



UNIVERSITY
of York

Postdoctoral Research Fellow

(BAE Systems)

Department: School for Business and Society

Hours of work: Full time | 37 hours per week

Contract type: Fixed Term for 3 years

Salary: Grade 7 | £46,970- £52,788 per year



Introduction

Applications are invited for a full-time Postdoctoral Research Associate to work on the European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant project RISK-LABS: Firms as Laboratories of Risk Governance, c.1300–2025.

RISK-LABS reconceptualises the firm as a historical laboratory of risk governance. Through a long-run perspective spanning more than seven centuries, the project investigates how firms developed mechanisms to identify, evaluate, distribute, and manage risk under conditions of uncertainty. Combining business history, institutional economics, and historical sociology, the project seeks to explain how organisations became key sites for experimentation in risk governance and how these practices shaped the evolution of capitalism.

The successful candidate will contribute primarily to the BAE Systems Work Package (WP5), which examines how a major contemporary British multinational in the defence and aerospace industries has identified, evaluated, distributed, and managed strategic, political, technological, operational, financial, and reputational risks.

About the BAE Systems Work Package

BAE Systems is one of Britain's major contemporary multinational firms in the defence, aerospace and security industries.

You will lead Work Package 5 on BAE Systems and examine the evolution of risk governance in the contemporary defence, aerospace and security industries. You will conduct original archival and documentary research on BAE Systems and its predecessor firms, collecting and analysing corporate, governmental and other primary sources and published collections, and building and managing relevant historical datasets. You will publish high-quality research outputs in leading journals in business history, economic history, and international business, and present findings at international conferences and workshops. You will contribute to the development of comparative frameworks across the wider RISK-LABS project, assist in organising project meetings, seminars and dissemination activities, and work closely with the Principal Investigator, Senior Investigators and other members of the research team. You may also contribute to the supervision of doctoral and master's students where appropriate.

Main purpose of the role

- To contribute to and/or lead on the production of research outputs and research outcomes.
- To participate actively in the planning and management of research projects, including supervising the work of others and providing expert advice and guidance.
- To contribute to and/or lead the obtaining of external research funding.
- To contribute to the public understanding of research and scholarship.

Key responsibilities

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

- To participate actively in the planning and advancement of research programmes, duties to include: the management of small research projects or identified parts of a large project; the management of other research staff, support staff and research students to ensure that the project is successfully

completed and that the researchers working on the project are supported in their personal and professional development; the management of research resources, ensuring that effective use is made of them.

- To write or contribute to publications or disseminate research findings, including public engagement to non-research specialist organisations using other appropriate media.
- Undertake peer review of research publications and actively contribute to the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- To make presentations at conferences or exhibit work in other appropriate events.
- To develop ideas and necessary collaborations for application of research outcomes.
- To decide on research programmes and methodologies, often in collaboration with colleagues.
- To develop ideas for generating income and promoting the research area, including contributing to the process of securing external funding.
- Extend, transform and apply knowledge acquired from scholarship to research and appropriate external activities.
- To supervise postgraduate research students and mentor colleagues with less experience. Advising on their personal development and supporting them in developing their research techniques.
- To attend departmental meetings as required and undertake appropriate managerial and administrative tasks in connection with the research activity.
- To develop and initiate collaborative working internally and externally, and the fostering of internal and external networks in order to advance research and exploit opportunities for collaboration and funding sources.
- All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others, and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety & Emergency Procedures.

The above list of duties is not exhaustive and is subject to change. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties within the scope and grading of the post.

Person specification

	Essential / Desirable
Qualifications	
Undergraduate degree in history, economic history, or another relevant humanities or social sciences discipline	Essential
PhD (awarded, or submitted with the award expected before appointment) in business history, economic history, modern or contemporary history, international business, management, political economy or equivalent experience	Essential
Knowledge	

Knowledge of the historiography of the firm and of institutions, including concepts such as transaction costs, agency, reputation and collective action, to engage in high quality research	Essential
Knowledge of a range of research techniques and methodologies	Essential
Has research expertise in an area that will complement and enhance the department's research strategy and goals	Essential
Advanced and specialist IT knowledge	Essential
Advanced knowledge of the modern and/or contemporary history of business, defence, aerospace, security, government–business relations, or a closely related field	Essential
Advanced knowledge of secondary and theoretical literatures on corporate, political, strategic, technological, operational and/or reputational risk and uncertainty	Essential
Ability to work confidently with modern corporate, governmental and policy records relevant to the study of BAE Systems and its predecessor firms	Essential
Ability to identify, access and critically interpret corporate, governmental and other primary sources relevant to modern defence and aerospace industries	Essential
Knowledge of the methodological and ethical challenges of researching contemporary firms, regulated industries and potentially sensitive archival materials	Essential
Understanding of research integrity, research data management and open research practice	Essential
Knowledge of languages relevant to BAE Systems' international operations and archival research	Desirable
Knowledge of quantitative, network-analytic or other computational approaches to historical and organisational sources	Desirable
Skills, abilities and competencies	
Highly developed communication skills to engage effectively with a wide ranging audience, both orally and in writing, using a range of media	Essential
Ability to lead and/or take responsibility for a small research project or identified parts of a large project	Essential
Ability to supervise the work of others, for example in research teams or projects	Essential
Ability to write up research work for publication and onward dissemination	Essential
Ability to persuade and influence project stakeholders	Essential
Ability to develop research objectives, projects and proposals for own and joint research	Essential
Competency to conduct individual and collaborative research projects	Essential
Ability to identify sources of funding and contribute to the process of securing funds, with collaborators if required	Essential

Ability to extend, transform and apply knowledge acquired from scholarship to research and appropriate external activities	Essential
Competency to make presentations at internationally recognised conferences or exhibit work in other appropriate events	Essential
Well developed analytical skills	Essential
Ability to work independently on a substantial programme of original archival research and to carry it through to publication	Essential
Ability to build, document and manage structured historical datasets accurately and consistently	Essential
Ability to apply quantitative, network or other systematic analytical methods to historical and organisational sources, or clear capacity to develop these methods rapidly	Essential
Excellent written and spoken English, including the ability to present complex research clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences	Essential
Ability to contribute to the intellectual life of a large comparative team project	Essential
Skills in quantitative analysis, network analysis or relational database design, for example R, Python, Gephi or SQL	Desirable
Familiarity with, or capacity to develop expertise in, current AI and machine-learning approaches to the analysis, classification or extraction of information from large bodies of historical and organisational sources, including critical evaluation of output	Desirable
Ability to reconstruct and interpret quantitative series from modern corporate, financial, production or policy records	Desirable
Ability to contribute to research funding applications and to identify opportunities for generating income	Essential
Skills in public engagement, digital dissemination or exhibition work	Desirable
Experience	
Experience of undertaking publicly evidenced high quality research	Essential
Evidenced active participation in the planning and advancement of research projects	Essential
Proven ability to attract and obtain external research funding	Essential
Successful management of research projects including supervision of the work of others and providing expert advice and guidance to teams	Essential
Evidence of dissemination of scholarly work which may include: the presentation of papers at conferences and workshops; participation in public engagement events to disseminate research; the publishing of chapters in textbooks; the publishing of papers; articles or reviews in academic journals or elsewhere; the development of websites	Essential

Sustained independent research in archives, special collections and/or corporate or governmental records relevant to modern or contemporary history	Essential
Experience working with modern corporate, governmental, policy or industry records, such as company reports, board or management records, government files, parliamentary material, trade publications or business correspondence	Essential
A publication record commensurate with career stage, including peer-reviewed output, and a credible plan for further high-quality publications	Essential
Presenting research at international conferences and workshops	Essential
Managing an individual research project, including planning, prioritising and meeting deadlines	Essential
Peer review of research publications, or contributing to research assessment such as the REF	Desirable
Supervising, mentoring or training students or less experienced colleagues	Desirable
Applying digital, AI or computational tools to a substantial body of historical or organisational source material	Desirable
Collaborative or comparative research across periods, countries or disciplines	Desirable
Organising seminars, workshops, conferences or other dissemination activities	Desirable
Personal attributes	
Commitment to promoting the public understanding of research and scholarship	Essential
Positive attitude to colleagues and students	Essential
Willingness to work proactively with colleagues in other work areas/institutions	Essential
Ability to plan and prioritise own work in order to meet deadlines	Essential
Commitment to personal development and updating of knowledge and skills both for themselves and the personal development of those they supervise	Essential
Intellectual curiosity and a commitment to interdisciplinary work across history, management and the social sciences	Essential
Meticulous attention to detail and accuracy in handling primary sources and data	Essential
Collegiality, and a commitment to inclusive and respectful team working across countries and time zones	Essential
Resilience and self-motivation in sustained archival and documentary research, where access and results may be uncertain and progress incremental	Essential
Other Requirements	
Willingness and ability to travel and to undertake extended research visits to archives and other relevant repositories in the UK and internationally	Essential

Willingness to work occasional irregular hours around archive or repository opening times and international project meetings	Essential
Commitment to the University's values on equality, diversity and inclusion	Essential
Commitment to open research, data deposit and the University's research data management requirements	Essential
Commitment to health and safety procedures, including lone-working arrangements when working off site	Essential
Ability to meet the obligations attached to the ERC grant, including reporting, acknowledgement and open access requirements	Essential
Eligibility to work in the UK for the duration of the appointment	Essential