Research Associate in AI Futures
Department of Computer Science

Closing date: 5 August 2019
Interview date: To be confirmed
Vacancy reference: 7789
INTRODUCTION

The University of York is a world leader in impact-driven research in AI, user experience, data science, game and application, and digital creativity. Large-scale research council, university and industry funding have allowed the creation of a multi-disciplinary team with 50 postdoctoral researchers, academics and PhD students working alongside 100 external industry partners to explore and maximise the impact of digital technologies of the future.

This post is based within Digital Creativity Labs, where ground-breaking research in digital innovation cuts across domains of science, social science and humanities. The post will investigate the impact of AI on the future of humanity, and ways to achieve desirable outcomes. The postholder will create literature surveys of positive and negative messages in current research and related literature (including speculative fiction), and interview leading researchers and decision-makers to explore expert views, experiences and understandings of the role of AI in the future of humanity, and the necessary steps we must take to achieve positive outcomes. We will pursue an intergenerational timescale for our future visions.

We seek an outstanding researcher with a record of excellent research output in high quality publications and multi-disciplinary collaboration. The researcher will show evidence of experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods. They will (1) conduct surveys which synthesise a wide range of appropriate literature and (2) conduct a series of interviews with cross-disciplinary stakeholders including thought-leaders, scientists, and policy makers looking at the current and possible future impact of AI on human activities. They will show willingness to work with researchers and stakeholders both in Digital Creativity Labs and beyond.

The postholder will bring an appetite for innovation across disciplinary boundaries and application domains. They will have the opportunity to develop their career in the lively, stimulating multidisciplinary environment of Digital Creativity Labs.
JOB DESCRIPTION

At a glance

Salary £32,236 a year / Grade 6

Hours of work Full Time / 37 hours a week

Contract type Fixed Term / 2 years

Based at Heslington Campus East

Main purpose of the role

- To conduct research under the supervision of senior colleagues and to contribute to the production of research
- To assist in the identification and development of potential areas of research and the development of proposals for independent or collaborative research projects

Key responsibilities

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

- To conduct individual and collaborative research projects, duties to include: analysis and interpretation of research data; use of appropriate research techniques and methods; writing up of research results and dissemination through publications, seminar and conference presentations and public engagement and outreach activities; contributing to the identification of possible new areas of research
- To build and maintain collaborations with relevant academic and industrial partners
- To undertake appropriate organisational and administrative activities connected to the research project, including conference organisation, and the development of promotional or educational material including website maintenance and development
- To develop and initiate collaborative working internally and externally, duties to include: the building of internal contacts and participation in internal networks; collaboration with colleagues on joint projects as required; participation in and identification of external networks in order to share information and identify potential opportunities for collaboration and possible sources of funding; attendance at and contribution to relevant meetings
- To provide guidance to other staff and students, as required, as well as coordinating the work of small research teams
- To assist with undergraduate teaching in own area of expertise.
- To contribute to the preparation of research proposals and applications to external bodies

Additional role responsibilities

- To collaborate with and grow a network of external experts and organisations in conducting applied and translational research
- To engage and collaborate with researchers from science, social sciences, arts and humanities in areas such as Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Tech Studies and Philosophy as well as experts and creatives involved in future thinking.
- To achieve substantial economic, social and cultural impacts from research, principally through working with external partners
- To work across disciplines and to encourage a multi-disciplinary perspective on research and its impact, across Digital Creativity Labs, its partners and the wider University community
# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>PhD including qualitative analysis work to investigate the impact of research/technology, or equivalent experience</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of qualitative research methodologies, particularly interviewing techniques and qualitative data analysis</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Knowledge of tools and approaches for aggregating and synthesising information from a wide range of published sources</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Understands research impact and has knowledge of methods for generating and measuring social, cultural and economic impact from research</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Knowledge of the directions of, and main players in, AI research</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<th>Skills, abilities and competencies</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<td>Highly developed communication skills to engage effectively with a wide ranging audience, both orally and in writing, using a range of media</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to write up research work for publication in high profile journals</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to synthesise ideas from interviewing domain experts and stakeholders, and published work, and translate them into visions for positive futures and to identify research directions and policy decisions that might lead to these outcomes</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to quickly get up to speed in the area of AI research directions and AI futures</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to negotiate a research brief and follow that brief while working independently and showing initiative</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to identify and recruit interview candidates in AI research and policy, and conduct insightful interviews</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Ability to supervise the work of others, such as MSc or PhD students</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>Experience of carrying out both independent and collaborative research, ideally in interdisciplinary teams that include academic and industry stakeholders</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Experience of writing up research work for publication and dissemination</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Experience of identifying and recruiting experts for interview</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience of conducting interviews and writing up qualitative analysis</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Experience of conducting research related to AI policy</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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<td>Experience of generating research impact, in particular through collaboration with industry</td>
<td>Desirable</td>
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### Personal attributes

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<th>Personal attributes</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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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>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to personal development and updating of knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial nature</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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THE DEPARTMENT

Digital Creativity Labs

Digital Creativity Labs (DC Labs) is a major (£18 million) investment by three UK research councils, four universities, and over 100 collaborative stakeholder organisations to create a world centre of excellence for impact-driven research in digital creativity, which launched in April 2016. DC Labs is focused on digital interaction and media convergence: digital games, interactive media and the rich space in-between. In DC Labs researchers, industry, government, the third sector and the general public are co-creating the means for interaction and expression in the future digital society, jointly realising the huge potential of games and interactive media for economic, social and cultural impact.

DC Labs is housed in purpose-built space within the Ron Cooke Hub, a £20m environment for creative ideas that brings together world class interdisciplinary research (the York Centre for Complex Systems Analysis), the Intelligent Games and Game Intelligence (IGGI) Centre for Doctoral Training, the 3Sixty (a totally immersive large black box with 360 degree projection and sound) and a large 3-storey atrium space for discussion and collaboration. DC Labs achieves rich synergies with the co-located IGGI Centre for Doctoral Training (www.iggi.org.uk) with over 60 PhD students, the WEAVR project investigating democratisation of data and data stories in esports, and the recently funded £15m AHRC Creative Media Labs, which has funded opportunities for companies to collaborate with researchers, PhD students and undergraduates to exploit the potential of immersive and interactive technologies for storytelling. The Ron Cooke Hub is adjacent to the Departments of Computer Science and Theatre Film and Television, the leading Departments for the DC Labs, and is a few minutes’ walk from the other collaborating Departments: Electronic Engineering, Archaeology, Sociology, Education and Psychology.

The Department of Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science has a very strong international research record. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 results ranked York’s Computer Science Department 7th overall in the UK, 5th for impact and 6th for environment. 90% of its academic staff were rated as “world leading” or “internationally excellent”. This result confirms the long-standing global reach and real-world significance of the department’s research and makes us one of the best departments in the country for nurturing excellent research and achieving economic, social and cultural impact from research. All aspects of its impact and environment were judged to be of world-leading or international standard. The Department has strong and long-standing links with industry and is highly regarded for its Continuing Professional Development courses. The Department has 55 members of academic and teaching staff and 28 research associates and fellows employed on research grants and contracts. Seven
specialist teaching staff deliver modules to industry as part of our highly regarded CPD programme in safety critical systems. We have a vibrant graduate school of approximately 160 research students, and around 550 undergraduate and 220 full-time and part-time taught postgraduate students. The professional support team comprises 24 administrative staff and 12 technical and computing staff. The Department has excellent links with the Yorkshire digital games industry, and has strategic partnerships with several large companies including IBM.
THE UNIVERSITY

Founded on principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, the University of York opened in 1963 with just 230 students. In 2019 it is the home of more than 18,000 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 one of just six post-war universities to have appeared in the world top 100. We were rated 22nd in the 2019 Times & Sunday Times league table. 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 multiple 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 7789
- Complete the online application form

You will need to submit your completed application by midnight (local UK time) on 5 August 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 2 referees.

Help and assistance
Direct any informal queries to jobs@digitalcreativity.ac.uk

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

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