, including flexible working. LCHS is based at Space Park Leicester, and the expectation is the role holders will work in person at SPL for at least 60% of the working week (e.g. minimum three days for full-time roles). Appointments will be made within the Grade 7 scale, depending upon experience.

Candidates should have a PhD in a relevant field and experience or demonstrable interest in working as part of a research team. You will be at an early stage of your academic career. The funder (Leverhulme Trust) guidelines on the definition of 'early career researcher' for its own, separate fellowship scheme include: you have not yet held a full-time permanent academic post; you hold a doctorate by the time you take up the role; and you have not held postdoctoral positions to pursue your own independent research for more than three years (or equivalent for part time). These guidelines are helpful indications of our expectations of candidate career stage for holding such a position at the Centre.

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Main Duties and Responsibilities

Research

- You will be responsible for conducting a 36-month research project into international space law. This would include leading on collecting and analysing data, developing new theoretical approaches or empirical analysis, and producing outputs submittable for future REF exercises, appropriate for the candidate's stage of career'.
- To lead in writing up research findings for academic and public dissemination. To work autonomously to attain project milestones and as part of a team of researchers and collaborators.
- To maintain regular communication with the Director/Deputy Director of the Centre as well as other project partners and collaborators.
- To provide guidance to other colleagues and stakeholders involved in their chosen research programme.

Professional Development

- You will be supported to engage with relevant training and wider opportunities and in work that supports your own professional development.
- You will be expected to attend and participate in monthly meetings of Centre staff, including via Teams when necessary.
- You will be encouraged to work closely with the Centre Manager and Administrator to publish updates via the Centre's website and social media platforms and those who wish to develop a personal social media presence will be supported in doing so.
- You will be required to ensure compliance with health and safety, ethics and data management requirements, and financial regulations, in all aspects of work

Impact and Knowledge Exchange

- You will be expected to produce appropriate outputs and disseminate research data and/or findings aligned with your research project. This can include, but is not limited to, publications, reports and events.
- You will be encouraged to present research at conferences, workshops and seminars, as appropriate and possible both in the UK and abroad, where feasible.

Leadership and Citizenship

- Guidance to other team members both research staff and students.
- Pro-actively build networks and collaborations.

Internal and External Relationships

- Internal: co-ordination with other RAs, Centre Director, Deputy Director, PhD students and other staff.
- To engage with external stakeholders, including project partners, external advisory board members, collaborators, professional bodies and third sector organisations.
- Delivery of research presentations at conferences, workshops and seminars. Assistance with organising events.

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Planning and Organising

- Long term planning/organisation of work in delivery of varied aspects of the job specification.
- Seek guidance from Centre Director, Deputy Director, Centre Manager and other academic colleagues as necessary.
- To effectively manage your time in undertaking research activities and delivering on the priorities of the project.
- To prioritise tasks within agreed work schedules.
- To plan for specific aspects of research incorporating issues such as deadlines, project milestones, funder requirements and overall research aims.
- To adapt daily and weekly plans to accommodate new developments and be flexible to the changing priorities of the research project.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- Educated to PhD level (or equivalent research experience) with a background in public international law*;
- Experience and knowledge of research on any aspect of international space law*;
- Evidence of research productivity (e.g. research publications in peer review journals and/or conference presentations), commensurate with career stage*;
- Evidence of willingness to undertake training related to project activities.

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Fluent or near fluent proficiency in English, sufficient to undertake research and administrative activities utilising English Language materials and to communicate effectively*;
- Excellent written* and verbal communication skills, including good IT competency*;
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team;
- Ability to plan, organise, implement and deliver programmes of work.

Criteria to be used in shortlisting candidates for interview*Criteria to be used in shortlisting candidates for interview

Reason for Fixed Term Contract

The reason for the fixed term contract is stated in section 1.9 in the summary of contractual terms in your contract of employment.

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Criminal Declaration

If you become an employee, you must inform your manager immediately, in writing, if you are the subject of any current or future police investigations/legal proceedings, which could result in a criminal office, conviction, caution, bind-over or charges, or warnings.

Supporting University Activities

As a University of Leicester citizen, you are encouraged to support key university activities such as clearing, graduation ceremonies, student registration and recruitment open days. We encourage all staff as citizens to work flexibly across the University if required. If supporting these activities is likely to affect your workload, please speak to your line manager in the first instance

University Values

Inclusive - We are diverse in our makeup and united in ambition. Our diversity is our strength and makes our community stronger.

Inspiring - We are passionate about inspiring individuals to succeed and realise their ambitions. We challenge our community to think differently, to get involved, and to constantly embrace new ideas.

Impactful - As Citizens of Change we will generate new ideas which deliver impact and empower our community

Freedom of Speech

The University is committed to upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law throughout our recruitment processes. We ensure that all candidates are considered based on merit and suitability for the role, without regard to their lawful viewpoints or the expression of challenging or controversial ideas. Our recruitment policies and practices are designed to protect applicants from discrimination or adverse treatment on the basis of their opinions, and to foster an environment where open debate and diverse perspectives are valued as essential to our academic mission.

Equity and Diversity

We believe that equity, diversity and inclusion is integral to a successful modern workplace. By developing and implementing policies and systems that challenge stereotypes across all aspects of our work, we have a culture that recognises and values the diverse contributions of our staff which benefit everyone. Our strong values of inclusivity and equity support our efforts to attract a diverse range of high-quality staff and students and identify our University as a progressive and innovative workplace that mainstreams equity, diversity and inclusion.

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