# Job Description – Research Associate Public Trust in Forensic Science

**About the Role**

We are seeking a research associate to contribute to the Economic and Social Research Council-funded project entitled Trust in forensic science evidence in the criminal justice system: The experience of marginalised groups. The successful candidate will help produce research that will enrich understandings of how the general public and specific marginalised members of the public (dis)trust forensic science evidence, i.e., DNA and digital evidence, and the way it is used in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in an end-to-end, crime scene to courtroom process. They will be part of a project team developing a relationship between charities that support marginalised users, academics and stakeholders involved in the CJS in the UK to consider issues of trust in forensic science. The successful candidate will use their qualitative and quantitative research methods knowledge and skills to capture and analyse data to design a tool to facilitate understandings of (dis)trust of forensic science evidence.

Four objectives will examine and mitigate mistrust in forensic science evidence.

Objective 1 involves investigation into how policy, practitioners, the media and others shape perceptions of trust of forensic science evidence, building on theory and the forensic science literature.

Objective 2 examines stakeholder perspectives about how forensic science evidence informs CJS cases, and particularly cases involving marginalised users. Language bias will be assessed, i.e., its impact on marginalised users' experience of forensic science.

Objective 3 involves hearing directly from marginalised users about trust in forensic science, investigating how, when, and why it helps inform whether the evidence is, and should be, used in the CJS. This will be explored through interactive and participatory action research methods with users.

Objective 4 involves the iterative co-design of a tool measuring and uncovering how can distrust of forensic science evidence may be mitigated, and public trust improved, through the collaborative development of a user-centred design tool.

**Key responsibilities**

This is not intended as a comprehensive list of duties or a restrictive definition of the post but is rather a guide.

* Knowledge of iterative and user interface co-design
* Liaising with marginalised user groups
* Developing research materials
* Collecting, processing and preparing data for analysis
* Contributing to the production of project outputs and reports
* Assist with setting up and maintenance of online project resources and social media
* Attendance at project-related meetings and conferences
* Assist with quality assurance
* Coordination with the project team made up of seven academics in universities in England and Scotland

**Skills and experience**

**Essential:**

Education, qualifications and training:

* A first degree or equivalent in design, psychology, social sciences, forensic science or related subject.
* At least 3 years of relevant experience, post-degree, in research and practice or commensurate education.

Knowledge, work and other relevant experience:

* Experience of handling data to inform design.
* Experience of stakeholder engagement and facilitating communication outputs to effect change.
* Experience in and understanding of citizen science / public participation in scientific research as well as engaging with the general public in science or social science
* Experience of design, (e.g., user research, service design, user experience or interaction design and ability to translate research findings to interactive materials for public audiences

Personal abilities and qualities:

* Experience working as part of a collaborative or partnership project.
* Excellent IT skills including use of the Microsoft Office Suite.
* The ability to use information and communication technology in outreach and public engagement.
* Excellent record-keeping and organisational skills.
* Ability to work to deadlines and good time-management.
* Ability to act on own initiative as part of a multidisciplinary research team.
* Excellent oral and written communication skills.
* Excellent stakeholder relationship building and management skills.

**Desirable:**

Education, qualifications and training:

* Taught Postgraduate or professional qualification

Knowledge, work and other relevant experience:

* Experience in design of materials and resources for training, dissemination of ideas and information to the public and social media promotions.

Personal abilities and qualities:

* Knowledge of and an appreciation of informal learning, public outreach and communications.
* A strong record of research and/or knowledge exchange that is commensurate to the position.

If you would like further details about the role before making an application, then please email your query through to Resourcing-Hub@open.ac.uk quoting the reference number and job title or contact Lara Frumkin at lara.frumkin@open.ac.uk.

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