Research Associate in Second Language Acquisition and Processing

Education

Closing date: 12 January 2019
Interview date: To be confirmed
Vacancy reference: 7233
INTRODUCTION

The post-holder will work on rigorous experimental research programmes investigating instructed second language acquisition and processing, in close collaboration with Professor Emma Marsden.

The primary aspect of the post-holder’s activities will involve designing, undertaking and analysing a series of experiments relating to ‘Processing for Acquisition’. The experiments will investigate key theoretical questions, with pedagogical implications, about the extent to which processing (including assigning meaning, parsing, and anticipation/prediction) is (a) a learning mechanism, (b) can be explicit, and (c) can be trained and improve learning in the long term.

The second aspect of the post-holder’s activities includes involvement in the research strand of the national ‘Centre for Excellence for Modern Foreign Language Pedagogy’. This very large Department of Education (government ministry) funded initiative aims to develop and evaluate research-informed language instruction in secondary schools for 11-16-year olds in England. The Research Associate will contribute to the collection and analysis of data on the learning of morphosyntax, vocabulary, and phoneme-grapheme correspondences, via a quasi-experiment in the 45 schools undertaking the research-informed pedagogy.

The Research Associate may also collaborate with Marsden on various other activities such as: her work as incoming-Editor of *Language Learning*; two large, international open science initiatives (OASIS and IRIS); and the analysis of a very large dataset gathered from an online digital game (known as Gaming Grammar) for learning French and Spanish morphosyntax.

The Associate will work under the supervision of Marsden and in collaboration with a range of national and international collaborators, including other post-docs and PhD students, journal editors, professional associations, schools, and researchers.

The Associate will be expected to be competent users of psycholinguistic methodologies (such as self-paced reading and visual world eye-tracking) and of advanced statistical analytical techniques. They will work with Marsden on a series of articles for publication in high-impact journals.

This is a full-time appointment available to start as soon as possible, with the start date and a ‘phased (part-time) start’ negotiable.
Main purpose of the role

- To conduct research under the supervision of Prof. Emma Marsden
- To contribute to the production of research outputs.
- To assist in the identification and development of potential areas of research and the development of proposals for collaborative research projects within agreed domains of research.

Key responsibilities

*(Role holders will be required to undertake some or all of the duties below)*

- To conduct collaborative research projects, in which duties may include: review of literature, design of pre-post-delayed test training (intervention) experiments, creation of stimuli, design using experimental software, use of appropriate research techniques and methods (such as self-paced reading and visual world eye-tracking); statistical analysis and interpretation of research data;
- To co-author articles reporting on the studies for high quality journal outlets;
- To accurately create OASIS summaries of research that has been published in journals;
- To undertake appropriate organisational and administrative activities connected to the research projects, including help with event organisation alongside other team members;
- Conduct open science wherever possible, potentially using the Registered Report or Pre-Registration approach to publishing;
- To liaise with researchers, editors, professional associations, schools and the team in the Centre for Excellence for MFL Pedagogy;
- To identify potential opportunities for collaboration and possible sources of funding;
- To attend and contribute to relevant meetings and conferences;
- To provide guidance to other staff and students, as required, as well as coordinating the work of small research teams.
## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Qualifications

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<tr>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>First degree in one or more of: a foreign language (including English), linguistics, education, psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>PhD (complete or very near completion) in psycholinguistics, linguistics, applied linguistics, psychology or education, or equivalent experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>If first degree is not (partially) in a language other than English, an intermediate-advanced competency in a language other than English</td>
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### Knowledge

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<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>Knowledge about theories of (second) language learning and/or processing, sufficient to engage in high quality publishable research</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Knowledge of a range of research techniques and methodologies, such as: experimental design; advanced statistical analyses (e.g., multivariate, regression, Bayes Factors); advanced data visualisation techniques; online psycholinguistic techniques (e.g., self-paced reading, visual world eye-tracking, phoneme detection); offline tests of learning (e.g., judgement tests).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>Research expertise in an area that will complement and enhance the department's research strategy and goals</td>
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<td>Desirable</td>
<td>Knowledge of stimuli and intervention design for participants with a range of proficiencies, ages, and languages</td>
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### Skills, abilities and competencies

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<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>Highly developed communication skills to engage effectively with different audiences (both academic and education professionals), both orally and in writing</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Ability to write up research work for publication in high quality journals and to engage in wider public dissemination</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Ability to develop research objectives, projects and proposals for joint research, with the assistance of a mentor if required</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Competency to conduct individual and collaborative research projects</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Ability to identify sources of funding and contribute to the process of securing funds with collaborators</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Competency to make presentations at conferences or exhibit work in other appropriate events</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Competency in advanced statistical analysis</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Competency in online psycholinguistic techniques</td>
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<td>Essential</td>
<td>Competency in experimental and stimuli design</td>
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<td>Desirable</td>
<td>Understanding of learning and processing theories</td>
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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### Experience

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<tr>
<td>Experience of carrying out both independent and collaborative research in (applied) psycholinguistics and/or second language acquisition</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Experience of writing up research work for publication</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to work as part of a team and also to work independently using own initiative</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Demonstrated success in publishing in high quality journals</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>Experience of undertaking open science practices, such as pre-registration or open multi-site replication</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>Experience of working in schools or other formal instructed settings (with students aged between 11 and 16)</td>
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### Personal attributes

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Attention to detail and commitment to high quality</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Collaborative ethos</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Interest in and enthusiasm for the subject matter of the project(s)</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Positive attitude to colleagues and students</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Willingness to work proactively with colleagues in other work areas/institutions</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to plan and prioritise own work in order to meet deadlines, including using initiative to plan research programmes</td>
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<td>Commitment to personal development and updating of knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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The Department of Education

The Department of Education, one of the six founding departments of the University of York, has undergone significant growth in the last six years, and currently has over 50 academic and teaching staff, numerous researchers and visiting fellows and 14 support staff. It registers over 700 students per annum, with approximately two-thirds at postgraduate level. The Department now has the second largest graduate schools of education in the UK.

The Department was ranked in the top ten of Education departments in the country for the proportion of 4* world leading research and was rated in the top ten for the impact of its 3* and 4* research in the Research Exercise Framework 2014. The Department also routinely achieves a high level of external recognition for its teaching.

In 2014 the Department became one of only 17 departments in the country to have achieved Bronze level in Equality Challenge Unit’s trial gender equality charter mark, designed to address gender imbalance and underrepresentation in the arts, humanities and social sciences in higher education and in 2018 the Department attained a Bronze level in the Athena Swan Equality and Diversity charter mark.

Further information about the Department can be found at www.york.ac.uk/education/

Incorporating a wide variety of disciplinary and methodological approaches, the vision for research in the Department is to build fundamental and applied understanding about learning and education and to make an impact on educational policy and practice. The Department has an active Early Career Research forum, which meets regularly and discusses issues ranging from professional through to worklife balance and finding jobs. The Department also holds regular research related events, such as an Education Research Forum, departmental and centre seminar series, and a Research Methodology lunchtime series.

Research infrastructure (such as the Research Committee and Ethics Committee) have representation for Early Career Researchers.

The Department’s research is focused around four research centres:

- Centre for Research on Education and Social Justice (CRESJ)
- Centre for Research in Language Learning and Use (CReLLU)
- Psychology in Education (PERC)
THE DEPARTMENT

- University of York Science Education Group (UYSEG)

The post-holder will be based within the Centre for Research in Language Learning & Use (CReLLU).

**Centre for Research in Language Learning and Use (CReLLU)**

The aim of the Centre for Research in Language Learning and Use (CReLLU) is to lead cutting edge interdisciplinary research relating to language learning, language processing, language use, and language in education. Research encompasses foreign, second, multilingual and first language acquisition and the relations between them.

Researchers work on projects focusing on a wide range of topics. These include many aspects of second language acquisition, such as bilingualism, biliteracy, classroom-based language learning and teaching, cognition, computer-assisted language learning, individual differences, language (education) policies, motivation, processing, reading and writing.

CReLLU researchers work with a wide range of traditional and cutting-edge methodologies, offering expertise in many data collection and analysis techniques for applied linguistics research, such as experimental research design, discourse and corpus analysis, language elicitation tests, research synthesis. The Centre also has a psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics laboratory, allowing for research into real-time language processing (e.g., self-paced reading and listening; eye-tracking; and ERP recording).

Further detail of the work of each of the Department’s research centres may be found at [http://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/](http://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/).

**The National Centre for Excellence for Modern Foreign Languages Pedagogy**

The post-holder is also likely to be involved in the work of the Department for Education funded national Centre for Excellence for Modern Foreign Language Pedagogy (CELP), which is in turn affiliated to CReLLU within the Department of Education.

CELP has an ambitious set of aims to strengthen language pedagogy and re-situate language learning at the core of secondary school education. Recognising the academic, social and economic importance of language education, the core purpose of the Centre is to develop and deliver research-informed curriculum design and instructional materials, leading to higher take up and greater success at GCSE (the national examination taken at age 16) and increase teacher
THE DEPARTMENT

capacity to and confidence in delivering the recommendations of the Review of MFL Pedagogy published by the Teaching School’s Council in 2016. CELP will drive, support, and monitor the work of 18 Specialist Teachers in nine Lead Schools, working with their local Hub schools (45 schools in total) as well as with a wider network of a further 90 schools linked to the Hubs. The Centre will deliver a substantial programme of professional development, resource creation, and workshops, running for two years in the first instance, starting on 3 December 2018, with a possible extension from the DfE for a further two years and possibly more. CELP comprises a Director (Prof Marsden), Co-Director (Dr Hawkes), Manager, Administrator, Teacher Educators, Resource Developers, Software Engineers.

The Research Associate would be involved in the arm of the Centre’s activities that will document the extent of learning over time, in learners aged 11-14, in terms of their morphosyntax, the lexicon, and grapheme-phoneme correspondences. They may also provide support for the cleaning and analysis of large scale online data gathered from an online digital game for learning grammar, known as Gaming Grammar.
THE UNIVERSITY

Founded on principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, the University of York opened in 1963 with just 230 students. In 2018 it is the home of more than 17,000 students across more than 30 academic departments and research centres. Since opening over fifty years ago, we have become one of the world's leading universities and a member of the prestigious Russell Group.

We are consistently recognised as one of the leading Higher Education Institutes and are ranked 16th in the Times & Sunday Times league table (2017). The University of York has won six Times Higher Education (THE) Awards and five Queen's Anniversary Prizes.

The University is proud of its association with Athena SWAN, holding 12 awards in support of gender equality, representation and success for all, with gold awards for Chemistry and Biology and a University-wide bronze award.

Of 154 universities that took part in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, The University of York ranked 14th overall and 10th for the impact of our research. The University is consistently in the top ten UK research universities and attracts over £60m a year of funding from research alone.

Our vision is to make the University of York a world leader in the creation of knowledge through fundamental and applied research, the sharing of knowledge by teaching students from varied backgrounds and the application of knowledge for the health, prosperity and well-being of people and society.
**Attractive workplace**

Centred around the picturesque village of Heslington on the edge of the city of York, our colleges are set in an attractive landscaped campus. York enjoys a safe, friendly atmosphere with facilities including bars, shops, theatres and concert halls all within easy walking distance.

The University has undergone an unprecedented period of expansion and renewal since 2000. We have invested in twenty new buildings on the original campus and have completed the first and second phases of a £750m campus expansion. Our investment in new colleges, teaching and learning spaces, laboratories, research facilities and a new sports village mean there has never been a better time to join us.

During this period of change we’ve worked hard to retain our friendly, informal and collegiate atmosphere, which is important to our core values of inclusivity and interdisciplinarity.

We have a thriving international community and are committed to providing staff moving to York with as much support as possible through our [Relocation Package](#) and [Welcome Officers](#).

The University is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive community - a place where we can all be ourselves and succeed on merit. We offer a range of family friendly, inclusive employment policies, flexible working arrangements, staff engagement forums, campus facilities and services to support staff from different backgrounds.

For further information please visit our [employee benefit pages](#).
THE CITY AND THE REGION

The City of York

Internationally acclaimed for its rich heritage and historic architecture, York's bustling streets are filled with visitors from all over the world. Within its medieval walls you will find the iconic gothic Minster, Clifford's Tower and the Shambles - just a few of the many attractions.

But York isn’t just a great place to visit - it’s also a great place to live and work. While nourishing a vibrant cosmopolitan atmosphere, York still maintains the friendly sense of community unique to a small city.

Visit www.visityork.org for more information on the city of York

Shopping, culture and entertainment

York boasts specialist and unique boutiques but also all the high street stores on its busy shopping streets. Alongside them you will find cinemas, theatres, an opera house, art galleries, a vast range of restaurants, live music venues and clubs. York is particularly renowned for its multitude of pubs and bars, from the modern to the medieval.

Housing and schools

Whether you choose to live close to the city, in one of the surrounding villages or further afield, you will find a wide range of housing within comfortable distance of York and the University. For families, the area has a range of excellent schools both in the state and independent sector.

Great location

York is one of Britain’s best-connected cities. Halfway between London and Edinburgh on the East Coast mainline, on intercity trains you can reach London King’s Cross in less than two hours and Edinburgh in two and a half hours. York is also well served by road links, and it is easily accessible from the A1, M1 and the M62.

For those travelling from overseas, Manchester Airport is two hours away and Heathrow Airport just three and a half. Flights from nearby Leeds Bradford Airport provide easy access to mainland Europe. By Eurostar from London St Pancras, Paris is just over six hours away.

Yorkshire

The Lonely Planet guide recently declared Yorkshire the third best region in the world to visit. There is something to cater to every taste, whether it be the rugged landscapes of the Moors or the Dales, the picturesque seaside towns of Scarborough and Robin Hoods Bay, the gothic architecture of Whitby or the vibrancy of cosmopolitan Leeds.
Apply online
- Go to https://jobs.york.ac.uk
- Find this job using reference 7233
- Complete the online application form

You will need to submit your completed application by midnight (local UK time) on 12 January 2019.

What will I need?
You will need to upload:
- your CV
- a letter describing how you meet the requirements of the job

You will also need details of 3 referees.

Help and assistance
Direct any informal queries to Professor Emma Marsden by email at emma.marsden@york.ac.uk or by telephone on +44 (0)1904 323335

If you have any questions about your application, contact the HR Services team:

recruitment@york.ac.uk
+44 (0)1904 324835