# Job Description – Post Doctoral Research Associate -ALPHABETICA

**About the Role**

Applicants are invited to apply for the post of Post Doctoral Research Associate (PDRA)funded by the European Commission, Horizon Europe, titled ‘ALPHABETICA: Activating Learning Paths: Holistic Arts-Based Education and Training for Inclusion and Cultural Awareness’.

ALPHABETICA will carry out 12 pilot actions (arts-based intervention activities) across 8 European countries aimed at enhancing the transformative effect of active participation in community-driven artistic co-creation activities. Collectively, the research pilot actions cover a range of school settings and out-of-school community settings with children aged from 3 to 18, as well as young people and adults of various ages. The project is informed by a synthesis of theories of youth participatory action research, theory of change, pedagogies of care, love and enchantment, pedagogies of past, present and the imagined future, and the more-than-human approach.

The project is led by a team at the University of Bologna, Italy, and the successful candidate will work with the UK team who are based at The Open University and Oxford Brookes University.

The UK team are responsible for:

1. Delivering the pilot action - Our Caring World Through Art (OCWA) / UK

For young people from disadvantaged communities, participation in art can feel inaccessible or even irrelevant, but has the potential to enable them to imagine new ways of caring for better futures. This pilot action seeks to examine the means by which young people from disadvantaged communities can make use of art in education to access ‘care in their worlds’. It will examine the transformative impacts of art endeavours to the self, meaning-making and identities through artistic co-creation. The pilot action will take place in a formal setting (school) and out-of-school community setting (local library). It will involve working with young people aged 3–18-year-olds, teachers, library staff members, and families. The development of activities will involve participatory processes underpinned by co-creation, youth participatory action research and creative artistic methods. We will be collecting data through traditional qualitative social science approaches, alongside arts-based co-creative approaches. As outputs, the research will involve the development of research-informed learning resources on arts-based education for educators and learning-based practitioners as well as project-informed guidance materials to enable the replication of the project activities in different contexts.

1. Co-ordination of the WP4 - Examining the transformative effect of arts-based education – research data collection

The UK team is also responsible for leading on Work Package 4, which involves overseeing the progress of all the international partners in successfully delivering their innovative pilot actions in their respective countries. The main aim of this WP is to examine, carry out and evaluate how participation in arts-based education can have a transformative effect in disadvantaged communities, on the sense of self across time, the relationship to different artistic forms in formal and informal learning spaces, and the relationship between human and more-than-human worlds.

The successful applicant should be an experienced researcher with a PhD, or very close to completion of a PhD and equivalent substantial professional experience, in Art Education/ Creative arts/ Visual anthropology and work relevant to fields such as Children and Young People’s Education; Cultural and social heritage and education, Children and Families. They should have experience using co-creation approaches such as arts-based and/or participatory action research and some experience with qualitative social science approaches. The candidate might also have experience working with young people in schools and/or young people and families in the local communities. The post holder role will play a full role in the research design, data collection and implementation of artistic activities in school and library settings, and have a major role in analysis, writing up and dissemination of the project activities.

The successful candidate will also have a strong interest in social inequalities, migration and improving the lives of young people; be able to think creatively and innovatively; and be committed to empowering and contributing to meaningful change. The successful candidate will support Prof. Crafter (Open University) and Prof de Abreu (Oxford Brookes University) in overseeing the coordination of the pilot actions taking place across wider European team and as part of Work Package 4.

**Key responsibilities**

**Main Duties**

The successful post holder will play a full role in the project.

* Work closely with the Oxford Brookes and the Open University partners to deliver the aims, objectives and outputs of the research project
* Contribute to the implementation, analysis, reporting and dissemination of the UK pilot action projects, taking a leading role on the “Our Caring World Through Art (OCWA)”
* Conduct literature searches and reviews
* Responsibility for planning and carrying out fieldwork , setting up and keeping digital data storage systems, data analysis and interpretation and report writing
* Make significant contributions to data analysis and evaluation using a range of analytical tools
* Make a significant contribution to the development of the “Our Caring World Through Art (OCWA)” dissemination outputs and activities
* Responsibility to liaise with the participating organisations (e.g. schools, libraries) and provide guidance as required to support the young people and education staff who may be assisting with the project
* Assist in the preparation/ drafting of documents such as ethics applications, research and data management protocols
* Contribute to the writing up of Work Package reports, annual reports, team meetings and advisory group reports, briefing documents and policy documents, research papers
* Contribute to the support and coordination of the pilot actions across the wider European teams who are part of Work Package 4
* Organise and participate in the UK project conferences, regular research meetings, management meetings (face-to-face, video) devise the agendas, minutes and disseminate appropriately
* Attend conferences/workshops and present papers and other project outputs (e.g. arts-based materials) as required
* Day-to-day responsibility for some project management tasks, and day to day communication with the UK and EU partners
* To observe all School and University rules and regulations

The above list of responsibilities is not exhaustive and the job holder may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with the level of the role, as reasonably requested by their line manager.

**Skills and experience**

**Essentials**

* PhD, or very close to completion of a PhD and equivalent substantial professional experience, in Art Education/ Creative arts/ Visual Anthropology and work relevant to fields such as Children and Young People’s Education; Cultural and social heritage and education, Children and Families.
* Substantial experience of research with children and young people, educators and families in schools and in informal community settings, such as libraries.
* Substantial experience with arts-based educational activities using co-creation and participatory research approaches and methods.
* Experience working with young people and families from a diversity of social and cultural backgrounds, marginalised and/or disadvantaged communities
* Experience using and analysing a variety of arts based activities/methods (e.g. visual, narrative, illustrations, multimodal digital)
* Experience using and analysing ethnography and social science approaches and methods (e.g. observations, interviews, fieldnotes)
* Excellent understanding of the ethical and social justice implications of research with vulnerable children, young people and families
* Experience of contributing to the planning of project activities and outputs
* Excellent experience of planning, co-creating and communicating research ideas with non-specialist audiences (e.g. arts-based workshops, public exhibitions)
* Experience of writing up and disseminating research findings (e.g. journal articles, research reports, to assist as a named author in publication of research).
* Evidence of successful teamwork and collegial approach

**Desirable**

* Experience using multi-media programmes to support co-creation of arts-based outputs
* Excellent oral communication skills with an ability to communicate with academic and non-academic stakeholders (i.e. educators/NGO’s)
* Ability to work independently; to take responsibility for setting and meeting targets of your own work, organisation, time management, and to take initiative when required

**Planned assessments**

You will be asked to deliver a 5-minute presentation at the beginning of the interview about ‘How your research and creative/arts-based experience will contribute to the ALPHABETICA project’

**About the Unit**

**The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)**

FASS is the largest and most diverse faculty at The Open University, with some 50,000 students studying our modules with excellent completion rates and consistently outstanding student satisfaction ratings. Noted for the strength of our interdisciplinary approaches, our researchers and scholars of international standing teach and research a very wide range of topics and themes in specific subject areas, recognised as world class or internationally excellent in the latest Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2021, and having a direct and profound influence on our undergraduate and postgraduate teaching.

FASS is organised into four schools:

* School of Arts and Humanities
* School of Creative Industries
* School of Psychology & Counselling
* School of Social Sciences and Global Studies

Students are supported by Student Support Teams. These teams offer specialist study support to students undertaking our qualifications across the University. Members of academic staff, including academics based in all four nations of the UK, form part of these teams in sustaining and improving student progression and retention.

The Faculty works closely with major and influential organisations and institutions in the UK (most notably the BBC) and other parts of the world in a range of validated partnerships and collaborations, and is engaged in world-class, agenda-setting research tackling the most difficult challenges facing us in the 21st Century, with work in numerous subject-based and interdisciplinary research groups and projects.

With around 1800 members of staff comprising academics, associate lecturers, support staff and full-time research students working across the locations of the University, and combining originality and innovation in research and curriculum, FASS is a vibrant and exciting place to study and work.

To find out more about the Faculty’s teaching, learning and research, please visit: <http://fass.open.ac.uk/>

**Further Information**

If you have questions in relation to this role, please contact careers@open.ac.uk .

*The Open University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion which is reflected in our mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. We aim to foster a diverse and inclusive environment so that all in our OU community can reach their potential.  We recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.  We strive to recruit, retain and develop the careers of a diverse pool of students and staff, and particularly encourage applications from all underrepresented groups. We also aspire to make The Open University a supportive workplace for all through our policies, services and staff networks.*

