Research Assistant
Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication,
Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics

27 July 2018
Job Reference: LF15970
Purpose of the role

The cross-disciplinary and translation-focussed Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication is based in the Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics but the team is a mixture of psychologists, communications experts and those experienced in user-centred design of online tools. It is rapidly becoming a leading global hub for the transparent communication and improved public understanding of risk and quantitative evidence. Dr Alexandra Freeman is the Executive Director and Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter is the Chair of the Management Board.

We aim to appoint a Research Assistant to help with all aspects of the Winton Centre’s work, which spans many disciplines, including the communication of risk and evidence in healthcare, the legal sector, government and journalism. Being predominantly a translational centre, the team works on real-world problems and the delivery of tools and training to help alleviate them. The post-holder will be expected in particular to focus initially on a project with a UK government department on the visual communication of uncertainty around official statistics, systematic review work on the potential harms of breast cancer treatment, and assist with the gathering of user feedback on online tools that the Centre has in production. In addition, there is likely to be the opportunity to work on some more academically focused work on what people understand from various risk communication formats across a range of fields and cultures.

In this case, there may well be the opportunity to contribute to the design of experiments and the writing of scientific papers. However, the main focus of the Centre’s work is always to understand the needs of communicators and audiences and hence serve them, rather than to further academic research or publish academic papers.
The role

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<tr>
<td>Contract:</td>
<td>One year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Centre for Mathematical Sciences</td>
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<td>Department:</td>
<td>Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics</td>
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<td>Working pattern:</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
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Applicants are expected to have either an excellent undergraduate degree in Psychology, behavioural science, or a closely related discipline, or to be able to demonstrate why their experience makes them an excellent candidate for the job. An ideal candidate would have demonstrable experience of reviewing, conducting, analyzing, and interpreting studies involving a variety of (human) participants. This should include working independently to prepare experimental tasks, recruiting for and carrying out heterogeneous participant samples, and using a range of statistical techniques for data analysis. High levels of motivation and organization and the capacity to work flexibly, including at locations across the UK, will be necessary.

The post-holder will work under the guidance of Dr Alexandra Freeman in the Winton Centre and Dr William Skylark in the Department of Psychology, and will work collaboratively with the other members of the Winton Centre team as well as their external collaborators at other universities and institutions, particularly within the NHS and UK Government.

**Key responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the Research Assistant are:

- To undertake literature research – including systematic reviews and data sourcing – under the overall direction of Dr Alexandra Freeman. This will require planning, flexibility and time management to work to agreed deadlines. It will also require a critical approach to literature appraisal and imagination regarding potential sources of data as well as meticulous data-handling.

- To recruit for and run focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and manage data collection from a range of participants, nationwide, in a number of studies. This will require excellent personal and communication skills, organizational skills, self-confidence, and care in handling confidential data.

- To contribute to experimental designs, hypotheses and scientific paper writing. This will require a good knowledge of psychological theories and experimental design and excellent English language skills.

- To communicate effectively with a variety of stakeholders, including the Winton Centre team, the general public, and professionals in a range of fields, particularly in the fields of healthcare and policy-making.
## Person specification

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<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
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<tr>
<td>An excellent first degree in Psychology or behavioural science or a closely allied discipline. A Masters or MPhil in a relevant subject would be desirable. Alternatively, demonstrably equivalent professional experience.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>An interest in interdisciplinary work, with strong skills and experience working collaboratively with researchers from different backgrounds</td>
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<td>A genuine willingness to prioritize practical questions and the development of tools and resources over traditional academic study</td>
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<td>A knowledge of psychological methods and approaches</td>
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<td>Experience of collecting data from human participants</td>
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<td>Experience of using “standard” inferential statistical tests (e.g., regression, ANOVA) to analyse data from human participants</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Experience of conducting literature reviews and searching academic databases</td>
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<td>Ability to communicate clearly and appropriately with people from diverse backgrounds in English, including writing academic papers in English</td>
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<td>Ability to work independently on challenging problems</td>
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<td>Ability to programme web-based studies and to design web-based tools for risk communication (e.g., using Qualtrics and javascript)</td>
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<td>Knowledge of the psychology research literature regarding human judgment and decision-making</td>
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<td>Knowledge of research concerning risk and evidence communication</td>
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<td>Experience of recruiting and testing human participants from diverse backgrounds (e.g., children, patients, practitioners)</td>
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<td>Experience of conducting ‘real world’ experiments or user-testing outside of an academic environment</td>
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<td>An understanding of how psychology research is conducted and managed in a university environment</td>
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<td>Evidence of communicating research findings to non-expert audiences</td>
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The Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics (DPMMS) is one of the two Mathematics Departments in Cambridge, the other being the Department of Applied Mathematics & Theoretical Physics. The Statistical Laboratory is a sub-department of DPMMS. Together with the Isaac Newton Institute, the two departments occupy the Centre for Mathematical Sciences (CMS). The CMS is a beautiful development west of the city centre and close to other Science Departments. The accommodation is of the highest quality and was designed by mathematicians and architects to facilitate the study of mathematics. It comprises offices, meeting rooms, seminar/lecture rooms, and common rooms, and is equipped with an excellent computer network. It may be viewed at https://www.dpmms.cam.ac.uk/about/photos/

DPMMS comprises at present about 40 tenured staff, more than 50 post-doctoral members of the Department and more than 90 PhD students. It gained an excellent quality profile in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (see: www.ref.ac.uk).

The Faculty holds an Athena SWAN Bronze award for promoting women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine and supports the aims of the Charter Scheme and the LMS Good Practice Scheme in seeking to advance women’s careers in the mathematical sciences. New staff are mentored and all staff are offered advice on career and promotion opportunities.

The research environment in DPMMS is very lively. Many regular seminar series meet weekly during term, and there is a steady stream of short-and long-term visitors from around the world.

Winton Centre For Risk and Evidence Communication

Through the generosity of the David and Claudia Harding Foundation, the University of Cambridge has established a new Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication. This Centre aims to:

- Serve as a collaborative resource for those responsible for public communication; and
- Be a prominent campaigner for best practice, through education, media engagement and training.

The centre’s academic director is Sir David Spiegelhalter, the current Winton Professor for the Public Understanding of Risk, and the Centre is situated in the Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics in the Centre for Mathematical Sciences. The Centre aims to become a leading global hub for the transparent communication and improved public understanding of risk and quantitative evidence. With partners, especially the Harding Center for Risk Literacy in Berlin, it will form an international core for the propagation of best practice in health, education and the media.

The Centre is physically located within the Statistical Laboratory of the Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics. Although the Centre is based in DPMMS, the Research Associate will also have a very close attachment to the Department of Psychology. The department was created in 2012 following the merger of the former Departments of Social and Developmental Psychology and Experimental Psychology and is celebrated for its teaching and research into topics including but not limited to; sensory perception, attention, memory, language, social and cognitive development, social psychology and personality, psychopathology and psychosocial adjustment, computational models of psychological processes, associative learning, animal cognition and behaviour, and drug addiction. For more details relating to the Department of Psychology, see www.psychol.cam.ac.uk.

The University of Cambridge
The School of the Physical Sciences is one of six Schools making up the academic work of the University. It covers Astronomy, Chemistry, Earth Science, Geography, Materials Science and Metallurgy, Mathematics and Physics.

The School’s aim is to contribute to our understanding of the physical world through excellence in observational, theoretical and experimental science and to extend quantitative, qualitative and combined methodologies to address problems in the fields of biology, technology, medicine, social science and the humanities. In pursuit of these goals, the School coordinates objectives in research, teaching, and infrastructure.

About the School

The School of the Physical Sciences comprises the following Departments:

Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics (DAMTP)
Chemistry
Earth Sciences
Geography (including the Scott Polar Research Institute)
Institute of Astronomy
Issac Newton Institute of Mathematical Sciences
Materials Science and Metallurgy
Physics (Cavendish Laboratory)
Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics (DPMMS)

The School is responsible for allocating core funds to departments and provides broad strategic focus across its constituent departments in a number of areas including; research activity, undergraduate and graduate education, estate needs, fundraising and human resources. As part of the University’s annual planning cycle, the School prepares a financial and academic plan which sets out strategic objectives, determines budgets as well as the flow of resources to departments. The School manages a wide range of administrative activities and projects across its departments and works alongside other Schools to further interdisciplinary research.

The School has over 1500 members of staff, over 3000 students and an annual budget of over £100 million.
Terms of appointment

Tenure and probation
Appointments will be made on a fixed-term basis for a period of one year. Due to the limited availability of funding. Appointments will be subject to satisfactory completion of a six month probationary period.

Hours of Work and Working Pattern
The hours of work for the position are 37 hours per week, working Monday – Friday.

Pension
You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) – a defined benefits pension scheme. For further information please visit: www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/.

Annual leave
Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 6.6 weeks (or 33 days for those working full time), plus public holidays.

General information
Pre-employment checks
Right to work in the UK
We have a legal responsibility to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK before you can start working for us. If you do not have the right to work in the UK already, any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon you gaining it.

Health declaration
Once an offer of employment has been made the successful candidate will be required to complete a work health declaration form.

Qualifications
The person specification for this position lists qualifications that are essential and/or desirable. Please note that if you are offered the post you will be asked to provide your relevant original certificates of these qualifications.

References
Offers of appointment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references.

Information if you have a disability
The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. We will make adjustments to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability wherever it is reasonable to do so and, if successful, to assist them during their employment. Information for disabled applicants is available at http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/disabled/

We encourage you to declare any disability that you may have, and any reasonable adjustments that you may require, in the section provided for this purpose in the application form. This will enable us to accommodate your needs throughout the process as required.

However, applicants and employees may declare a disability at any time.

If you prefer to discuss any special arrangements connected with a disability, please contact, Ms Julie Bazin, who is responsible for recruitment to this position, on 01223 764289 or by email on hr-office@maths.cam.ac.uk. Alternatively, you may contact the HR Business Manager responsible for the department you are applying to via hrenquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk.

(For research roles—please delete any options as necessary)
The University

The University of Cambridge is one of the world’s oldest and most successful universities. We are a renowned centre for research, education, and scholarship that makes a significant contribution to society. The University is consistently ranked amongst the top universities in the world. Our affiliates have won more Nobel Prizes than any other University.

Our sustained pursuit of academic excellence is built on a long history of first-class teaching and research within a distinctive collegiate system. For eight centuries our ideas and innovations have shaped the world. Our principal goal is to remain one of the world’s leading universities in an increasingly competitive global higher education sector. Today the University of Cambridge is at the centre of a cluster of over 4,300 businesses employing 58,000 people. Our capital investment projects include the West Cambridge site, the North West Cambridge development and the growth of the Biomedical Campus in the south of the city. The North West Cambridge development includes the opening of a primary school – the first in the UK to be managed by a University. So we are deeply embedded in, and committed to serving, our local community. These are all conspicuous signs of a University that is not only adapting to new needs, but also anticipating the future.

Our mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence. Our core values are:

- freedom of thought and expression; and
- freedom from discrimination.
The University is one of the world's leading academic centres. It comprises 150 faculties and departments, together with a central administration and other institutions. Our institutions, museums and collections are a world-class resource for researchers, students and members of the public representing one of the country’s highest concentrations of internationally important collections.

The University has an annual income of £1.66 billion. Research income, won competitively from the UK Research Councils, the European Union (EU), major charities and industry, exceeds £400 million per annum and continues to grow.

The Colleges and the University remain committed to admitting the best students regardless of their background and to investing considerable resources both in widening access and financial support.

The 31 Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities which appoint their own staff. Many academic staff are invited to join a College as a Teaching Fellow, which provides a further social and intellectual dimension. The Colleges admit students, provide student accommodation and deliver small group teaching. The University awards degrees and its faculties and departments provide lectures and seminars for students and determine the syllabi for teaching and conducting research.

The University’s estate is undergoing the most significant transformation in its history. Cambridge has been able to create a new science and technology campus to the west of the city centre, and is now expanding further to the north west of Cambridge including investing in affordable homes for University key workers and community facilities. Even with our continued development, the University remains within walking or cycling distance across the campus. The University is a major partner on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and we continue to redevelop our historic city centre sites demonstrating our determination to ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.

Our instinct for seeking out excellence and setting up enduring and mutually beneficial collaborations has led us to establish strategic partnerships across the globe. Whether it is the successful Cambridge-Africa Programme involving universities in Ghana, Uganda and elsewhere on the African continent; or the close association with the government of India to pursue new research in crop science; or the creation, with Germany’s Max Planck Institutes, of a Cambridge-based centre for the study of ethics, human economy and social change – international partnerships are now an inextricable part of the University’s make-up.

Our ideas and innovations have shaped the world. Our campaign, 'Dear World... Yours, Cambridge', will raise £2 billion to help us shape all our futures.
Working at the University

Working at Cambridge you will join a diverse, talented and innovative community, with more than 18,000 students and over 11,000 staff from all walks of life and corners of the world.

The University continually explores strategies to attract and retain the best people. It is committed to supporting its staff to achieve their best. We are a fair, diverse and inclusive society and we believe our staff are our greatest asset. There is strong commitment to developing institutional leadership and supporting and encouraging staff development at all levels. Furthermore, the University’s Athena SWAN award recognises and celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women. We offer a variety of roles including academic, research, professional, managerial and support roles. We also offer extensive benefits and excellent learning opportunities within a stimulating working environment. The University has signed up to the Race Equality Charter, a notional framework for improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education.

Living in Cambridge

Cambridge is rich in cultural diversity. From beautiful University and College buildings, museums and art galleries, quaint gardens and punts on the River Cam, to a vibrant restaurant and café scene, our employees are surrounded by the wonderful features of this unique city.

If you prefer the faster pace of life, London is a 45 minute train journey away. For those travelling from overseas, Stansted Airport is just 45 minutes away and Heathrow Airport under 2 hours away.

The University is a short distance from a host of other attractions such as Ely Cathedral, Newmarket Races and various wildlife parks and stately homes.

Cambridge is also within easy reach of the beautiful Broads and coastlines of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Further information about attractions in and around Cambridge can be found at Visit Cambridge, the official tourism website for the city.
What Cambridge can offer

We offer a comprehensive reward package to attract, motivate and retain high performing staff at all levels and in all areas of work. The University offers a wide range of competitive benefits, from family leave entitlement, to shopping and travel discount schemes. Our generous annual leave package contributes to the positive wellbeing of our University employees. Sabbatical leave enables academics to focus on research and scholarship, whilst still maintaining their full salary. The University also has a career break scheme for academic and academic-related staff, with additional flexible working policies for all other staff.

CAMbens employee benefits
We offer a CAMbens scheme for University employees, providing access to online and in-store shopping discounts and cashback. With more than 2,000 participating retailers, employees can save money on a wide range of household expenses, from groceries and clothes, to holidays and insurance and much more. A range of local discounts are also available, helping employees to save money whilst also supporting local Cambridge businesses. CAMbens Cars and CAMbens Cycle to Work salary sacrifice schemes are also available, which enable employees to save money on transport costs. A 10% discount rate on the purchase of train season tickets, bulk buy tickets and an interest free travel to work loan are also available for staff of the University of Cambridge.

Family-friendly policies
The University recognises the importance of supporting its staff. We have a range of family-friendly policies to aid employees’ work-life balance including a generous maternity, adoption and shared parental leave entitlement of 18 weeks full pay and emergency family care support via My Family Care. In addition, our highly regarded workplace nurseries, childcare vouchers, a childcare salary sacrifice scheme and a high quality holiday play scheme are available to help support University employees with caring responsibilities. The Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group is an organisation within the University run by volunteers whose aim is to help newly arrived wives, husbands, partners and families of Visiting Scholars and members of the University to settle in Cambridge and give them an opportunity to meet local people. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs supports the postdoctoral community within Cambridge. Further details are available here: https://www.opda.cam.ac.uk/

Your wellbeing
The University’s Sport Centre, Counselling Services and Occupational Health are just some of the support services available to University employees to promote their physical and mental wellbeing. There are many societies in Cambridge catering for almost every taste and interest. Whether you want to take part in a sport, participate in music or drama, pursue a hobby, or join a political group, you will almost certainly find that a society exists for this purpose. The University also hosts the Cambridge Science Festival and Cambridge Festival of Ideas, as well as Open Cambridge weekend, which together attract over 50,000 visitors per year. The festivals are a great opportunity to get your first taste of public engagement, through volunteering, supporting hands-on activities or proposing a talk.
**What Cambridge can offer**

**Pay and benefits**
The University salary structure includes automatic service-related pay progression in many of its grades and an annual cost of living increase. In addition to this, employees are rewarded for outstanding contribution through a number of regular pay progression schemes. The University offers attractive pensions schemes for employees, with an additional benefit of a salary exchange arrangement providing tax and national insurance savings. Payroll giving is also a simple, tax-efficient way for employees to make monthly donations to charity.

**Relocating to Cambridge**
The University Accommodation Service exists to help employees in their search for a rental home in Cambridge. A new University development at North West Cambridge called Eddington offers subsidised rented accommodation to University staff. The development consists of high quality furnished one and two bedroom apartments. For more information about the development and how to apply please visit the website [www.nwcambridge.co.uk](http://www.nwcambridge.co.uk).

The importance of helping individuals settle into a new area is also recognised by the University. The Shared Equity Scheme [https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/cambens-employee-benefits/financial/shared-equity-scheme](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/cambens-employee-benefits/financial/shared-equity-scheme) provides financial assistance to qualifying new members of staff with the purchase of living accommodation, where they have to relocate to take up their appointment. Removal expenses are also available for qualifying new members of staff. The University has introduced a Rental Deposit Loan Scheme to support new starters and existing employees with the set up costs of renting privately in the Cambridge area: [https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/cambens-employee-benefits/relocation-housing/rental-deposit-loan-scheme](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/cambens-employee-benefits/relocation-housing/rental-deposit-loan-scheme).

**Equality & diversity**
The University has a vibrant and varied community. We support and encourage under-represented groups and we value diversity. We welcome applications from individuals with disabilities. Our recruitment and selection procedures follow best practice. We have an Equal Opportunities Policy, along with a range of diversity networks for women, black and minority ethnic and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff. More details are available here: [http://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/).

**Development opportunities**
We support new employees to settle in through various activities. The encouragement of career development for all staff is one of the University's values and we put this into practice through various services and initiatives. Our Personal and Professional Development Department provides development opportunities and courses for all University employees. These include face-to-face sessions, online learning modules and webinars. Employees may also apply for financial support to undertake training that will lead to a qualification. We offer reduced staff fees for University of Cambridge graduate courses and the opportunity to attend lectures and seminars held by University departments and institutions. The CareerStart@Cam programme also supports employees in assistant staff roles who do not hold higher education qualifications to develop their skills, experience and qualifications.

Whether it is understanding the molecular basis of neurodegenerative diseases, or helping farmers in India increase their yield, or discovering better ways to live in large cities – I know that what we do in Cambridge affects lives, and livelihoods, the world over.

*Vice Chancellor Emeritus, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, 2016*
How to apply

Applications should be submitted online via the University of Cambridge jobs page [www.jobs.cam.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.cam.ac.uk) by clicking “Apply online” in the job advert. You will need an email address to register for our online system.

Informal enquiries are welcomed and should be directed to Dr Will Skylark at [wjm22@cam.ac.uk](mailto:wjm22@cam.ac.uk).

If you have any queries regarding the application process please contact the recruiting manager for this position at: [LF15970@maths.cam.ac.uk](mailto:LF15970@maths.cam.ac.uk).

The closing date for applications is 27 July 2018.

Interviews are expected to be in the week of 6 August 2018.