

**Research Assistant/Associate  
Sustainable Bioenergy (Internal  
Only)**



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Aston University



**Reference: 0613/24**

**Grade: 7 (Research Assistant) /8 (Research Associate) depending on experience**

**Salary: £33,232 to £35,880 (Assistant), £37,999 to £45,163 (Associate), depending on experience**

**Contact Type: Fixed term for 9 months**

**Basis: Full time**

## Job description

### Job Purpose:

The Energy and Bioproducts Research Institute (EBRI) at Aston University seeks applications for a Researcher Assistant/Associate (based on qualification and experience) to carry out social, socio-economic and policy research on bioenergy systems in the Philippines and India. This position offers the unique opportunity to work in a highly interdisciplinary environment and apply social science in an engineering-focused research area.

This role is part of the RICE (Renewable, Inclusive, Carbon-positive Energy), funded by Innovate UK under Energy Catalyst Round 10. The project aims to transform energy access and deliver innovative, market-focused energy solutions in the Philippines and India and other rice producing countries. The project supports the development of carbon-positive energy solutions in the Global South, focusing on environmental sustainability and inclusivity.

The researcher will conduct social and socio-economic research on bioenergy systems relevant to the project. This includes conducting interviews and stakeholder engagement with the local community in different and project-relevant locations. The researcher will be responsible for developing the analytical framework, analysing data and making recommendations to the commercial project partners supporting the development and commercialisation of their business models. In addition, the researcher will be responsible for liaising and engaging with all project partners, communicating and publishing results, and engaging with external stakeholders and users of the research.

The researcher will be based at EBRI, Aston University, UK and be part of the EBRI Systems group. However, the researcher will also be required to conduct fieldwork and research activities in the Philippines and India.

The researcher will regularly meet and liaise with colleagues and project partners to ensure appropriate input, data sharing, and effective dissemination of results. In addition, the researcher will work with colleagues in EBRI to share knowledge, skills and results and engage with a wide variety of external stakeholders about project activities via different ways of communication. EBRI and the Aston Early Career Researcher Forum will provide a supportive environment for early career researchers and offer mentoring/shadowing and other development opportunities to support staff in transitioning to new roles. The EBRI Systems group offers a buddy scheme to support new staff in their new working environment. Furthermore, flexible working and dynamic working are supported for this post can be discussed.

### Main duties and responsibilities

- ▶ Evaluate the social and socio-economic impacts of bioenergy and biochar systems in the Philippines and India.
- ▶ Cooperate and engage with all project partners to assess commercialisation opportunities of renewable and carbon-positive energy and products from rice straw
- ▶ Plan (including obtaining ethics approval), prepare and conduct fieldwork and interviews in the Philippines and India with local communities to assess rice production, straw management, energy use/demand, value creation from improved rice production, stakeholder perceptions (farmers, supply chain actors, local policymakers) in line with commercial business models
- ▶ Develop qualitative and quantitative frameworks for analysing data collected in interviews and fieldwork
- ▶ Transcribe and evaluate interview and fieldwork data
- ▶ Assess non-market value of project relevant business models

- ▶ Engage and collaborate with project partners and relevant stakeholders.
- ▶ Support other project activities in accounting for the wider sustainability impacts
- ▶ Regularly meet and liaise with colleagues and project partners to ensure effective input, data sharing, and dissemination of results.
- ▶ Share knowledge, skills, and results with colleagues in EBRI.
- ▶ Engage with a wide variety of external stakeholders about project activities through various communication channels.
- ▶ Make recommendations to the industrial project partners based on research findings
- ▶ Write up and publish the outcomes of research in good quality publications.
- ▶ Present papers, posters, and reports at seminars, conferences etc.
- ▶ Work interdisciplinarily with colleagues in EBRI to develop new, sustainable approaches to low carbon energy and bioproducts
- ▶ Develop research objectives, projects and proposals for personal/joint research programmes consistent with the priorities and strategy of EBRI, with the assistance of a mentor if required.
- ▶ Identify funding sources, develop and submit funding applications, securing external research funding.
- ▶ Participate in and develop external networks.
- ▶ Engage with EBRI System group to share knowledge, skills and results.

### **Additional responsibilities**

#### Citizenship

- ▶ Demonstrate the University's leadership values through own actions and behaviour.
- ▶ Undertake such other duties as may be reasonably requested and commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

#### Additional responsibilities

- ▶ Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the role's demands, including undertaking relevant training and development activities to develop themselves and support the development of others.
- ▶ Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.
- ▶ Carry out duties in a way that promotes fairness in all matters and engenders trust.
- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity, support diversity and inclusion, and work to support the University's environmental sustainability agenda and practices.

## Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
<b>Education and qualifications</b>	<p>Research Associate: PhD in a relevant area</p> <p>Research Assistant: MSc AND work experience in relevant area</p>	Application form
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Knowledge in bioenergy systems, sustainability and renewable energy policy</p> <p>Experience in social and/or socio- economic assessment, data analysis and relevant methods such as using qualitative and quantitative techniques</p> <p>Experience in working with stakeholders from different cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds and at different career levels</p> <p>Experience in business model design and evaluation</p> <p>Experience in reporting scientific outputs, publishing scientific journal papers, presenting scientific findings at conferences and seminars</p> <p>Working with industrial and non-academic partners</p> <p>Experience in successfully working as part of an interdisciplinary team</p>	Application form and interview
<b>Aptitude and skills</b>	<p>Demonstrable aptitude for conducting fieldwork in overseas locations</p> <p>Well-developed IT skills with a demonstrated aptitude for business model development, qualitative systems and network modelling.</p> <p>Ability to autonomously progress project research and proactively engage with partners</p> <p>Demonstrated skills of independent working, time management and successful delivery of objectives</p>	Application form and interview

	Essential	Method of assessment
	<p>Ability to present data clearly and concisely that is visually appealing.</p> <p>Ability to prepare written communications to a high standard</p> <p>Ability to develop and maintain a research programme and publish high-quality publications.</p> <p>Well-developed interpersonal and team-working skills.</p>	

	Desirable	Method of assessment
<b>Education and qualifications</b>	<p>Knowledge of climate change targets and policy.</p> <p>Working internationally</p> <p>Working with colleagues and stakeholders from different cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds and career levels.</p>	Application form
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Stakeholder engagement techniques for organising and evaluating workshops</p> <p>Communicating scientific concepts to a wide variety of different (technical and non-technical) audiences.</p> <p>Engaging with and supporting early-career colleagues in their professional and personal development</p>	Application form and interview



## Contact information

### Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Mirjam Roeder

Job Title: Professor

Email: [m.roeder@aston.ac.uk](mailto:m.roeder@aston.ac.uk)

Or

Name: Sam Sogbesan

Job Title: Research Associate

Email: [s.sogbesan1@aston.ac.uk](mailto:s.sogbesan1@aston.ac.uk)

### Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:

Recruitment Team via [jobs@aston.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@aston.ac.uk) or 0121 204 4500.

## Additional information

Visit our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr> for full details of our salary scales and benefits Aston University staff enjoy

**Salary scales:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/salary-scales/index>

**Benefits:** [Benefits and Rewards | Aston University](#)

**Working in Birmingham:** <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/birmingham>

**Employment of Ex-Offenders:** Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the positions they applying for is listed an exception under the act.

**Eligibility to work in the UK:** You should ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements, including meeting the [English language standards](#). If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful. Please see UKVI guidance for further information on eligibility, knowledge of English requirements and approved test centres <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>

With the end of free movement for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals from 1 January 2021, the UK's new immigration system applies to all non-UK/Irish nationals who require a visa.

Where an individual is subject to UK immigration control, they will require a visa to work in the UK.

The following individuals do not need a visa for the UK, but do still have to prove their right to work before employment can commence:

- **British Citizens or Irish Nationals**
- **EU/EEA/Swiss nationals with Settled or Pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**
- **Non-EEA nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement in the UK**

The main routes available for those who need a visa to work in the UK are **Skilled Worker**, **Global Talent** and the **Graduate Route**.

You can find further information about each of these visa routes on our [candidate immigration page](#).

If you will conduct research in your role, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application. Please see below for further details.

**Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS):** If you will conduct research in your role and you apply for a Skilled Worker or Temporary Worker GAE visa, you may need to apply for and obtain ATAS clearance before Aston can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship for your visa application.

This process can take at least 6 weeks to process, and Aston will consider this when confirming your expected start date. Processing times will increase between April and September and can longer to complete.

There is no fast-track option available. ATAS certificates will be processed in order of receipt.

You can find more information about ATAS on our [candidate immigration page](#).

### **Before you start and Right to Work**

#### **90-day entry vignette**

If you have applied for your visa outside of the UK, you will receive a vignette in your passport which is usually valid for 90 days. Please make sure to travel to the UK within the 'valid from' and 'valid to' dates on this visa. If you entered the UK before or after these dates, you would not 'activate' the visa and you would need to leave and re-enter the country.

You will also receive a decision letter confirming details about your immigration permission and where to collect your Biometric Residence Permit.



## Cost of Living - Estate and Letting Agents

There are numerous Estate and Letting Agents in and around Birmingham that can help you find suitable accommodation. The [Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme](#) provides a list of professional agencies and landlords who have applied with them for accreditation. Whilst accreditation is not a guarantee of quality, it provides some reassurance about the standard of the service they provide.

You can also use property search websites such as [Rightmove](#) or [Zoopla](#).

**Equal Opportunities:** Aston University promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure, through our admissions policies for students, and our staff recruitment and selection processes that we encourage applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level.

The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly or indirectly, against student or potential students, staff or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career.

An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is included within the application form. Data you provide on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be included in a general database, for statistical monitoring purposes, enabling the University to monitor the effectiveness of its Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment. Individuals will not be identified by name.

**Data Protection:** Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) ("GDPR"). The University's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, including the Job Applicant Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection>. Your application will only be used to inform the selection process, unless you are successful, in which case it will form the basis of your personal record with the University which will be stored in manual and/or electronic files. Information in statistical form on present and former employees is given to appropriate outside bodies.

Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies>

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[aston.ac.uk](http://aston.ac.uk)