Research Associate

Department | Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences (www.strath.ac.uk/science/strathclydeinstituteofpharmacybiomedicalsciences/)
Faculty | Faculty of Science (www.strath.ac.uk/science/)
Staff Category | Research
Reports To | Head of Institute
Reference No | 541757
Grade: | RS07
Salary Range: | £36,024 – £44,263 (as of August 2023)
Contract Type: | Fixed Term (5 Years)
FTE | 1 (35 hours/week)
Closing Date | 04/08/2023

Job Advert

The Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences (SIPBS) seeks to appoint a Postdoctoral Research Associate (PDRA) in Clinical Decision Support Tools in Acute Care to join our expanding Pharmacoepidemiology research program. This post is aligned to the HDR (Health Data Research) UK’s Driver Programme “Medicines in acute and chronic care”.

At Strathclyde we have invested to create an internationally leading research environment of medicines data scientists. Our reputation and increasing partnerships and networks (including Sweden, Brazil, Kenya, South Africa) are focused on maximising the use of established and new (phenotypic and bio-resource) health data to create the next generation of clinical decision support (CDS) tools in routine clinical care. You will join our established pharmacoepidemiology programmes (https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/subjects/pharmacybiomedicalsciences/pharmacoepidemiologyandhealthcare/) which are focused on understanding the real-world effectiveness of new medicines to inform a more stratified approach to clinical care.

This five-year position is for a Postdoctoral Research Associate with expertise in health data, data science, statistical modelling and/or computing / artificial intelligence to work within HDR UK’s Driver Programme “Medicines in acute and chronic care”. This position is based at Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Science (SIPBS) at the University of Strathclyde, but the Driver programme includes five other Postdoctoral Research Associates (PDRAs) in total, spanning universities in the North, South-West, Midlands in England and Scotland and Wales, providing an excellent support community. The PDRAs will work collaboratively across centres as part of a vibrant data science and clinical community, focused on delivering innovative solutions to medicines management. This post will help develop and test novel clinical decision support tools using electronic health data from the recently established Hospital Electronic Prescribing and Medicine Administration (HEPMA) system across hospitals in Scotland in linkage with other national electronic health records.

You will be educated to a minimum of a 2:1 Degree and have a PhD (or equivalent professional experience) in an appropriate discipline. Previous research experience in pharmacoepidemiological methods, statistics, and/or health data science is essential. You will have: a genuine desire for the research area; good communication skills, the ability to work both within a NHS and academic environment; and the motivation to contribute towards identifying and/or securing additional support for Knowledge Exchange and research opportunities for the University of Strathclyde.

Job Description

Brief Outline of Job:
The candidate will work alongside other data scientists, statisticians, clinicians, pharmacists, nurses and patients, to improve the prescribing effectiveness, safety and monitoring of mental health medicines among hospitalised patients with the ultimate goal of reducing errors in prescriptions, identifying drug-drug interactions and increasing guideline compliance through a series of
clinically informed, data-driven challenges. The candidate will be part of a multi-disciplinary team; building, testing and deploying these tools, working in supported partnerships with other data scientists from different backgrounds, regulators, policy makers and healthcare professionals. The candidate is expected to also develop research proposals, with assistance from senior colleagues as required; to engage where required in relevant teaching, professional and knowledge exchange activities; and input to administrative activities.

**Main Activities/Responsibilities:**

1. Develop research objectives and proposals for own or joint research, with assistance of a mentor if required.
2. Contribute to writing bids for research funding.
3. Work within specified research grants and projects and contribute to writing bids.
4. Analyse and interpret data.
5. Apply knowledge in a way which develops new intellectual understanding.
6. Disseminate research findings for publication, research seminars etc.
7. Supervise students on research related work and provide guidance to PhD students where appropriate to the discipline.
8. Contribute to developing new models, techniques and methods within the scope of this Driver programme.
9. Undertake management/administration arising from research.
10. Contribute to Departmental research-related activities and research-related administration.
11. Contribute to enterprise, business development and/or public engagement activities of manifest benefit to the College and the University, often under supervision of a project leader.
12. Collect research data; this may be through a variety of research methods using health data but also through literature reviews.
13. Present research outputs, including drafting academic publications or parts thereof, for example at seminars and as posters.
14. Provide guidance, as required, to support staff and any students who may be assisting with the research.
15. Deal with problems that may affect the achievement of research objectives and deadlines.
16. Promotes equality and values diversity acting as a role model and fostering an inclusive working culture.

**Person Specification**

**Educational and/or Professional Qualifications**
(E=Essential, i.e. a candidate must meet all essential criteria to be considered for selection, D=Desirable)

E1 Good honours degree and PhD (or equivalent professional experience) in appropriate discipline such as mathematics, statistics, computer science and normally, a higher degree relevant to research area of data science or equivalent qualifications

D1 Membership of relevant Chartered/professional bodies (including Higher Education Academy)

**Experience**

D2 Sufficient breadth or depth of knowledge in the relevant discipline/s to contribute to research programmes and to the development of research activities

E2 Relevant work experience in pharmacoepidemiological methods and statistical modelling

D3 Experience of relevant student supervision and teaching activities

D4 Experience of knowledge exchange related activities

E3 Experience in using statistical computer programs such as R software

**Job Related Skills and Achievements**

E4 Developing ability to conduct individual research work, to disseminate results and to prepare research proposals.

E5 Ability to plan and organise own workload effectively
E6 Ability to work within a team environment
E7 High level analytical capability
E8 Fluency in relevant data models, techniques or methods and ability to contribute to developing new ones—although relevant training will be available
E9 Able to lead the provision of high-quality analytics through the application of analytical, coding and statistical techniques driven via the production, development and promotion of a data science work programme
E10 To provide high quality support for analysis and intelligence interpretation. To provide a clear explanation in relation to the methodologies used. To understand and interpret results of analyses suggesting conclusions to be drawn.
E11 Identify innovative uses of NHS data and implement solutions to deliver fresh insights.

Personal Attributes
E12 Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to listen, engage and persuade, and to present complex information in an accessible way to a range of audiences

Other Relevant Factors
D5 Evidence of publication in good quality journals

Application Procedure

Applicants are required to complete an application form including the name of three referees who will be contacted without further permission, unless you indicate you would prefer otherwise. Applicants should also submit a Curriculum Vitae and a covering letter detailing the knowledge, skills and experience you think make you the right candidate for the job as well as a Research Plan outlining your research strategy for the next 5 years. Applicants should also complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.

Other Information

Further information on the application process and working at Strathclyde can be found on our website (http://www.strath.ac.uk/hr/workforus).
Informal enquiries about the post can be directed to either Dr Amanj Kurdi, Reader in Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacy Practice (amanj.baker@strath.ac.uk) or Dr Tanja Mueller, Lecturer in Pharmacoepidemiology and Health Services Research (tanja.mueller@strath.ac.uk)

Conditions of Employment
Conditions of employment relating to the Research staff category can be found at: Conditions of Employment.

Rewards and Benefits
Our staff have access to a wide range of outstanding benefits that include financial rewards, family friendly and wellbeing benefits and career development opportunities, details of which can be found here.

PVG Check
This position involves regulated work, making it a legislative requirement that the successful candidate becomes a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme. If appointed, employment with the University will not be confirmed, until membership of the Scheme has been received. The successful applicant will be precluded from working with protected groups until that time.

Probation
Where applicable, the successful applicant will be required to serve a 9 month probationary period.

Pension
The successful applicant will be eligible to join the Universities’ Superannuation Scheme. Further information regarding this scheme is available from Payroll and Pensions.

Relocation
Where applicable, the University offers a relocation package to support new employees who meet the eligibility criteria. The relocation package is offered as a contribution towards costs incurred, and is designed to be flexible, allowing staff to use the financial support available in the way that will be most helpful to them. Further details are outlined in the Relocation Policy.
Interviews
Formal interviews for this post will be held on 16/08/2023.

Equality and Diversity
The University of Strathclyde is a socially progressive institution that strives to ensure equality of opportunity and celebrates the diversity of its student and staff community. Strathclyde is people-oriented and collaborative, offering a supportive and flexible working culture with a deep commitment to our equality, diversity and inclusion charters, initiatives, groups and networks.
We strongly encourage applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnicity, women, LGBT+, and disabled candidates and candidates from lower socio-economic groups and care-experienced backgrounds.

University Values
The University’s Values capture what we’re all about: who we are, what we believe in and what we stand for. Our Values have been derived from how we act and how we expect to be treated as part of Strathclyde.
1. GENERAL CONDITIONS
Members of staff are subject to the Charter and Statutes and the Ordinances and Regulations of the University, published in the Calendar, and to any amendments or additions thereto approved by the University Court and, in the case of the Charter and Statutes, the Privy Council. Staff are also expected to familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, general University policies and procedures, as published on University web pages.

The University Court recognises Strathclyde Universities and College Union (SUCU) as the sole body with which it will negotiate and consult on all collective issues concerned with the terms and conditions of employment of Research Staff. Such terms and conditions may be varied by the University Court after negotiation and consultation with SUCU.

Each member of staff is responsible for the proper performance of allocated duties to the person or persons specified in the member of staff’s letter of appointment and any accompanying papers.

The University is committed to ensuring that its business is conducted in an open and transparent manner and will take all appropriate steps to address risks of bribery or corruption. Members of staff are required at all times to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the resources for which they are responsible. The University has in place a robust Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy to enable concerns to be brought to its attention. This is available at www.strath.ac.uk/publicinterestdisclosure. Other relevant policies, e.g. Fraud Prevention and Conflicts of Interests, can also be found on the University’s website.

Any member of staff may at any time be exposed to commercially sensitive information, information related to potentially valuable intellectual property or information which may otherwise be of a confidential nature. This information, which could be found anywhere in the University, may be written or disclosed orally, can include information of a commercial or technical nature, and may be owned by the University or by third parties. The University requires all employees to keep any such information confidential in the first instance and not disclose, publish or otherwise disseminate it without prior consent of the University. Such confidentiality obligations are commonplace and in the commercial interests of the University. When in doubt advice should always be sought from Research and Knowledge Exchange Services prior to disclosure.

The University operates probationary periods for new staff, the duration of which will be specified in individual letters of appointment. The normal probation period for posts in this staff category is 9 months for those at grades 6 and 7, and 12 months for grades 8 and above. Further guidance on probationary procedures is published at http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/hr/.

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Further information on the terms and conditions specified in this document and other staffing policies and procedures can also be found at www.strath.ac.uk/hr.

2. SALARY
Appointments are made at an appropriate salary point on the University’s grading structure, with initial placing determined according to qualifications and experience. Increments are paid to staff on the 12 month anniversary of their appointment. Where this is not the first of the month, the increment will be paid on the first of the month directly after the 12 month anniversary. This allows 1 progression to the next point on the salary scale until the top guaranteed point of the scale is reached.

Salaries are paid directly to staff members nominated bank account, normally on the second last working day of the month.

3. HOURS OF WORK
Working time is that required to fulfil the duties of the post. The University Court recognises that research staff carry out these duties in a variety of ways appropriate to the nature of the research activity, but expects regular contact to take place between the research staff employee and the supervisor/grantholder (where these positions are occupied by different individuals) during normal working hours on week days. There are exceptions to this pattern which may involve contact at other locations or in the evenings, or at weekends, but these arrangement will be made with the agreement of the member of staff concerned.

Duties may, by arrangement with Head of Department/School/Director, include some teaching associated with the post (up to a maximum of 40 hours per semester) for which no additional payment will be made.

Additional work which does not fall within the scope of that described above may by arrangement attract payment which must be authorised and processed through the payroll.

4. HOLIDAYS
Annual leave entitlement is 31 days per year to be taken by agreement with the line manager. For staff members working on a part-time basis, holidays will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

In addition to annual leave there is an entitlement to eleven public holidays per year which should be taken on days that the University is closed for this purpose. The University presently closes for four additional days over the Christmas and New Year period. These additional days count against the annual leave entitlement.

For staff members working on a part-time basis, public holiday entitlement will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Annual leave and public holiday entitlements should be taken in the leave year to which they relate. Up to five days leave can be carried forward into the new leave year subject to line management agreement. In exceptional circumstances, Heads of Department/School/Director may approve carry forward of accrued annual leave in excess of five days.

The University’s expectation is that staff take all accrued holidays prior to their termination date. If staff have exceeded their entitlement the University will deduct an equivalent number of days pay from final salary payments.
5. SICKNESS ABSENCE
During any period of absence through illness or injury provided the appropriate notification and certification procedures have been followed the University will pay a member of staff (having taken account of the aggregate of all periods of absence due to illness during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of the current absence) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Continuous Employment at start of absence from work</th>
<th>Full Pay</th>
<th>Half Pay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>1 month</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 year but less than 2 years</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 years but less than 3 years</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>4 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 years but less than 5 years</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>5 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 years or more</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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In order to manage the University’s sick pay scheme the University requires to maintain sickness absence records on individual members of staff. When making payments after the expiry of statutory sick pay the University will deduct an amount equivalent to any benefit normally payable by the Department of Work and Pensions. For full details on the general University policy in this area please refer to the Sickness Absence Management Policy at www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/hr.

6. PENSIONS
If you are under age 75 at the date your appointment commences you will automatically become a member of the pension scheme operated by the University — the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). You will be admitted to the career revalued benefits scheme called USS Retirement Income Builder; the contribution rate that currently applies is 9.8% of pensionable salary. A threshold applies to the maximum salary that counts towards the USS Retirement Income Builder. The current threshold from 1 April 2023 is £41,004 per year. Contributions based on salary above the monthly equivalent rate of the threshold are paid to the defined contribution section of the scheme called USS Investment Builder. Please use the following link to access information, including the USS Member Guide: [https://www.uss.co.uk/for-members/youre-a-new-joiner](https://www.uss.co.uk/for-members/youre-a-new-joiner). The scheme booklet is called ‘Your Guide to the Universities Superannuation Scheme’.

The University operates a salary exchange arrangement, Pensions Plus, for members of the USS. Pensions Plus enables pension contributions to be made in a manner so that both employees and the University can benefit from available National Insurance Contribution savings. You will be automatically included in Pensions Plus, provided it does not adversely affect your take-home pay or your ability to claim certain state benefits. If your earnings fall below the Pension Plus pay protection limit you will be opted out of Pension Plus. This will not affect your membership of the USS.

New members of staff may opt out of USS within three months of taking up appointment and will then be treated as if they had never been a member of the scheme. After three months members of staff who wish to withdraw from USS during their employment will be required to give a minimum of 28 days’ notice in writing to the University. Any member of staff who wishes to opt out should contact the Pensions Section, Finance, in the first instance (pensions@strath.ac.uk). Please note that if you are a member of Pensions Plus and withdraw from USS with less than two years of membership, or cease employment with the University and have less than two years of USS membership, the option of a refund of pension contributions will not be available to you. Instead, USS must provide you with a pension benefit that is payable from your Normal Pension Age. Regardless of whether you participate in Pensions Plus, if you are a member of the pension scheme for two years or more you are entitled to a refund of pension contributions on leaving the scheme, you will be entitled to a pension benefit.

The University reserves the right to alter or withdraw Pensions Plus as it sees fit or as required to comply with legislative changes. Withdrawal or amendment of Pensions Plus will not affect your membership of USS. If you do not wish to participate in Pensions Plus but wish to remain in

Information regarding pension scheme membership can be found on the USS website: [www.uss.co.uk](http://www.uss.co.uk)

7. PLACE OF WORK AND RESIDENCE
Members of staff will be based on the John Anderson Campus, unless otherwise stated in the letter of appointment. The Department/School in which the post is initially placed will be specified in the letter of appointment although there will be an expectation to work at such other places as required in the course of employment.

If the need arises for members of staff to work outside the UK for a period (or periods) of more than one month then such arrangements will be subject to mutual agreement. Members of staff would then be provided with a statement in advance setting out the terms covering such periods of employment.

The University does not normally place specific restrictions upon the place of residence of members of staff. All staff are, however, expected to reside in a location which is compatible with the satisfactory fulfilment of all the duties associated with their appointment.

8. CONSULTANCY/FURTHER ACTIVITIES
To support the strategic objectives of the University and to facilitate individual professional development, the University encourages staff to engage in professional activities with outside bodies related to their field of work. In many cases, such activity will be approved on the basis that it represents University knowledge exchange activity and should therefore be treated as part of the individual’s overall workload and managed through the University’s systems. It is also recognised that there will be some cases where an activity is entirely separate from the University and should thus be notified/approved as a personal business activity. For further information please refer to the “University Procedure in relation to Work for Outside Bodies including Consultancies”, which forms part of the employment contract and can be accessed at www.strath.ac.uk/hr.

9. DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
Further information on the University’s disciplinary and grievance procedure can also be found at [www.strath.ac.uk/policies/hr](http://www.strath.ac.uk/policies/hr) or on request from Human Resources.

10. NOTICE AND TERMINATION
Members of staff are employed on the conditions indicated in individual letters of appointment and any accompanying papers. The University is not obliged to give notice of termination or continue any employment beyond the end of that period. Where the period of the contract of employment is for one year or less it may be terminated at the end of the fixed term period by one months notice on either side. Where you have one year or a further series of contracts immediately consecutive, the employment may be terminated at the end of the fixed term period by three months notice on either side, except during the probationary period when the notice period is one month. If the appointment is for a fixed term it will expire at the end of the period without the necessity for notice.

Revised April 2023