

# RESEARCH ASSISTANT



<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Research Assistant</b>
<b>Department:</b>	Population Health
<b>Faculty:</b>	Epidemiology and Population Health
<b>Location:</b>	London
<b>FTE:</b>	0.5 FTE
<b>Grade:</b>	G5
<b>Accountable to:</b>	Principal Investigator (PI) Isolde Birdthistle
<b>Job Summary:</b>	<p>The post holder will work collaboratively with an inter-disciplinary research team at LSHTM and with institutional partners in South Africa to contribute to the evaluation of MTV Shuga ('Down South' season 2 campaign; DS2). The MTV Shuga DS2 campaign is a '360-degree' multi-media campaign produced by MTV Staying Alive Foundation with funding by Unitaid to contribute to HIV prevention among young people, particularly by increasing the demand for HIV self-testing and PrEP in sub-Saharan Africa. The LSHTM PIs are Isolde Birdthistle (DPH) and Simon Cousens (IDE).</p> <p>The post offers an opportunity for a Research Assistant to design and analyse a qualitative study embedded within the wider evaluation. This will include the preparation of research tools and training materials, the execution of qualitative data analysis, and the dissemination of findings through presentations and papers. They will also contribute to training and support for the qualitative data collection team in Eastern Cape, South Africa.</p>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is a world-leading centre for research and postgraduate education in public and global health. Our mission is to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide; working in partnership to achieve excellence in public and global health research, education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice.

Founded in 1899, the School has expanded in recent years at its two main sites on Keppel Street and Tavistock Place. Our staff, students and alumni work in more than 150 countries in government, academia, international agencies and health services.

Research income has grown to more than £180 million per year from national and international funding sources including UK government and research councils, the European Union, the Wellcome Trust, Gates Foundation and other philanthropic sources.

Our diverse research talents, skills and experience, underpin our position as a leader in public and global health. These range from the molecular to the global, the theoretical to the applied, the analytical to the political. Our staff are conducting research in more than 100 countries.

We have 3,000 staff based all around the world with core hubs in London and at the MRC Units in The Gambia and Uganda, which joined LSHTM in February 2018. Our outstanding, diverse and committed staff make an impact where it is most needed - deploying research in real time in

response to crises, developing innovative programmes for major health threats, or training the next generations of public and global health leaders and researchers.

Working in partnership is central to achieving our mission. Our strategic collaborations in the UK and across high-, middle- and low-income countries deliver health and socioeconomic benefits across the world, especially in the most disadvantaged communities.

LSHTM is also a member of the M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centers, Universities and National Academies, the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region, and the Consortium of Universities for Global Health.

We deliver research-led educational programmes to future health leaders, managers and researchers across the world. We have more than 1,000 face-to-face Master's and Doctoral students, 3,000 studying by distance learning, and 1,000 each year on short courses and continuous professional development. Our free online courses are studied by more than 55,000 participants globally.

LSHTM performs strongly in various global university league tables. In the 2018 Shanghai World Ranking we placed 151-200 overall, and ranked 3rd in public health, 40th in clinical medicine, and 76th in human biology. In the US News Best Global Universities Ranking 2019, we ranked ninth in the UK overall and 13th in the world in the fields of social sciences and public health in the 2019 QS World University Rankings.

In 2017, the inaugural Center for World University Rankings by Subject placed LSHTM first in the world for tropical medicine research, second for parasitology and seventh for infectious diseases, public, environment and occupational health and social sciences and biomedical. LSHTM ranked first in Europe for research impact in sciences, based on its proportion of publications that belong to the top 1% most frequently cited publications, in the 2018 CWT Leiden Ranking.

LSHTM was named University of the Year 2016 by Times Higher Education and awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2017 in recognition of our response to the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa. (LSHTM does not appear in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings as universities are excluded if they do not teach undergraduates).

We seek to foster and sustain a creative and supportive working environment based upon an ethos of respect and rigorous scientific enquiry. We embrace and value the diversity of our staff and student population and seek to promote equality as an essential element in contribution to improving health worldwide.

LSHTM is one of around 20 specialist institutions that receive institution specific funding from the Office for Students (OfS). This funding recognises the additional costs that LSHTM incurs because of its unique range of teaching, specialist facilities, and the scale of its contributions to national and international agencies.

## **FACULTY INFORMATION**

**The Faculty of Epidemiology & Population Health (EPH)** houses a large group of epidemiologists, demographers, statisticians and nutritionists working on issues of major public health importance in the UK and globally. EPH has approximately 400 staff members organised into four research departments.

- Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology
- Department of Medical Statistics
- Department of Non-communicable Disease Epidemiology
- Department of Population Health

The Faculty has a teaching programme consisting of ten MSc courses: Epidemiology, Demography and Health, Medical Statistics, Public Health for Development (run jointly with the Faculties of Infectious & Tropical Diseases and Public Health & Policy), Nutrition for Global Health, Reproductive & Sexual Health Research, Veterinary Epidemiology (run jointly with the Royal Veterinary College), Global Mental Health (run jointly with Kings College London - Institute of Psychiatry) and the Distance Learning courses in Epidemiology, Clinical Trials and Demography and Health. The Faculty also has approximately 120 research students studying for an MPhil, PhD or DrPH degree.

The Dean of Faculty is Professor Liam Smeeth.

## **DEPARTMENT INFORMATION**

The Department of Population Health (DPH) aims to increase global access to effective treatments and public health interventions, and is a centre of excellence in the determinants and consequences of population change. We have strong links with many overseas research groups and provide world-class opportunities for postgraduate training.

The Department Head is Professor Rebecca Sear.

## **THE POPULATION STUDIES GROUP (PSG)**

The Population Studies Group (PSG) in the Department of Population Health (DPH) is engaged in the measurement and explanation of population trends and the analysis of health and other consequences of population changes. With 21 academic and academic-related staff and 12 research students, PSG represents one of the largest UK research groups in demography, reproductive health research and related disciplines. Most staff work in London, but a few members of staff are based in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Malawi.

PSG has strong programmes of research in both rich and poor countries on topical issues in the fields of reproductive and sexual health, the demographic impact of the AIDS epidemic in Africa, family demography, evolutionary demography, as well as methodological work on demographic analysis techniques. It holds a substantial number of research grants awarded by the MRC, ESRC, Wellcome, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

PSG provides much of the teaching for the MSc in Demography and Health and the MSc in Reproductive and Sexual Health Research. These courses are long-established Economic and Social Research Council outlets for postgraduate training and the research group currently holds several ESRC DTC and MRC studentships.

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

'Accelerating demand for HIV self-testing among young people' is a new project led by MTV Staying Alive Foundation and funded by Unitaid. The project aims to create new MTV Shuga campaigns to generate demand for HIV self-testing and PrEP and other HIV prevention strategies among young people across sub-Saharan Africa. As the research partner on the project, LSHTM is conducting an independent evaluation of the new MTV Shuga campaigns, led by Principal Investigators Isolde Birdthistle (DPH) and Simon Cousens (IDE). LSHTM is collaborating with Epicentre, a research institute in South Africa. The evaluation will generate and triangulate evidence from a range of methodologies, including a qualitative study utilizing in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and content analysis of social media data.

The portfolio of duties outlined below will vary in accordance with the detailed expectations of the role (attached), which may be varied from time to time, and agreed at your annual Performance and Development Review (PDR).

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Main Activities and Responsibilities**

#### **KNOWLEDGE GENERATION**

1. To undertake high quality research as directed by your line manager, including contributing to drafting grant proposals and peer-reviewed and other outputs;
2. To support the administration of projects linked to your employment, helping ensure compliance with good practice in relation to the conduct of research, the ethics policy, and other relevant School policies;
3. To design topic guides for focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with young people (15-24 years) and parents/guardians in Eastern Cape, South Africa;
4. To help conduct fieldworker training in Eastern Cape, South Africa, in the areas of pilot-testing, data collection, transcription and translation of qualitative research data.
5. To manage and store qualitative data in secure and ethical ways;
6. To conduct coding and thematic analysis of qualitative and social media data using both inductive and deductive approaches;
7. To contribute to the interpretation of quantitative survey data, with insights from the qualitative research;
8. To disseminate findings through oral presentations and written outputs (including peer-reviewed publications and reports to funders and stakeholders).

#### **EDUCATION**

1. To participate in some aspects of the School's Education Programme or educational outreach activities;

#### **INTERNAL CONTRIBUTION**

1. To undertake activities that support the Department, Faculty or the School;
2. To participate in the School's PDR process;

#### **EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTION**

1. To demonstrate good external citizenship by supporting the external academic and practice communities;

# RESEARCH ASSISTANT



2. To engage with MTV Staying Alive Foundation and Epicentre, to facilitate collaboration.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

1. To keep up-to-date with the latest research / thinking in your academic field and with changes to pedagogic practice within the School and more generally;
2. For lab-based disciplines: where the length and nature of the position permits, to apply for and, if accepted, undertake a doctoral degree (if not already acquired);
3. To undertake and successfully complete the mandatory training required by the School as appropriate to the role;

## GENERAL

All academic staff are free within the law to question and test received wisdom, and put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, to enable the School to engage in research and promote learning to the highest possible standards.

All staff at LSHTM are also expected to:

1. Act at all times in the School's best interests;
2. Treat School staff, students and visitors with courtesy and respect at all times;
3. Comply fully with School policies, procedures and administrative processes relevant to the role;
4. Uphold and support the School's values (as set out in the School Strategy document);
5. Act as ambassadors for the School when hosting visitors or attending external events;

*The above list of duties is not exclusive or exhaustive and the role holder will be required to undertake such tasks as may reasonably be expected within the scope and grading of the role.*

*Role descriptions should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are an accurate representation of the role.*

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

This form lists the essential and desirable requirements needed by the post holder to be able to perform the job effectively.

Applicants will be shortlisted solely on the extent to which they meet these requirements.

### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. MSc degree in a relevant field such as a sexual and reproductive health discipline and/or social science research methods (e.g., ethnography, anthropology, sociology) either awarded or imminent.
2. Experience in the thematic analysis of qualitative data related to sexual & reproductive health including HIV.
3. Research or programmatic experience related to educational entertainment or multi-media health interventions for adolescents and/or young adults.
4. Evidence of producing written and oral research outputs disseminated through peer-reviewed journals or scientific conferences.
5. Evidence of understanding current HIV prevention needs and opportunities in sub-Saharan African countries, particularly among adolescents and young adults.
6. Evidence of good organisational skills, including effective time management.
7. Proven ability to work independently, as well as collaboratively as part of a research team.
8. Evidence of excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
9. Relevant computer/analytical skills - this includes competence in software packages to create and refine a coding framework and facilitate thematic analysis of qualitative and social media data.
10. Willingness to travel to Eastern Cape, South Africa, for several weeks at a time.

### DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Some experience of teaching
2. Research or work experience in sub-Saharan Africa
3. Demonstrates understanding of theories or frameworks underlying behaviour change or adoption, with relevance to adolescents and young adults.

## **SALARY AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

The post is funded for nine months in the first instance. The salary will be on the Academic scale, Grade 5 at £34,854 per annum (inclusive of London Weighting). The post will be subject to the LSHTM terms and conditions of service. Annual leave entitlement is 30 working days per year, pro rata for part time staff. In addition to this there are discretionary "Director's Days". Membership of the Pension Scheme is available.

Applications should be made on-line via our website at <http://jobs.lshtm.ac.uk>. Applications should also include the names and email contacts of 2 referees who can be contacted immediately if shortlisted. Online applications will be accepted by the automated system until 10pm of the closing date. Any queries regarding the application process may be addressed to [jobs@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@lshtm.ac.uk).

The supporting statement section should set out how your qualifications, experience and training meet each of the selection criteria. Please provide one or more paragraphs addressing each criterion. The supporting statement is an essential part of the selection process and thus a failure to provide this information will mean that the application will not be considered. An answer to any of the criteria such as "Please see attached CV" will not be considered acceptable.

Please note that if you are shortlisted and are unable to attend on the interview date it may not be possible to offer you an alternative date.

## **ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION STATEMENT**

The School will comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, which requires all employees to provide documentary evidence of their legal right to work in this country prior to commencing employment. Candidates will be required to email a copy of their passport (and visa if applicable) to HR prior to their interview and if appointed will be asked to bring the original documents in to be copied and verified before their start date.

This role does not meet the minimum requirements set by UK Visas and Immigration to enable sponsorship of migrant workers. Therefore we cannot progress applications from candidates who require sponsorship to work in the UK.

Further information about Certificate of Sponsorship and eligibility to work in the UK, can be found at: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/points](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/points)

Date compiled: Jan 2019

## Academic Expectations: Research Assistant

Examples of expected types of activities are listed; the selection of activities will vary from year to year and not all activities in each category would necessarily be done in any one year. The statement in each shaded heading summarises the general expectations for contributions in each category. Given the nature of employment as a Research Assistant, it is expected that most activity will focus on knowledge generation, but some activity in other areas is desirable and will be required for career progression.

<b><i>Knowledge generation: High quality support for, and contribution to, research</i></b>
<i>Research and scholarship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undertaking research, as directed by line manager</li><li>• Contributions to funding applications including supporting more senior staff in completing applications</li><li>• Contributing to peer-reviewed outputs as expected by the subject area/discipline in terms of types of output</li><li>• Poster/oral presentations at conferences</li><li>• Social media contributions such as twitter, blogs, web-based media or webinars</li></ul> <i>Doctoral degree supervision</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None expected though involvement in advisory activities/roles or provision of practical skills training is encouraged where relevant</li></ul> <i>Research management, leadership and support</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective management of own time and activities</li><li>• Supporting the administration of projects he/she is employed on, eg taking meeting minutes</li></ul> <i>Professional development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate courses and other development activities, referenced to RDF</li><li>• Especially for lab-based disciplines: where the length, nature and funding source of the position permit, to apply for and, if accepted, undertake a doctoral degree (if not already acquired).</li></ul>
<b><i>Education: Participation in educational activities<sup>1</sup></i></b>
<i>Teaching and assessment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited participation in some aspects of the School's Education Programme or education outreach activities e.g. contributions to taught courses, research methods training, mentoring school pupils on outreach programmes</li></ul>
<i>Educational development and innovation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited contributions to educational innovations or developments, e.g. helping to update the content or delivery of a course or module</li></ul> <i>Educational leadership and management</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None expected</li></ul> <i>Professional development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formal study/training and/or other activities that develop educational knowledge and expertise, referenced to UKPSF</li></ul>
<b><i>Internal contribution: Support to the academic environment in the Department or beyond</i></b>
<i>Internal citizenship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting Department/Faculty/Centre/School events or special interest groups; organising seminars/lab meetings/journal clubs; group or departmental social organising; support to Athena Swan activities; support to external partnerships</li></ul> <i>General leadership and management roles</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None expected but credit can be given if undertaken</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> it is accepted that some RA roles and/or funding make it difficult to give time to Educational activities, but some degree of engagement is encouraged



***External contribution: Support to the external academic community***

*External citizenship*

- Involvement in journal or book reviews, if opportunities arise
- Sharing examples of good practice (e.g. contributing to discipline-specific interest group or professional bodies)

*Knowledge translation and enterprise: not expected but options include*

- Collection of evidence of research impact for impact case studies (e.g. policy records, correspondence with policy makers, media highlights)
- Engagement with policy/practice/industry/NGO communities and with the general public