

Job Description

Title	Details
Job title	Research Assistant
Department/Unit	PCLS
Job Type	Fixed-term, .5 FTE
Grade	5
Accountable to	Line Manager
Accountable for	any members of staff this person line manages
Vacancy reference	SRF54576
Additional Information	

Purpose

We seek to recruit a Research Assistant for a project investigating a dietary intervention to support sensory hyperreactivity and anxiety in autistic children.

The position will be based at the Centre for Autism within the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences at the University of Reading, and the project is supported by the Eagles Autism Foundation.

Team Structure

The postholder will be part of a research group with early career and senior researchers, led by Dr. Teresa Tavassoli, Dr. David Field, Prof. Julie Lovegrove, and Prof. Bhismadev Chakrabarti. The empirical work will be carried out at the University of Reading.

Main duties and responsibilities

Research:

- Undertake research under the supervision of the Principal Investigator
- Recruitment and scheduling of visits
- Serving as the first point-of-contact for participants, and being the interface between the research team and the participants
- Working with autistic children and their families
- Collecting data in-person in a laboratory
- Collecting observational as well as biological samples
- Preprocessing samples and data for analyses

Supervision received

Dr Tavassoli will provide primary research supervision. The postholder will also receive regular input from senior investigators in the team named above.

Supervision given

N/A

Contact

PCLS

Terms and conditions

This post is available as part – time, .5 FTE, fixed term up to 20 months.

A standard DBS check is required for this position.

Please see these links for information on [Safeguarding](#) and [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) Procedure](#)

There are no specific hours of work, but the appointee will be required to work such hours as would reasonably be expected to carry out the duties associated with the post.

This document outlines the duties required for the time being of the post to indicate the level of responsibility. It is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list and the line manager may vary duties from time to time which do not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility entailed.

Date assessed: 14/10/2026

Person Specification

Job Title	School/Department
Research Assistant	PCLS

Which stage these Criteria be assessed

A = Application

I = Interview

P = Presentation/Pre task/Other

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Skills Required	• Excellent organisational and timekeeping skills (I) • Good interpersonal skills (I) • Excellent computer skills in Microsoft Office (A) • Excellent problem-solving skills (I) • Experience with research (A,I)	• Some experience of psychological or other relevant research with young and/or autistic children (A,I) • Research and project-related administrative skills (A,I) • Experience with research with autistic children (A,I) • Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing (I) • Ability to work to deadlines (I)
Attainment	• Bachelors and/or Masters in Psychology, or relevant discipline (A)	• A Masters and/or PhD degree in Psychology (A) • Some experience of publication – appropriate for career level (A)
Knowledge	• Basic knowledge and an interest in sensory perception (A,I) • Knowledge and interest in autism and relevant literature (A,I) • Knowledge of developmental testing and experimental methods (A,I)	
Relevant Experience	• Experience of working with human participants, ideally autistic and/or non-autistic children either as part of research or clinical work (A,I) • Experience with conducting research (A,I) • Experience in recruiting participants (A,I)	• Experience with biological sample collection and storage, such as Elisa or LC-MS methods (A,I) • Experience of managing a project (A,I)

Other	• Friendly and approachable (I) • Strong organisational and project management skills • Interest about the project and research, especially sensory reactivity in autism and working with autistic children (A,I) • Standard DBS check is required for this role	• Good attention to detail (A) • Fast learner – open to learning new skills and taking initiative (I)
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Completed By Teresa Tavassoli, PhD

Date 14/10/2026