Postdoctoral Research Associate

Aston University
BIRMINGHAM UK

Reference: 0433-25

Grade: Grade 8

Salary: £38,249 - £40,497 per annum, depending on experience

Contract Type: Fixed-term (Until 31 March 2026)

Basis: Full Time

Job description

DIATOMIC is a West Midlands Innovation Accelerator programme led by Connected Places Catapult (CPC) with Aston University and regional partners. Year 3 focuses on a cloud-native Digital Twin platform that lowers technical and commercial barriers for up to ten local SMEs and supports "smart investment zones" in Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Aston University leads Work Package 3 – Technical SME On-Boarding & Support, which delivers training, guidance and impact evaluation for SME cohorts integrating their use-cases onto the platform.

Job Purpose:

This postdoctoral-level appointment requires an awarded PhD—or submission of a doctoral thesis by the start date—in a discipline aligned with Digital Twins, Cloud Computing or Software/Systems Engineering. The post-holder will consolidate current research on Digital Twin and cloud techniques, translate it into structured training resources, and provide expert mentorship that enables SMEs to design, implement and deploy their Digital Twins on the DIATOMIC platform. No direct software development is expected; the emphasis is on pedagogy, knowledge transfer and consortium coordination.

Main Duties/Responsibilities:

Training design & delivery
- ► Curate and author a modular curriculum (slide-decks, lab manuals, video micro-modules) covering Digital Twin fundamentals, modelling workflows, cloud deployment patterns and data-governance good practice.
- ► Align content with CPC Digital Twin Hub resources to ensure consistency and accreditation pathways.

SME technical onboarding
- ► Lead knowledge-exchange surgeries and cohort workshops; shepherd SMEs through platform account set-up, data-model templating and trial preparation.
- ► Contribute to onboarding documentation and trial-plan templates required under WP3 deliverables.

Consortium engagement
- ► Liaise with CPC platform architects and Accelerator managers, ensuring milestones are met.
- ► Represent Aston at monthly consortium meetings and quarterly Steering-Group reviews.

Impact & dissemination
- ► Capture case-study evidence, prepare quarterly support/impact reports, and co-author white papers or conference outputs.

▶ Organise at least two outreach events (webinar or on-campus showcase) highlighting SME outcomes.

Academic citizenship
▶ Uphold Aston values of EDI and sustainability; mentor postgraduate students assisting with training production; contribute to SPRDF seminar series.

Additional responsibilities:

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

Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	PhD (awarded or thesis submitted by August 2025) in Digital Twin, Cloud Computing, Software/Systems Engineering or a cognate discipline.	Application form and interview
Experience	Documented record of designing and delivering technical training or CPD courses; evidence of stakeholder engagement, user-centric documentation and impact generation.	Application form and interview
	Thorough grounding in Digital Twin concepts, data-centric architectures, cloud services (Azure preferred) and open-source modelling tools.	Application form and interview
Aptitude and skills	Excellent verbal and written communication; ability to translate complex ideas for non-experts; workshop facilitation, curriculum design and instructional-media production; collaborative working in multi-partner programmes.	Application form and interview

	Desirable	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	HEA Fellowship or recognised teaching qualification.	Application form
Experience	Participation in CPC Digital Twin Hub or similar national initiatives.	Application form and interview
	Familiarity with built-environment or energy-system twins.	Application form and interview

	Desirable	Method of assessment
Aptitude and Skills	Basic scripting to create reproducible demo environments (e.g. Terraform, GitHub Actions).	Application form and interview

University values

All staff are expected to demonstrate/promote the University's values and expectations, which are an integral part of our strategy and underpin the culture of the University. In addition, our leaders are expected to be accountable, help to execute strategic visions of the University and share and set clear expectations that inspire those around them.

Values + Behaviours

Innovation

We strive for excellence within ourselves and others, providing solutions to new and existing challenges.

Collaboration

We work best when we are collaborative, working together to contribute to the Aston community.

Ambition

We strive together for improvement and innovation looking ahead to see the bigger picture.

Inclusion

We treat everyone in our community equally and how they would like to be treated.

Integrity

We are open, honest and fair. We take ownership of the way we work and how we treat each other.

How to apply

You can apply for this role online via our website https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/jobs.

Applications should be submitted by 23.59 on the advertised closing date.
All applicants must complete an application form, along with your CV.

Any CV sent direct to the Recruitment Team and Recruiting Manager will not be accepted.

If you require a manual application form, then please contact the Recruitment Team via recruitment@aston.ac.uk.

Contact information

Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Ranjit Judge
Job Title: Operations Manager
Email: r.k.judge1@aston.ac.uk

Or

Name: Manolya Kavakli-Thorne
Job Title: Professor Of Gamification
Email: m.kavakli-thorne@aston.ac.uk

Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting or interviews:
Recruitment Team via recruitment@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

Aston University
Birmingham
B4 7ET, UK.
+44 (0)121 204 3000

www.aston.ac.uk