UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Research Role Profile

Job Title:	Research Assistant in Psychology

Responsible to:	Head of research group, or principal investigator

Responsible for:	There is no direct supervisory responsibility

Job Summary and Purpose:
To support research activity in accordance with specified research project(s) under the supervision of the principal investigator

Main Responsibilities/Activities
To support a research team by contributing to the planning of research projects and undertaking prescribed research tasks in accordance with specified research project(s), making use of standard research techniques and methods. These may include fieldwork, interviews, laboratory experimentation, computer-based data analysis or library research as directed by the research award holder and will entail co-ordinating own work with that of others to avoid conflict or duplication of effort. Analysing and interpreting results of own research, under the guidance of research award holder or supervisor. Write up results and contribute to the preparation of papers for submission to appropriate journals and conferences, and other outputs as required and/or appropriate. Attend appropriate conferences for the purpose of disseminating research results of personal development. Continually update knowledge and develop skills To carry out routine administrative tasks associated with a specified research project, for example risk assessment of research tasks, organisation of project meetings and documentation. This will entail planning own day-to-day research activity within the framework of the agreed programme, dealing with problems that may affect the achievement of research objectives and deadlines and implementing procedures required to ensure accurate and timely formal reporting and financial control Demonstrating, or occasionally assisting with undergraduate supervision within the post holder's area of expertise and under the direct guidance of a member of the Faculty academic staff.

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Research Role Profile

Person Specification
The post holder must have: A first degree or a professional qualification or equivalent in a relevant subject. At least part-completed a relevant doctoral degree or have relevant experience in a given field. Whilst there is no requirement for previous work experience, the post holder will be expected to be able to support research activities by performing experiments and/or undertaking studies and analysing/ interpreting results.

Relationships and Contacts
Direct responsibility to the principal investigator or academic supervisor.

Special Requirements
To be available to participate in fieldwork as required by the specified research project.

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities policy.
- Help maintain a safe working environment by:
  - Attending training in Health and Safety requirements as necessary, both on appointment and as changes in duties and techniques demand
  - Following local codes of safe working practices and the University of Surrey Health and Safety Policy
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Research Role Profile

Addendum

This document provides additional information relating to both specific aspects of the post/faculty and any post specific person specification criteria. The information contained within this document should always be read in conjunction with the accompanying generic Job Purpose.

Job Title:	Research Assistant in Psychology

Background Information/Relationships

Early Childhood Maths Group Spatial Reasoning Toolkit – efficacy trial

The Project

Spatial ability involves perceiving the location and dimension of objects and the relationships between them (e.g., map-reading, packing a suitcase), and is associated with expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that spatial training increases children's spatial skills, with positive transfer to mathematics (Hawes et al., 2022). Furthermore, many spatial interventions have demonstrated the largest gains for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Bower et al., 2020; 2022; Schmitt et al., 2018). Despite this robust research literature, the domain of spatial thinking is less regularly targeted for intervention compared to the number domain.

The Early Childhood Maths Group Spatial Reasoning Toolkit (ECMG SRT) is a set of professional development resources developed for practitioners working with young children. ECMG SRT resources include: a research summary and trajectory of spatial reasoning development, posters, videos, children's book lists, 'prompt' keyrings and child assessments. In this programme, practitioners will be implementing the ECMG SRT with 3- to 4-year-old children in nursery settings. The ECMG SRT draws on many spatial skills (e.g., part-whole relationships, perspective taking, spatial visualisation and spatial representation). We predict that children who take part in the ECMG SRT programme will demonstrate improved spatial abilities, with the largest gains for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Longterm, we predict benefits to children's mathematics competence.

You will be involved in Phase 1 of the project, and in the planning for Phase 2. Your main role in Phase 1 will be to support the Project Officer with recruitment of up to 150 nursery settings. You will also support the Postdoctoral Researcher to complete development work to ready the ECMG SRT for trial. Development work includes running focus groups, repackaging existing ECMG SRT materials to optimise accessibility, and creating templates for practitioners to support implementation and evaluation. You will support the Project Officer in planning for Phase 2, for example, in planning communications with nursery settings.

The Role and its Responsibilities

Your time will largely be dedicated to duties related to recruiting nursery settings. This involves following the recruitment and marketing plan set out by the Project Officer. For example, building networks, engaging senior leaders, creating newsletters, social media

advertising, organising webinars and engagement events, designing recruitment flyers, communicating with nursery settings via email, phone and in-person, and keeping a precise recruitment log. You will organise 'keep warm' engagement with recruited nursery settings throughout your post. You will also support the Postdoctoral Researcher who will be leading the development work for the ECMG SRT trial. Planning for Phase 2, the implementation of the intervention will be led by the Project Officer. You will support as needed.

You will be part of a strong team of experts in spatial cognition and mathematics, and in intervention research. Prof. Emily Farran directs the CogDeV lab (lead unit, University of Surrey), an internationally recognised centre for spatial-mathematics research and impact and is a member of the Centre for Educational Neuroscience (CEN) management committee, which aims to further translational research across neuroscience, psychology and education. Dr. Cath Gripton (Associate Director of the Observatory for Mathematical Education) is an expert in early years mathematics education. Dr. Sue Gifford (Chair of the Early Childhood Maths Group and Chair of the Royal Society's Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education Primary and Early Years Expert Panel) is an expert in early years mathematics education. Prof. Camilla Gilmore (Director of the ESRC Centre for Early Mathematics Learning) investigates research and practice in Early Years and Key Stage 1 mathematics.

You will be responsible to Prof. Emily Farran in the School of Psychology, University of Surrey. The post will be based in the Department of Psychological Sciences, within the University's School of Psychology, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences.

You are welcome to contact Prof. Emily Farran (e.farran@surrey.ac.uk) if you would like further information or would like to discuss the post.

Person Specification

This section describes the sum total of knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role. This is in addition to the criteria contained within the accompanying generic Job Purpose.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships	**Essential/ Desirable**
A BSc or equivalent qualification in Psychology or a related subject.	Essential
Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge)	**Essential/ Desirable**
Experience of developing and supporting engagement or recruitment activities, and the ability to follow research programme protocols.	Essential
Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to produce clear and concise communications for a range of stakeholders.	Essential
The ability to work independently, as well as proven ability to work collaboratively as part of a research team.	Essential
A strong understanding General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and experience of adhering to GDPR and ethical processes	Essential

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Research Role Profile

Excellent Microsoft Office 365 Skills (SharePoint, Teams, Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint) and administrative skills.	Essential
Experience of working with nurseries / schools.	Desirable
Experience of supporting research projects with research integrity, including developing a working knowledge of the project objectives and milestones.	Desirable
Familiarity with open science / open research practices.	Desirable
Special Requirements	**Essential/ Desirable**
Eligible to work with children (an Enhanced DBS check will be required).	E

Key Responsibilities

This document is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but an outline record of any faculty/post specific responsibilities. This should be read in conjunction with those contained within the accompanying generic Job Purpose.

You will be required to

1. Contribute to the day-to-day management of the engagement and recruitment aspects of project, in line with the agreed objectives of the project to ensure that goals are achieved.
2. Contribute to and follow a recruitment and marketing plan.
3. Create engagement materials, such as social media advertising, designing recruitment flyers.
4. Communicate with nursery settings via email, phone and in-person.
5. Organise engagement activities with recruited nursery settings.
6. Support the wider ECMG SRT with Phase 1 activities as needed (e.g., development work for the ECMG SRT trial).
7. Support planning for the implementation of the intervention as needed.
8. Communicate effectively with the ECMG SRT team.
9. Comply with ethical procedures and data protection requirements.
10. Undertake such other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.