

Civic Research Internships

Research Assistant application process and guidance

Research Assistant role advertised

All Research Assistant roles will be listed on the [PLN website](#), advertised through mycareer, and all eligible students will also receive an email bulletin. Applications for each role will be open for at least two weeks.



You apply for the role

You will need to complete an online application form for each role you are applying for. The application forms will always follow the same format. *See attachment 1 for more information and guidance.*



The PLN passes all eligible applications to the project team

Once the deadline passes all applications will be checked for eligibility. If there are a high number of applications, we may not have capacity to email ineligible applicants to let them know. Please check [full eligibility criteria](#) before applying.



The project team shortlist applications

If the role receives a high number of applications, we will give priority to applicants who meet one or more of the criteria listed in attachment 2. *See attachment 2 for more information.*



Outcome of application

You will receive an email letting you know whether you've been shortlisted and are invited to an interview. You will receive an email no matter the outcome of your application.



Interview

The panel will be made up of some or all of the project team. At this stage you should discuss your availability, start dates and working pattern. *See attachment 3 for more information and guidance.*



Outcome of interview

At your interview the panel will let you know when you will be told if you've been offered the role or not.



You start your role as Research Assistant

The PLN will check in with you about half way through your role to check that everything is going according to plan, but you can contact us at any time if you have any questions, issues or concerns.



Feedback and evaluation

We think that taking part in activities like this is beneficial for everyone involved. To see if this is the case, you will be asked to give your feedback. You may also be asked to give more in-depth feedback for an evaluation project. *See attachment 4 for more information.*

Attachment 1 – applications

All job descriptions and application forms for Research Assistant roles will follow the same format so you'll know what to expect every time.

Each time we advertise a role you will need to complete a new application form for that specific role. This is because the projects, and sometimes phases within each project, will require specific skills and knowledge. (If two or more roles are being advertised within one job description you only need to apply once and may be asked to specify which role is your preference.)

- Before completing the application form make sure you've familiarised yourself with the relevant job description, including any websites, social media and additional reading that's been suggested.
- We suggest that you draft your application and answer all questions in a Word document before completing the online form. Doing this means you can:
 - spend as much time as you need working on it without experiencing any timeout-issues
 - use spell checking and word count tools
 - keep a copy for your own records, which is useful if you're invited for an interview and when applying for other roles

The questions in the screenshot of the application form below are where you should explain to the panel why you're a good candidate for the role. Your answers to these questions should refer back to the job description, and under each question we have given suggestions about which sections are most relevant.

[illegible]

The [Careers Service](#) have helpful online resources about writing applications, including:

- Their online [Application Form Guide](#)
- Videos and written resources from their [Career Support Officer](#) you can find through mycareer
- E-learning modules to support you in [completing your application](#)

The Careers Service are also available to help with your application – either speak to them online [via their Live Chat](#) (9.30 am – 4.30 pm every weekday), or [book a 1:1 appointment](#) for more detailed advice.

Attachment 2 – shortlisting and eligibility

The University's [Access and Participation Plan \(APP\) 2020-2025](#) has identified five key groups of undergraduate students that face real barriers to academic and career development.

Therefore, we will give priority to applicants who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- you are a Black, Asian or minority ethnic student. We would particularly welcome applications from students from an ethnic group that is under-represented at the University of Bristol (Asian Pakistani; Asian Bangladeshi; Asian Indian; Black Caribbean; Black African; mixed backgrounds featuring one of these groups);
- you have a disability. Please note that the term disability is very wide; further details of what may be considered a disability are in the [definition of disability](#);
- you are a mature student (aged 21 or over when you started your first undergraduate course);
- your postcode is listed as a '1' or '2' in the POLAR4 column on the [POLAR checking tool](#);
- you are a [care-leaver](#) or an [estranged student](#).

Applicants who do not meet any of these criteria are still eligible to apply. For full eligibility criteria please visit our [website](#).

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Professional Liaison Network – fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk

Attachment 3 - interview

If you've been invited to an interview, you will be told in advance who is on the interview panel. This will be some or all of the research project team and will sometimes include someone from the project's partner organisation.

As well as the panel asking you questions, this is an opportunity for you to work out if the role is right for you.

At this point you should also:

- discuss start dates and a working pattern
- confirm what the expectation and needs of the project are in terms of your availability and location e.g. will you be working remotely, are you expected to meet in-person
- let the panel know about any areas where you might need our support e.g. Do you have a laptop? Do you need any IT equipment so you can carry out the work?

Get interview ready

(The below is taken from the Careers Service [Interview Guide](#), which you can access in full.)

1. Prepare

The more prepared you are, the more confident you will be at the interview. If the interview is online, try out platform you'll be using beforehand, and try to find a calm, quiet space for the interview.

Revisit your application (if you haven't saved this we can send it to you) and make sure you're happy talking about any of the skills and experience you have included.

2. Research

Thoroughly research the role (re-read the job description), partner organisation and sector (if relevant). Familiarise yourself with their website, social media channels, and any other reading relevant to the project. This shows the panel you are dedicated to the role.

3. Anticipate

Prepare answers to typical questions, such as:

- Why do you want this role?
- Tell us about yourself
- Tell us about a time when you... or Describe a situation where you...

4. Practise

It can feel uncomfortable to talk about yourself and your achievements at first, so it's a good idea to practise. You can do this in front of the mirror, with friends or family, or using the Careers Service [interview simulator](#).

5. Prepare questions

You will be given the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview. Prepare some questions that show a genuine interest and desire to succeed in the role.

The [Careers Service](#) have other useful online resources to help you prepare for interviews, including:

- Their online [Interview Guide](#)
- Regular [interview skills workshops and events](#) you can find through mycareer
- E-learning modules to help you [prepare for interviews](#) and [answer interview questions](#)
- [Interview360 tool](#) – practice answering interview questions and get instant feedback

Attachment 4 – evaluation

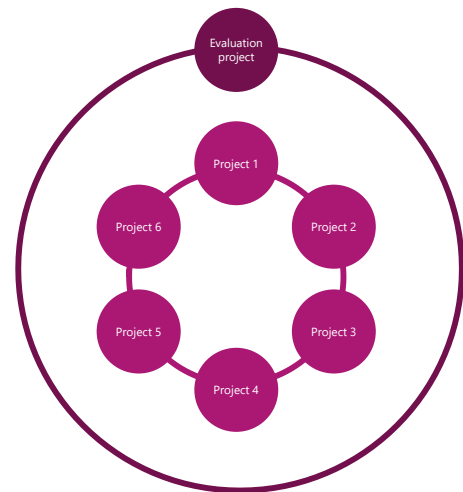
By becoming a Research Assistant, you will develop new skills and discover new pathways for learning. We hope that this experience will:

- Drive your interest in your subject area
- Improve overall academic achievement
- Develop your soft skills and increase employability
- Inspire further study

As part of the Bristol Model, a research team are looking into the impact that opportunities like this have on undergraduate students. They may ask to talk to you, to understand how your experiences as a Research Assistant have impacted your academic and employment outcomes.

If you become a Research Assistant, you will be asked to complete a feedback form and may also be asked to meet with the evaluation project team or take part in a focus group.

This feedback and evaluation is not to assess your work on the project. It will help us identify factors that contribute to the impact of the activities we run and identify any issues and areas we can change to improve our activities. It will also help us to run more activities like this in the future.



Support

If you have any questions at any point during the application process or whilst undertaking work as a Research Assistant through either our Bristol Model or Civic Research Internship programmes, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Professional Liaison Network

fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk