

RESEARCH ASSISTANT OR RESEARCH FELLOW



Job Title:	Research Assistant or Research Fellow
Department:	Disease Control and Elimination Theme
Faculty:	MRC Unit The Gambia
Location:	Basse, The Gambia
FTE:	1.0 FTE
Grade:	Research Assistant Grade 5 or Research Fellow Grade 6
Accountable to:	Associate Professor Grant Mackenzie
Job Summary:	Research Fellow in Clinical Trial and Vaccine Epidemiology on the Pneumococcal Vaccine Schedules Study (PVS)

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 £110 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. The School's multidisciplinary expertise includes clinicians, epidemiologists, statisticians, social scientists, molecular biologists and immunologists, and we work with partners worldwide to support the development of teaching and research capacity.

Our education provision has expanded to more than 1,000 London-based Master's and Research students, 3,000 studying postgraduate courses by distance learning, and 1,000 each year on short courses and continuous professional development. Our free online courses (MOOCs) are studied by more than 30,000 participants globally.

The School performs well in various global university league tables. In the US News Best Global Universities Ranking 2017, we are ranked sixth in the world (together with Oxford University) in the fields of social sciences and public health. In the 2016 CWTS Leiden Ranking, the School was ranked fifth in the world for research impact across all disciplines, based on the share of institutions' outputs within the top 1% of papers by citation in all areas of science and independent of size of output.

The School was named University of the Year 2016 by Times Higher Education, in recognition of our response to the Ebola epidemic. The School is a member of the M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centres, Universities and National Academies, the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region, and the Consortium of Universities for Global Health.

FACULTY INFORMATION

Established in 1947, the Medical Research Council in The Gambia has an international reputation for ground-breaking research into some of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the tropics. The overall goal of the Unit is to improve the health of people in developing countries by aiming for excellence in research, healthcare and training. The research programme of the Unit spans basic scientific research (immunology, microbiology, virology and molecular biology), clinical studies, large epidemiological studies and intervention trials, and translational research. The field and laboratory-based work draws on excellent research and clinical facilities and attracts international funding. The Unit has about 150 scientists, clinicians and senior administrative staff from many parts of the world, as well as hosting visiting researchers, and over 400 support staff. There are also field stations – Basse, Keneba and Walikunda - each in a different ecological setting, providing varied research opportunities.

To reflect changes in national and global health priorities and new international funding opportunities the Unit's research portfolio has been organized under three themes: Disease Control & Elimination; Nutrition; Vaccines & Immunity. These themes have been selected to target the health needs of developing countries, to reinforce sub-regional and international collaborations and to address some of the major current priorities in Global Health research.

The Disease Control & Elimination theme is conducting a number of investigations concerning respiratory infection. Over the last 10 years, in collaboration with the Gambia Government, the Unit has conducted surveillance for pneumonia, meningitis, and septicaemia to measure the impact of the introduction of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) into the EPI. The incidence of invasive pneumococcal disease caused by serotypes included in the vaccine has fallen by 95%, invasive disease due to all serotypes has fallen by 60% and rates of very severe pneumonia have fallen by 61%. These projects were conducted from the Basse Field Station in the Upper River Region (URR) of the country with some studies also located in neighbouring Central River Region (CRR). The PCV evaluation studies have been based within Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems in the Basse area, covering the area of the country south of the River Gambia in the URR (population 179,000) and in the neighbouring Fuladu West district, covering the area south of the river in CRR (population 90,000).

Pneumococcal vaccination and EPI programmes in general, face several imminent challenges. Around half of the world's children do not receive PCV, primarily because the vaccine is relatively expensive precluding its introduction in a significant number of countries. Cost issues are also of concern in a number of low-income countries whose economic growth will soon lead to graduation from GAVI support for subsidised vaccine. In such countries, the maintenance of pneumococcal vaccination will require significant increases in national EPI budgets. Low-income countries also aspire to introduce additional vaccines, but this is challenging due to the costs involved and crowding of immunisation schedules. In response to these issues, and given that pneumococcal disease has been well-controlled by the introduction of PCV, the Unit plans to conduct a large study evaluating whether continued use of an alternative PCV schedule that includes one early and one booster dose (i.e. a '1+1' schedule) will have the same impact as the current schedule of three early doses (i.e. a '3+0' schedule). The study will be conducted in collaboration with the Gambia Government. The PCV schedules trial (PVS) will be located in the Basse and Fuladu West Demographic Surveillance areas in URR and CRR.

A Clinical Trial and Vaccine Epidemiologist is required to support the PI in the coordination of the PVS study. The post-holder will be based in Basse, a town of 30,000 in URR situated about 400 kilometres from the coast with limited local facilities, including schooling. Free-furnished residential accommodation will be provided, and for displaced staff the package will include overseas allowances, flights and other benefits.

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).

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Main Activities and Responsibilities

KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

Research Assistant

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 contribute to peer-reviewed publications, including as lead author;
3. 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;
4. To lead the management of clinical trial research activities on a day-to-day basis, including ensuring that field, laboratory and data processes and systems are delivering the required outputs, ensuring regulatory compliance and quality assurance across the study, and organising training and standardization of clinical and field activities.
5. To perform data analysis necessary for the implementation of the PVS study.
6. To undertake the effective management of staff as necessary, including field assistants, nurses and study personnel.
7. To develop and maintain excellent relationships with study participants, the local population and Government colleagues

Research Fellow

1. To undertake high quality research & scholarship, including contributing to drafting major grant proposals and/or leading on drafting small grant proposals;
2. To contribute to peer-reviewed publications, including as lead author;
3. 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;
4. To make a contribution to research degree student supervision, as appropriate to qualifications and experience;
5. To manage small grants or elements of larger grants, ensuring compliance with good practice in relation to the conduct of research, the ethics policy and other relevant School policies;
6. To lead on the management of clinical trial research activities on a day-to-day basis, including ensuring that field, laboratory and data processes and systems are delivering the required outputs, ensuring regulatory compliance and quality assurance across the study, and organising training and standardization of clinical and field activities.
7. To perform data analysis to answer scientific questions relevant to the PVS study and to support trial implementation.
8. To undertake the effective management of staff as necessary, including clinicians, field assistants, nurses, laboratory staff and other study personnel.
9. To develop and maintain excellent relationships with study participants, the local population and Government colleagues

EDUCATION

Research Assistant

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

Research Fellow

1. To contribute to the delivery of high quality, research-informed teaching and assessment in relation to your specific subject and within the broader area covered by your department and disciplinary field;
2. To contribute to the improvement of the quality of the School's education, by participating in the development of new and updated learning and teaching materials or approaches;
3. To participate in the delivery of distance learning modules at LSHTM by acting as an assessor.

INTERNAL CONTRIBUTION

Research Assistant

1. To undertake activities that support the Department, Faculty or the School;
2. To participate in the School's PDR process;
3. To participate in an academic journal club at Basse Field Station.
4. To participate in clinical and scientific meetings organised at the MRC.

Research Fellow

1. To undertake activities that support the Department, Faculty or the School;
2. To participate in the School's PDR process
3. To lead an academic journal club and scientific seminar series at Basse Field Station.
4. To participate in clinical and scientific meetings organised at the MRC.

EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTION

Research Assistant

1. To demonstrate good external citizenship by supporting the external academic and practice communities;
2. To present research findings at relevant academic conferences.

Research Fellow

1. To demonstrate good external citizenship by contributing to learned society/conference events, journal and grant reviews etc
2. To present research findings at relevant academic conferences.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Research Assistant

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;

Research Fellow

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. 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;

2. Where the length and nature of the position permits, to apply for and, if accepted, undertake a post-doctoral fellowship;
3. To undertake and successfully complete the mandatory training required by the School 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, including when acting as Principal Investigator, accepting academic, managerial, financing and ethical responsibility for a project
4. Comply with all of the relevant safety rules and regulations as detailed in the MRC Safety Manual
5. Uphold and support the School's values (as set out in the School Strategy document);
6. 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.

[MAY 2018]

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

Research Assistant	Research Fellow
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. MSc in Epidemiology or Master of Public Health2. Experience in pneumonia / bacterial / pneumococcal disease research3. Experience working in a research institute4. Experience on research projects conducted in low-income countries5. Experience in data analysis6. Excellent record keeping skills7. Understanding of the implementation and co-ordination of epidemiological studies or randomized trials8. Computer literate, e.g. Word, Excel, Access, Email, Statistical software9. The ability to work well in a multi-disciplinary team10. Excellent inter-personal skills and a willingness to work with others to overcome problems as and when they arise11. Ability to work effectively in a multicultural environment, provide mentorship to junior colleagues and supervise students12. Excellent written and spoken English13. Excellent communication skills14. Ability to deal sensitively with the collaborators and sponsors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. PhD in a relevant field e.g. epidemiology2. Experience in pneumonia / bacterial / pneumococcal disease research3. Significant experience working in a research institute4. Significant experience on research projects conducted in low-income countries5. Track record of publications in peer-reviewed journals6. Experience in data analysis7. Proven experience of managing staff8. Excellent record keeping skills9. Practical experience in the implementation and co-ordination of epidemiological studies or randomized trials10. Capacity to coordinate a complex group of studies11. Computer literate, e.g. Word, Excel, Access, Email, Statistical software12. The ability to work well in a multi-disciplinary team13. Excellent inter-personal skills and a willingness to work with others to overcome problems as and when they arise14. Ability to work effectively in a multicultural environment, provide mentorship to junior colleagues and supervise students15. Excellent written and spoken English16. Excellent communication skills17. Ability to deal sensitively with the collaborators and sponsors

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

Research Assistant	Research Fellow
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. MB BS / MD or equivalent medical qualifications2. FWACP Part 1 or equivalent3. Experience in laboratory procedures in research or experience of collaborative research involving laboratory determined outcomes and/or exposures	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. MB BS / MD or equivalent medical qualifications2. FWACP Part 1 or equivalent3. Experience in laboratory procedures in research or experience of collaborative research involving laboratory determined outcomes and/or exposures4. Experience and demonstrable success in training and supervising research staff

E-Essential: Requirement without which the job could not be done

D-Desirable: Requirements that would enable the candidate to perform the job well

SALARY AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

The post is funded until June 2022. The salary will be on the Academic scale, at Grade 5 for a Research Assistant in the range £34,238 – £39,304 per annum inclusive, or at Grade 6 for a Research Fellow in the range £39,304 - £44,634 per annum inclusive. 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. Please quote reference REF MRC-MRC-2018-06

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.

Date compiled: May 2018

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.

<i>Knowledge generation: High quality support for, and contribution to, research</i>
<i>Research and scholarship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertaking research, as directed by line manager• Contributions to funding applications including supporting more senior staff in completing applications• Contributing to peer-reviewed outputs as expected by the subject area/discipline in terms of types of output• Poster/oral presentations at conferences• Social media contributions such as twitter, blogs, web-based media or webinars <i>Doctoral degree supervision</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None expected though involvement in advisory activities/roles or provision of practical skills training is encouraged where relevant <i>Research management, leadership and support</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective management of own time and activities• Supporting the administration of projects he/she is employed on, eg taking meeting minutes <i>Professional development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate courses and other development activities, referenced to RDF• Especially for or lab-based disciplines: to apply for and undertake a doctoral degree (if not already acquired), if contract and funding source permit.
<i>Education: Participation in educational activities¹</i>
<i>Teaching and assessment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <i>Educational development and innovation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited contributions to educational innovations or developments, e.g. helping to update the content or delivery of a course or module <i>Educational leadership and management</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None expected <i>Professional development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal study/training and/or other activities that develop educational knowledge and expertise, referenced to UKPSF
<i>Internal contribution: Support to the academic environment in the Department or beyond</i>
<i>Internal citizenship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <i>General leadership and management roles</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None expected

¹it 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

<i>External contribution: Support to the external academic community</i>
<i>External citizenship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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) <i>Knowledge translation and enterprise: not expected but options include</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

Academic Expectations: Research Fellow

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 Fellow, it is expected that most activity will focus on knowledge generation, but some activity in other areas is required and will support career progression.

<i>Knowledge generation: Independent contributions and a clear trajectory towards excellence as an academic researcher</i>
<i>Research and scholarship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertaking research• Working with PIs to draft grant proposals and/or leading writing of small grants, work packages or sections of larger proposals or personal fellowship applications• Contributing to peer-reviewed outputs, including as first author, as expected by the subject area/discipline in terms of types of output• Poster/oral presentations at relevant conferences, translation of research findings into educational materials• Social media contributions such as twitter, blogs, web-based media or webinars <i>Doctoral degree supervision</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For RFs with Doctorate, some contribution to doctoral degree supervision is encouraged (e.g. specialist skills training; ad hoc advice; advisory committees). RFs without a Doctorate may also advise in areas of specialist knowledge² <i>Research management, leadership and support</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective management of own time and activities• Management of small research grants or elements of larger grants, including management of data collection and relationships with research collaborators, support to grants management <i>Professional development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courses and other professional development activities, referenced to RDF• To apply for and undertake a doctoral degree (if not already acquired), if contract and funding source permit;
<i>Education: Basic competence in teaching and assessment</i>
<i>Teaching and assessment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research-informed teaching and assessment contributions (e.g. contributions to modules, MSc project supervision) <i>Educational development and innovation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributing to the development of new educational materials, learning opportunities or assessments approaches <i>Education leadership and management</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None expected <i>Professional development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in professional development activities referenced to UKPSF (e.g. HEA, PGCILT, preparation for doctoral degree supervision, shadowing more experienced colleagues)
<i>Internal contribution: Contributions to School functioning and development</i>
<i>Internal citizenship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributing to at least one Department, Faculty, School, or Centre event or special interest group in any one year;

² Such RFs are expected where the length and nature of the position permits, to apply for and, if accepted, undertake a doctoral degree (if not already acquired)

- Supporting external School collaborations/partnerships (beyond own research or education role) where relevant

School leadership and management roles

- None expected

External contribution: Contribution beyond the School

External citizenship

- Contributing to learned society/conference events, journal and grant reviews etc

Knowledge translation and enterprise: not expected but options include:

- Collecting evidence of research impact for impact case studies (e.g. policy records, correspondence with policy makers, media highlights)
- Engaging with policy/practice/industry/NGO communities and the general public
- Supporting MOOCs/OERs or other (e.g. educational) outreach