Job Description – Research Associate in Responsible AI. Centre for Protecting Women Online

*1 FTE*

4 year Fixed-term  
*AC2*  
*Walton Hall, Milton Keynes-based, with some travel*

We are seeking to appoint a highly motivated PostDoctoral Research Associate) to work in the Centre for Protecting Women Online funded by Research England. We are looking for a dynamic person who would seek to play an active part in building the research culture in the centre. The candidate will have expertise in Large-scale data analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Responsible AI with an interest in the intersection between technology, sociology, psychology, policy, and law.

It is anticipated that a hybrid working pattern can be adopted for this role, where the successful candidate can work from home and the office. However, as this role is contractually aligned to our Milton Keynes office, some regular attendance in the office is expected, especially in response to business needs. We’d expect this to be approximately once per week. The position is full-time; however, we are open to considering part-time arrangements under exceptional circumstances.

The Centre

The Centre for Protecting Women online will be a vehicle for understanding and addressing challenges posed to women’s safety online through a novel, interdisciplinary and ambitious research agenda. This will be combined with cross-sectoral, collaborative outputs and interventions which inform law, policy, technology development and practice to reduce online harms suffered by women and girls; minimise anti-social behaviours online whilst promoting pro-social behaviours and help build tech/ software that helps ensure accountability, credibility and helps facilitate justice. The work will be delivered through a management and five interwoven Work Streams. The candidate will work primarily on the Responsible AI stream, led by Professor Miriam Fernandez in close collaboration with Professor Arosha Bandara, but they are expected to collaborate with other work streams as part of the multidisciplinary nature and ambition of the centre.

Key Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the role include:

* To engage in world-leading research on responsible AI, focusing on analysing online spaces and the effectiveness and dangers of existing technology and platforms on the protection of women online.
* To conduct large-scale collection, aggregation, structuring and analysis of online data
* To investigate the risks and opportunities of existing technology under a Responsible AI lens, and to work towards novel socio-technical solutions focused on protecting women online.
* Input to policy development from a technological perspective.
* Engage with the wider research community in responsible innovation and technology regulation, both nationally and internationally, to facilitate cross-disciplinary discussions to improve online safety for women.
* Write REF-returnable papers based on the results of research activities and publish them in peer-reviewed conferences and journals.
* Present results at national and international conferences.
* Be an active member of the Centre for Protecting Women Online, attending research group meetings, sharing knowledge with members of the team, and supervising PhD students.
* Attract funding
* Maintain and generate collaborations within and outside the academic community.
* Have a strong commitment to the principles and practice of equality and diversity.
* Undertake knowledge exchange activities.

Person Specification

Skills and experience

Essential:

* PhD, or close to completion, in Computer Science or a relevant area
* An existing track record of publications in a relevant area (commensurate with career stage)
* Knowledge and familiarity with research on online environments, particularly social media
* Solid theoretical foundation and practical experience with large-scale data analysis/statistics, machine learning, natural language processing, and responsible AI
* Good programming skills applied to a variety of domains and technologies
* Ability to design and prototype software solutions
* Ability to analyse data using Python, R or Matlab
* Good knowledge and experience in working with and querying databases
* Good Knowledge and experience in working with the Linux environment
* Experience with code sharing, issue tracking (JIRA, GIT) and testing
* Ability to undertake high-quality research and produce research outputs (e.g., journal articles, conference articles, books, research reports, etc.) on a relevant subject
* Ability to plan and organise your own work
* Ability to adapt to changing situations in a timely manner within scope and direction set by the work stream lead.
* Have interest in and evidence of ability to undertake knowledge exchange activities

Desirable:

* Familiarity with critical and feminist approaches to digital gendered violence
* Experience of working in multi-disciplinary research teams
* Excellent oral and written communication skills
* Evidence of successful research student supervision
* Experience bidding for funding

The position is based on the Knowledge Media Institute (KMi). KMi is a multidisciplinary corporate R&D lab for the Open University, committed to world class research activity at the forefront of data science, Artificial Intelligence and new media technology. KMi has, for almost 25 years, deployed research results to address real world scenarios that have led to innovation in education and commercial settings. KMi currently consists of around 80 researchers, has published more than 1000 scientific papers since its creation, and has been involved in over 100 EU and national projects. The research conducted under these projects covers a wide range of issues related to the use of technology for social good.

