Engagement Fellowships for Postgraduate Research Students

Pay: £13.95 per hour (including holiday pay)
Duration: Training in mid-December, project work from January to March over ~ 10 weeks
Working pattern: Flexible ~ 6 hours per week for 10 weeks
Interview dates: Via Teams, between 28th November and 2nd December.
Application deadline: Sunday 20th November (midnight)

Background

Are you a Post Graduate Research student based in Lancashire? Do you want to use your research skills to take on social challenges and make a positive impact on society?

Whether you’re looking for a career in academic research, engagement in policymaking, charity and public sector – or maybe you’re not sure yet - your research skills and experiences can offer numerous pathways for creating impact and shaping the world around you.

Lancaster University is part of an exciting new initiative from The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) exploring the ways which HEIs and researchers can create impact at scale from their research, a process and outcomes also referred to as ‘commercialisation’. Commercialisation and the journey to sustainable impact looks and feels different for every individual Academic. It depends on their ambitions, their values, how they want to balance their work portfolio, their research interests and outputs, and the impact they want to have in the world.

The aim of the initiative is to support academic researchers in the Social Sciences in getting their research ideas out to the people who would benefit from it the most, while making the most of the commercial and business opportunities from their research.

Research academics here at Lancaster are in the process of identifying and developing opportunities to create social enterprises, products, services or spin-off businesses arising from their research outputs. This will allow their research to reach wider audiences, customers and beneficiaries.

Through this process of supporting and developing commercialisation of established research ideas, you will build knowledge and expertise and skills which you can apply to your own research ideas and plans!

Example project areas

Here are a few of the projects which comprise part of the CRoSS programme at Lancaster:

Researcher: Nathan Jones – Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (Fine Art)

Nathan’s research looks at “the contemporary” through new media art and media theory, centrally focusing on the co-evolution of language and technology. He uses critical and creative approaches that combine art writing, poetry, hybrid and post-digital publishing, performance and media-archaeological method.

Torque Editions is a partnership between Nathan and an academic at another Higher Education Institution. It acts as the practice element and an output for his research. Currently it sells predominantly digital copies of publication runs but the partners are keen to explore ways in which the company could diversify both products and income streams.

Researcher: Jadwiga Leigh – Sociology (Social Work)

Jadwiga’s research has mainly focused on professional identity and organisational culture in child protection both in the UK and in Belgium using a variety of different methods from ethnography to visual methodology.

New Beginnings is a foundation led by Jadwiga which exists to provide parents in the child protection system with the reliable support they need to ensure they and their children are safe and secure. The organisation has successfully delivered services in partnership with a range of organisations and are now keen to create a sustainable funding model for the future.
Researcher: Sally Bushell – English Literature and Creative Writing (Romantic and Victorian Literature)

Sally’s original research specialism is in nineteenth-century Literature (Romantic and Victorian) with a particular interest in spatial and material forms of interpretation. Her traditional disciplinary expertise is in Wordsworth and in the study and interpretation of manuscripts. However, she is also interested in the Digital and Spatial Humanities and in new ways of understanding the spatial meaning of literary texts.

Litcraft is the name and methodology behind a highly successful project led by Sally which uses the popular Minecraft gaming platform to build accurate scale models of authorial maps from classical works of literature. It makes works accessible in entirely new ways where reading and writing are integrated with an immersive experience of the literary world. Litcraft has proven effective in re-engaging children with literature, changing reluctant readers into life-long readers and also adding value to the exhibitions and events of partners including the British Library and The Wordsworth Trust. Due to additional funding, there are plans to expand the commercial opportunities around Litcraft and create impact with different audiences.

Engagement Fellowship Job Description

We are recruiting 15 PGR students to support academics with the development of their commercial ideas. You do not need to be a business expert to take part; we are keen to work with any PGR student who wants to develop themselves and work with others to create something valuable.

To support your personal and professional development, you will attend a 2-day personal development programme.

The development programme covers subject areas that are becoming increasingly critical for research careers, including commercial awareness and business model thinking, project discovery and project management, high impact collaboration tools for teams, and human centred design. These topics are contextualised for researchers and underpinned by the Research Development Framework, and the Entrepreneurial Competencies Framework.

This development programme is fully funded by the European Regional Development Fund and therefore will have no cost attached for PGR students. On completion of the development programme, your 60 hour paid fellowship will begin.

The development programme will run face-to-face/in person on campus over two days in the week commencing 12th of December and will run for around 12 hours.

You will be split into small project teams and matched with an academic researcher to develop the commercial ideas and activities of their research. You will have regular meetings with your group and your academic researcher for guidance and to discuss ideas, plans and progress.

The schedule of the project work is flexible and will depend on the nature of the tasks defined by your group, and participating Fellows’ availability to work effectively in small teams.

You will also receive 1:1 mentoring to develop bespoke personal development goals, track your personal growth, reflect on your achievements, reframe any barriers and challenges, and then reflect on what comes next.

Mentoring and group meetings may be a mix of face-to-face/in person meetings at the Work In Progress Studio in Alexandra Square, combined with online meetings and calls via Teams.

You will have a dedicated Teams space with channels for each group, along with a dedicated shared file store, and a bank of learning resources.
**Person Specification**

We are looking for PGR students from **any discipline** who are:

- **Creative thinkers.** You’ll need to use your collective creativity and knowledge to explore the wider impact of research outcomes within commercial contexts, exploring the application of research in public, private sector and policy-making scenarios.

- **Willing to embrace challenges and change.** You should be willing to explore drivers for change, understanding the political, environmental, social, technological and economic factors of influence. You will need to consider diverse audiences, customers and groups of stakeholders.

- **Team players.** Each academic researcher will work collaboratively with a group of PGR Engagement Fellows to develop their commercial idea. You’ll need to contribute regularly towards discussions and actively participate in the ongoing project work. You’ll need to communicate well with others and build good working relationships within your group.

- **Available and committed** to participate in all aspects of the opportunity, including the dates outlined below, and regular group meetings which follow. Groups will create their own timetable for meetings and carrying out project work, which must be followed and respected by all.

- **Interested in developing themselves as researchers with an entrepreneurial mindset.**

**Proposed learning outcomes:**

- Understand and be able to articulate what it means to be entrepreneurial and how that might apply in the research commercialisation context.

- Understand where their existing research and other skills and expertise can create value within the process of research commercialisation;

- Be able to identify your own development needs;

- Be able to identify relevant personal and professional development opportunities;

- Be able to apply entrepreneurial skills to the development of an existing spin out, or to explore commercial pathways for academic research outputs.

**IMPORTANT**

- *The projects detailed above are indicative of the types of opportunities available following the Engagement Academy programme and through the Engagement Fellowships.*

- *We reserve the right to withdraw or amend opportunities at any time during the development and delivery of the Engagement Academy programme;*

- *Applicants interested in progressing to the Engagement Fellowships are advised that whilst they are welcome to indicate a preference for which academic, company or project, there is no guarantee that we will be able to meet their preferences. The final make-up of each project team is largely dependent upon the skills and knowledge required for that project and the balance of available skillsets and expertise across the successful applicant base.*
- Right to work checks will be conducted as part of the short-listing process and hours worked will be monitored against visa constraints around part-time work.
- Payment can only be made in GBP into UK bank accounts, and will be approved on the submission of weekly learning logs.
- Selection decisions will reflect the suitability of individual applicants as well their potential to bring unique value as a member of a multi-disciplinary cohort.
- In case of large numbers of applications, preference will be given to candidates who have not previously engaged with Work in Progress as beneficiaries of the ERDF U Start project.
- You will be asked in the application form whether you would like to be contacted for any potential future Fellowship Opportunities.