

Job Title: Research Associate in Plant-Based Nutrition

Grade: 7

Salary: £39,906 to £46,049 per annum, pro-rata if part-time

Department: Global, Lifestyle and Metabolic Health

Hours/Contract: Full-time, or job share considered, fixed term contract until 31 December 2028

Job Family: Teaching and Research

Reference: 12696

Role Purpose

We are looking for talented, motivated individuals to join the team at the Diabetes Research Centre (University of Leicester).

The post-holder will contribute to a flagship investigator-led clinical trial investigating the role of plant-based nutrition on health. This project investigates the health benefits of a vegan or vegetarian diet compared to a typical omnivore diet over a 12-month period and aims to recruit 450 younger adults living with overweight and obesity.

The project offers a unique opportunity for the post-holder to contribute to high-impact research with real-world relevance related to nutritional sustainability and health promotion. The post-holder will have expertise in key areas relevant to the research, including nutrition. Experience in human clinical trials involving nutritional interventions is highly desirable.

The post-holder will join a large team that will be employed to deliver the project, working directly under the supervision of the lead researchers and senior trial managers. The exact roles assigned to the post-holder will be dependent on background and expertise, but will include at least one of the following:

- 1) Trial set-up, including finalising and publishing the main trial protocol, overseeing NHS ethics submissions and approvals
- 2) Trial management, including overseeing recruitment pathways, intervention delivery teams, data collection and data entry. To also include quality assurance and site-file management.
- 3) Trial dissemination, including data analysis and communication of research area and outputs, such as writing opinion pieces and review articles, analysing the trial data and drafting the outcome manuscript, and supporting social media and traditional media dissemination and communication.

Opportunities for professional development will be encouraged, including gaining experience in teaching, grant writing, and broader academic engagement.

Main Duties and Responsibilities





Research

- Lead and/or independently support the set-up, delivery, and management of a large clinical trial. This may include (but is not limited to) the development of study protocols, obtaining regulatory approvals, training of site staff, trial management and overseeing an intervention delivery team, and quality assurance processes.
- Provide substantial contribution to diverse research outputs, by leading and/or independently supporting both data analysis and the preparation of journal article manuscripts, conference abstracts and presentations, including those as lead author/presenter.
- Contribute to the overall research programme using innovative research models, novel approaches and techniques.
- In agreement with the line manager, liaise with project funders and collaborators to progress the research.
- Assist and provide advice/support to other staff and students within own area of expertise. This may include helping in the supervision of students and other junior members of the team.
- Design and develop the work-plan required to meet deadlines related to the principal responsibilities above, including planning and prioritising personal work load several months ahead and coordinating with other teams and individuals, whilst also adapting to accommodate new developments or research directions.

Professional Development

- Maintain a broad knowledge of up-to-date research and scholarship in relevant fields.
- Undertake appropriate training and personal development activities to develop research skills relevant to the programme of work; this may include attendance of internal and external training courses if the opportunity arises.
- Engage in continuous professional development, for example through participation in relevant staff development programmes.

Impact and Knowledge Exchange

- Represent the research group at external meetings, including national and international conferences (if the opportunity arises). This may include delivering poster, oral or other presentations.
- Contribute to building and maintaining internal and external collaborations, including with industry, academic and other partners.
- Participate in workshops and conferences to support the dissemination of research findings.
- Undertake, subject to agreement of the lead researchers, external commitments which reflect well upon and enhance the reputation of the Diabetes Research Centre and the University of Leicester.
- Contribute to future collaborations with the programme funder.
- Engage positively and pro-actively in research impact.

Leadership and Citizenship



- Carry out administrative duties related to the trial and the overall research programme of the group, as required by the lead researchers and/or study teams.
- Contribute to the overall department by attending meetings and seminars as appropriate.
- Undertake other departmental roles as may be reasonably required by the lead researchers.
- Contribute to the overall success of the research programme.
- Pro-actively build networks and collaborations.
- Providing mentoring and coaching to Early Career Researchers and research students.

Teaching

- Whilst primarily a research role, the post holder may on occasion be asked to assist with the development and/or delivery of lectures, seminars, tutorials and other classes or public presentations within their areas of expertise, in support of teaching or other education activities delivered by the Diabetes Research Centre (e.g., UoL Diabetes MSc, healthcare professional training, public education sessions etc.), as reasonably required by lead researchers or education leads.

Other

Ensure compliance with health and safety requirements in all aspects of work.

Internal and External Relationships

The post holder will be situated at the Leicester Diabetes Centre, located at Leicester General Hospital. They will sit within Leicester Lifestyle and Health Research Group and NIHR Leicester Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) working directly with Professor Tom Yates, Professor Louise Goff, Dr David Clayton and Professor Kamlesh Khunti.

Within the role, the appointee will be expected to liaise and work closely with teams within the Leicester Diabetes Centre, collaborators within the Project, and research themes across the NIHR Leicester BRC. This will include working with groups across the University of Leicester, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, and with other local, national and international collaborative organisations as appropriate.

The Diabetes Research Centre and the NIHR Leicester BRC host bespoke clinical research facilities, nutrition laboratories and clinical trial infrastructure. The post holder will work closely with the clinical staff, research scientists, laboratory technicians and other key support staff when utilising these facilities. The appointee will also work directly with NHS patients. The appointee will also work directly with NHS patients participating in the trial.

The research involved in this project is expected to take place at the Diabetes Research Centre, Leicester Central Hospital, and may involve overseas visits as part of the project.

Planning and Organising

- With guidance from the Principal Investigator, or equivalent, plan own work and prioritise research and project activities on a regular basis, including organising resources and co-ordinating with other individuals and teams within the Diabetes Research Centre, as well as external funding partners, to design and implement collective workplans to meet project timelines and other deadlines.





- The post-holder will be required to effectively manage their time to deliver on the priorities of the research programme with the support of their line manager.
- Attend suitable training courses or equivalent and be proactive in terms of continued professional development.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- PhD (or near completion) or equivalent expertise in a relevant discipline (for example, but not limited to, health sciences, diet/nutrition, food science, sports nutrition/physiology) *
- Experience in conducting/coordinating human research programmes*
- Experience in design and analysis of clinical trials or studies using quantitative data*
- Experience or good knowledge of preparing/submitting regulatory approvals required to conduct clinical research within the NHS*
- Evidence of involvement in high-quality research publications*
- Proficient in Microsoft Office or equivalent software, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations
- Experience of collaboration or team working

Desirable

- Experience in human research programmes involving nutritional interventions*
- Experience of recruiting participants from the community and primary care
- Experience of working with clinical populations in a clinical setting

Skills, Abilities and Competencies

Essential

- Ability to manage and coordinate research projects*
- Ability to work at a high level of accuracy and at high analytical sensitivity
- Ability to interpret analytical data*
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work as part of a team
- Excellent written* and oral communication skills
- Excellent IT skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Ability to prioritise workload in order to meet deadlines
- Highly motivated*
- Willingness to undertake necessary training and personal development
- Willingness to undertake necessary travel

Desirable

- Well-developed understanding of Health and Safety regulations and procedures, particularly around clinical research.
- Demonstrable success in producing research outputs of the very highest standard.
- Proven capability in analytical, technical and/or scientific problem-solving.
- Budget management skills.
- Willingness to foster new collaborations.





***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.

Criminal Declaration and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

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 offence, conviction, caution, bind-over or charges, or warnings.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 because the appointee will have substantial access to young people and/or vulnerable adults. Therefore, an appointment to this post will be subject to checking through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The successful applicant for this post will, therefore, be required to give consent for the University to check and obtain appropriate clearance with the DBS for the existence and content of any criminal record in the form of an Enhanced Disclosure with Child and Adult Barred List

Information received from the DBS and the police will be kept in strict confidence and will be destroyed once the University is satisfied in this regard.

NHS Research Governance

Where it is determined that the duties of this post for the purposes of research involve work with the NHS, it is necessary to ensure that the performance of the duties attached to the post are covered by NHS research governance arrangements and the appointee must comply with all such arrangements, which may include occupational health clearance and DBS clearance.

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 benefits everyone. Our strong values of inclusivity and equality 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 equality, diversity and inclusion.

