



OPPORTUNITY

Where change
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Reference: 0831-26

Grade: 7

Salary: £33,951 per annum, depending on experience

Contract Type: Fixed Term (18 months), with a part time option available until July 2028

Basis: Full time

Job description

Job Purpose:

We are seeking a motivated Research Assistant to support two interconnected projects aimed at advancing inclusive mobility through innovative digital technologies, including digital twins and an augmented reality (AR) navigation app designed specifically for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility.

The projects are 'Scaling Inclusive Mobility from Campus to City and Beyond', funded by Aston University, and 'Development of a Digital Twin and AI-Enabled Walkway Monitoring System', funded by the Ministry of SMEs and Startups of South Korea. Both projects adopt a user-centred approach to identify mobility barriers and user needs through qualitative and quantitative research methods, contributing to the development, testing and evaluation of inclusive mobility technologies.

Working closely with wheelchair users, students and partner organisations, including Transport for West Midlands and disability advocacy groups, the projects will deliver user trials, public demonstrations, and policy workshops to support inclusive transport planning across Birmingham and the wider West Midlands region.

The Research Assistant will contribute to the design and implementation of studies, data collection and analysis, and the development and evaluation of the digital twin and the AR-based navigation app. The role will also support stakeholder engagement activities, public demonstrations and workshops, as well as the publication and dissemination of research findings.

This position offers valuable hands-on experience in inclusive mobility research, the co-creation of AR-based accessibility solutions, and collaboration with international partners, industry, community, and public sector partners. The successful candidate will develop practical expertise in accessibility data collection, digital navigation technologies, user-centred design and evaluation, and the dissemination of research outputs through regional, national, and international events, as well as high-impact academic publications.

Main Duties/Responsibilities

Research

To undertake research activities and contribute to the objectives of the inclusive mobility research projects working under the assistance of the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators.

- ▶ Conduct the collection and analysis of accessibility-critical data, including obstacles and environmental barriers affecting wheelchair users and people with limited mobility.
- ▶ Lead the deployment, implementation, and testing of the AR-based navigation app across the Aston University campus and surrounding pedestrian routes.
- ▶ Plan, coordinate, and deliver user trials, public demonstrations, and engagement activities involving wheelchair users, students, and wider stakeholder groups.
- ▶ Lead user-centred research to explore the travel experiences, barriers, and needs of wheelchair users and people with limited mobility and translate findings into clear design requirements to enhance accessibility and navigation experiences.
- ▶ Support workshops with partner organisations, including TfWM and disability organisations, to translate research insights into inclusive mobility recommendations.
- ▶ Contribute to the preparation of reports, impact case studies, and dissemination materials for academic, institutional, and public events.
- ▶ Lead the publication of research findings in high-quality academic journals and the dissemination of project outcomes through national and international conferences and events.
- ▶ Contribute to research proposals, project reporting, and related funding activities, as appropriate.
- ▶ Contribute to collaborative research objectives and activities aligned with project, School, and University priorities.

Teaching

- ▶ To assist in the development of student and staff research skills

External engagement

- ▶ To represent the interests of the subject and Institute via activities to raise the regional, national and international profile, particularly with industry, policy and business stakeholders
- ▶ To foster relationships with professional bodies and other related organisations

Citizenship

- ▶ To carry out specific Institute roles and functions as may be reasonably required e.g. management group, health and safety representation.
- ▶ To take part in the meetings and activities of the Institute and represent it externally.
- ▶ To demonstrate the University's leadership values through own actions and behaviour.
- ▶ To undertake such other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

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 | A degree (or near completion) in a relevant discipline such as User Experience, Interaction or Service Design, Human-Centred Design, HCI, Human Factors, Psychology, Computer Science, Transport, or a related field. | Application form |
| Experience | <p>Experience in human-centred design research, including work with end users to inform the design of products and/or services.</p> <p>Experience in qualitative and/or quantitative data collection and analysis, including methods such as surveys, interviews and focus groups with familiarity in both field work.</p> <p>Experience in planning and supporting research activities such as interviews, workshops, user trials, and public engagement or demonstration events.</p> <p>Experience in contributing to research outputs and dissemination (for example, high-quality reports, journal articles, conference papers or dissemination materials for academic, professional, or public audiences).</p> | Application form and interview |
| Aptitude and skills | <p>Experience in qualitative and/or quantitative research methods, including interviews, focus groups and surveys, with proficiency in tools such as NVivo and SPSS (or similar).</p> <p>Ability to work effectively with a range of stakeholders, including end users, students and external partners.</p> | Application form and interview |

| | Essential | Method of assessment |
|--|---|----------------------|
| | <p>Willingness and ability to undertake fieldwork, including accessibility data collection and user trials.</p> <p>Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present research clearly to both academic and non-academic audiences.</p> <p>Ability to work independently, manage priorities, and contribute effectively within a collaborative research team.</p> <p>Awareness of research ethics, data management and good research practices.</p> | |

| | Desirable | Method of assessment |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Education and qualifications | Master's degree (or near completion) in a relevant discipline such as Product Design, Geography, Urban Planning, Computer Science, Disability Studies, or a closely related field. | Application form |
| Experience | <p>Knowledge of accessibility and inclusive mobility for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility.</p> <p>Previous experience in accessibility research, co-design, or community engagement.</p> | Application form and interview |

| | Desirable | Method of assessment |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | <p>Experience using digital tools for data collection, mapping, or prototyping (e.g. mobile apps, GIS, or testing platforms).</p> <p>Experience of publishing in academic journals and/or presenting at conferences.</p> <p>Experience of contributing to research ethics applications or working within formal ethical approval processes.</p> <p>Familiarity with local transport networks and accessibility initiatives in Birmingham, West Midlands or the UK.</p> | |
| Aptitude and Skills | <p>Skills in GIS, mapping, AR/VR technologies, or participatory and co-design methods.</p> <p>Digital literacy, including confidence in using research, mapping, and data visualisation tools.</p> <p>Proactive and self-motivated approach with the ability to work independently and take initiative when required.</p> <p>Commitment to inclusive and accessible research practices, with sensitivity to the needs of diverse user groups.</p> <p>Strong organisational skills and attention to detail.</p> | 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 | Collaboration | Ambition | Inclusion | Integrity |
| | We strive for excellence within ourselves and others, providing solutions to new and existing challenges. | We work best when we are collaborative, working together to contribute to the Aston community. | We strive together for improvement and innovation looking ahead to see the bigger picture. | We treat everyone in our community equally and how they would like to be treated. | We are open, honest and fair. We take ownership of the way we work and how we treat each other. |

Applications should be submitted by 23.59pm 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: Dr Jisun Kim

Job Title: Lecturer in Product Design

Email: j.kim23@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: 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**.

Please see UKVI guidance for further information on eligibility, knowledge of English requirements and approved test centres <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa> You can also find further information on our candidate immigration [web 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 our candidate immigration [web page](#) for further details.

Before you start and Right to Work

Right to Work Check

All employees must complete a Right to Work check before they commence work at Aston. HR will contact you during the onboarding process to arrange your check.

Cost of Living - Estate and Letting Agents

There are numerous Estate and Letting Agents that can help you find suitable accommodation.

Useful websites for support and guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent/how-to-rent-the-checklist-for-renting-in-england> and <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>

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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