



Postdoctoral Research Associate in Comparative Affective Science (Psychology)

Overview

Reference	017396
Department	Psychology
Grade	Grade 7
Term	36 Months Fixed Term Contract
Salary Range	£33,199 - £39,609
Closing Date	27 February 2019 at midday
Working Arrangements	This role is full time but we will consider requests for flexible working arrangements including potential job shares

The Project: Production and perception of expressions of emotions in humans and their closest relatives

Humans are extraordinarily skilled in expressing, recognising and sharing emotional states, something which has enabled our species to engage in varied and sophisticated social interactions. Nevertheless, despite the importance of emotional expressions for our species, we still know very little about how they evolved and to what extent we find similarities and differences across human cultures. This project address these issues through a comparative investigation of humans and our closest living relatives to explore the evolutionary and cross-cultural origins of human expressions of emotion. Combining behavioural experiments, psycho-physical techniques (e.g. eye-tracking, pupillometry, thermal-imaging) and controlled observations, this project compares how humans produce and perceive expressions of emotions across five different human cultures (UK, Netherlands, Japan, Rwanda, DR Congo) as compared to our closest living relatives, the bonobos.

This project aims to:

1. Identify how individuals express their emotions (Production Objective).
2. Test whether receivers accurately detect these emotional expressions (Perception Objective).
3. Identify how perception may differ across human cultures (Cultural Objective).

Durham University

Durham University is one of the world's top universities with strengths across the Arts and Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences. We are home to some of the most talented

scholars and researchers from around the world who are tackling global issues and making a difference to people's lives.

The University sits in a beautiful historic city where it shares ownership of a UNESCO World Heritage Site with Durham Cathedral, the greatest Romanesque building in Western Europe. A collegiate University, Durham recruits outstanding students from across the world and offers an unmatched wider student experience.

Less than 3 hours north of London, and an hour and a half south of Edinburgh, County Durham is a region steeped in history and natural beauty. The Durham Dales, including the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, are home to breathtaking scenery and attractions. Durham offers an excellent choice of city, suburban and rural residential locations. The University provides a range of benefits including pension and childcare benefits and the University's Relocation Manager can assist with potential schooling requirements.

Durham University seeks to promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive environment for work and study that assists all members of our University community to reach their full potential. Diversity brings strength and we welcome applications from across the international, national and regional communities that we work with and serve.

The Department

The Department of Psychology at Durham University is an outstanding research environment, and the successful candidates will play a significant role in maintaining its reputation as a world-class department for comparative affective science, social and cognitive psychology. Founded in 1952, the Department of Psychology is consistently ranked as one of the very best in the UK with an outstanding and growing reputation for excellence in research. We are currently ranked in the top 100 of Psychology Departments world-wide according to the QS World Rankings. The department is extremely well-equipped for research, including excellent facilities for comparative affective science, eye-tracking, virtual reality, EEG/ERP and biophysiological recording. The department benefits from full IT and mechanical research support from departmental technicians and is a member of a large inter-disciplinary network across the University, relevant to the current project e.g. Durham Primatology Group; [Centre for Co-Evolution of Biology & Culture](#) and [Behaviour Ecology Evolution Research Centre](#). The Department is proud to be a Silver Athena Swan Award holder, recognising our commitment to advancing women's careers in STEM and promoting equality/diversity.

The Role

A 36-month fixed-term full time post-doctoral Research Associate position is available at the Department of Psychology at Durham University, UK. The successful candidate will join a collaborative research team led by Dr. Zanna Clay, Dr Anthony Atkinson (Durham University) and Dr Mariska Kret (Leiden University, Netherlands), as well as other researchers on this project. The position is funded by the Open Research Area - Economic & Social Research Council (UK).

The successful candidate will conduct behavioural and psycho-physical research (non-invasive) with adult humans in Durham, UK and in Africa, where they will conduct cross-

cultural research with adult humans in Rwanda and DR Congo and with bonobos in a forested sanctuary in DR Congo (assisted by a research assistant). A cross-cultural comparison with Japan will take place in collaboration with Dr Akihiro Tanaka (Tokyo Woman's Christian University). The researcher will closely interact with another post-doc working on the project (who will be based in Leiden, under the supervision of Dr Mariksa Kret).

The research will involve a combination of quantitative approaches including eye-tracking, touchscreen experiments, psycho-physical measures (infra-red thermal imaging, pupillometry), behavioural experiments and observations. Computing and programming support is provided.

Responsibilities:

- To develop new experimental tasks and assist with the development of research objectives.
- To conduct individual and collaborative research projects under the direction of the Principal Investigator/s.
- To work with the Principal Investigator/s and other colleagues in the research group, to develop new research areas, methods and extend the research portfolio.
- To collect and analyse data from human participants in the UK and Africa (Rwanda and DR Congo).
- To collect and analyse data from bonobos in DR Congo (Lola ya Bonobo Sanctuary).
- To interpret research data and generate original ideas based on outcomes.
- To prepare and deliver research presentations at conferences and to diverse audiences which may include: research sponsors, academic and non-academic audiences.
- To publish high quality outputs to peer reviewed journals and papers for presentation at conferences and workshops under the direction of the Principal Investigator/s.
- To help supervise related research in the lab. This includes working with/supervising the activities of a Research Assistant as well as closely interacting with the other post-doc on the project, who will be based in the Netherlands.
- To deal with problems that may affect the achievement of research objectives and deadlines by offering creative or innovative solutions.
- To collaborate with academic colleagues on areas of shared research interest to develop knowledge and understanding.
- To document and deposit datasets and analysis scripts.
- To engage in public engagement with science activities/ impact work.
- To play a proactive role in the research team.

This post is fixed term for up to 36 months– funding is available for this fixed period only.

The successful candidate will be employed to work on a research project which will be led by the Principal Investigators Z. Clay, M. Kret and Co-Investigator A. Atkinson. Whilst this means that the post-holder will not be carrying out independent research, the expectation is that they will contribute to the advancement of the project, through the development of their own research ideas/adaptation and development of research protocols.

The position is available from April 1st 2019 at the earliest, though timing is flexible.

The Requirements

Applicants must have (or shortly expect to obtain) a PhD in a discipline related to Psychology, Biology, Biological Anthropology with preference towards applicants with experience in Comparative Psychology and/or Affective Science. They must have an excellent academic record, and demonstrate the ability to undertake high quality independent research. Because the post-holder will work with in third-world countries including with great apes, they must have experience working in remote and/or third world countries and ideally experience collecting behavioural data with non-human primates.

Essential:

1. Qualifications

- A PhD (or be close to submission) in Psychology, Biology, Biological Anthropology or a related subject.

2. Experience

- Experience in conducting high quality academic research.
- Demonstrable ability to write material of a quality commensurate with publication in highly-ranked journals.
- Demonstrable ability to present research papers at conferences and communicate research to specialists and within the wider academic community.
- Experience working in third-world conditions.
- Evidence conducting behavioural research with animals.

3. Skills

- Evidence of ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- Ability to work independently on own initiative and to maintain deadlines.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

Desirable:

4. Experience

- Strong publication record in peer-reviewed journals, commensurate with stage of career.

- A track record of presenting research at conferences, symposia, or meetings, commensurate with stage of career.
- Experience conducting research in basic third-world conditions.
- Experience conducting research with great apes/non-human primates.
- Demonstrable ability to develop research proposals/ designs in collaboration with other academics.
- Experience overseeing students/assistants with respect to the development of their practical/research skills.
- Experience working in other languages.

5. Skills

- Demonstrable ability to plan and manage independent research.
- Knowledge of research methods in comparative psychology such as behavioural experiments, touchscreen tasks, systematic observations.
- Capacity to design and implement behavioural experiments.
- Knowledge of psycho-physical techniques (e.g. eye-tracking, thermal-imaging, bio-physiological measures).
- Experience of, or an aptitude for, engaging in public engagement/impact activities with non-academic audiences.
- Proficiency in French or capacity to learn other languages.

How to Apply

For informal enquiries please contact **Dr Zanna Clay**. Zanna.e.clay@durham.ac.uk. All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence.

We prefer to receive applications online via the Durham University Vacancies Site. <https://www.dur.ac.uk/jobs/>. As part of the application process, you should provide details of 3 (preferably academic/research) referees and the details of your current line manager so that we may seek an employment reference.

Applications are particularly welcome from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in the University.

What to Submit

All applicants are asked to submit:

- A CV and covering letter which details your experience, strengths and potential in the requirements set out above;
- A brief research proposal outlining how we might investigate the production and perception of emotion expressions comparatively (Max 300-500 words).

Next Steps

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.