

The Alan Turing Institute

PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMME – RESEARCH ASSISTANT, POLICY

THE ALAN TURING INSTITUTE

There has never been a more significant time to work in data science and AI. There is recognition of the importance of these technologies to our economic and social future: the so-called fourth industrial revolution. The technical challenge of keeping our data secure and private has grown in its urgency and importance. At the same time, voices from academia, industry, and government are coming together to debate how these technologies should be governed and managed.

The Alan Turing Institute, as the UK's national institute for data science and artificial intelligence, plays an important part in driving forward advances in these technologies in order to change the world for the better.

The Institute is named in honour of Alan Turing, whose pioneering work in theoretical and applied mathematics, engineering and computing is considered to have laid the foundations for modern-day data science and artificial intelligence. The Institute's goals are to undertake world-class research, apply its research to real-world problems, driving economic impact and societal good, lead the training of a new generation of scientists, and shape the public conversation around data and algorithms.

After launching in 2015 with government funding from EPSRC and five founding universities, the Institute has grown an extensive network of university partners from across the UK and launched a number of major partnerships with industry, public and third sector. Today it is home to more than 500 researchers, a rapidly growing team of in house research software engineers and data scientists and a business team.

BACKGROUND

The Public Policy Programme works alongside policy-makers to explore how data-driven public service provision and policy innovation might help solve long-running societal problems. We also work hand-in-hand with public sector organisations and citizens to develop practice-based ethical standards for the responsible development and use of data science and AI. Our dynamic group works closely with the government agencies, as well as international organisations like the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission.

In addition to our work with international organisations, governments, and regulators, we carry out interdisciplinary academic research on a wide variety of topics, from identifying policy priorities using agent computing to quantifying online hate speech. Our research projects rely entirely on public funds and their primary aim is to contribute to the Institute's mission of making great leaps in data science and artificial intelligence research in order to change the world for the better.

ROLE PURPOSE

The Public Policy Programme is looking to recruit a Policy Research Assistant to help us advance our innovative and high-profile research. The successful candidate will work closely with Professor Helen Margetts and Dr Cosmina Dorobantu, the programme's Director and Co-Director, and will provide research assistance across the programme's activities in the area of data science for policy-making and public services provision. Versatility will be key to success in this role. The post-holder will have a can-do attitude and be able to provide research assistance on a wide variety of high impact projects, ranging from the use of technology in government to promoting online safety, informing digital trade provisions, and supporting the creation of regulation and standards governing AI technologies. No candidate will have expertise in all the areas in which they will contribute in this role, but the successful one will have a desire to learn and a keen interest in fostering government innovation using data science and AI. The role will offer the successful candidate opportunities to grow and learn as a researcher by working alongside academics and policy makers in an interdisciplinary, dynamic, and collaborative environment. The post-holder will be line managed by Dr Cosmina Dorobantu.

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DUTIES AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The core responsibilities of this role are:

- Assist the Public Policy Programme's Director and Co-Director in conducting research and producing innovative research outputs by:
 - Carrying out desk and field research duties.
 - Participating in and reporting on relevant meetings, seminars, and workshops.
 - Providing support with writing presentations, articles, newsletters, blog posts, and website materials.
 - Facilitating the public dissemination of information about the Public Policy Programme and its activities.
- Help with managing relationships and organising events by:
 - Identifying opportunities for collaborations.
 - Contributing to developing and maintaining a growing network of internal and external partners.
 - Participating in meetings with representatives of government agencies, third sector organisations, and universities.
 - Coordinating internal and external-facing workshops, seminars, and engagement exercises.
- Contribute to project management and programme development activities by:
 - Working alongside the Programme Manager and the Research Project Managers to monitor progress on key projects.
 - Drafting progress reports and impact statements.
 - Coordinating and helping to draft funding applications.

Please note that job descriptions cannot be exhaustive, and the postholder may be required to undertake other duties, which are broadly in line with the above key responsibilities. This job description is written at a specific time and is subject to changes as the demands of the Institute and the role develop.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Skills and Requirements Post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:	Essential (E) Desirable (D)	Tested at application (a) Tested at interview (i)
Education/Qualification		
A Master's degree or equivalent experience in a discipline or field that provides suitable theoretical and empirical foundations for the use of data science and AI in policy-making	E	A, I
Knowledge and Experience		
A background and strong interest in data science, AI, and digital technologies more broadly, and in their applications in the public sector.	E	A, I
Technical skills and practical experience in areas such as machine learning, agent computing, network science, data supply chains, or digital innovation more broadly.	D	A, I
Experience in a policy environment, such as an international organisation, government agency, think tank, or learned society; or experience in a tech company or consultancy.	D	A, I
Experience working as a research assistant in an academic environment	D	A, I
Knowledge of the UK government and policy-making landscape	D	I
Communication		
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	E	A, I
A clear, insightful, and engaging writing style and a track record of writing essays, articles or blog posts	E	A, I
An ability to explain technical and methodological concepts in ways that are understandable to non-experts.	E	A, I
An ability to communicate at multiple levels and to diverse audiences	E	A, I
Teamwork and Motivation		
An ability to collaborate successfully in a multidisciplinary environment across different levels of seniority.	E	A, I
Liaison and Networking		
Experience in interacting with policy-makers, academic, and other non-academic stakeholders.	D	A, I
Planning and Organising		
Ability to work flexibly, prioritising tasks to meet deadlines and maintaining a high standard and attention to detail.	E	A, I
Analysis and Research		

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Experience in supporting research through literature review, content analysis and summary, managing bibliographic information, and related tasks.

E

A, I

Other Requirements

Demonstrable interest in the mission of the Alan Turing Institute, and in exploring the real-world uses and impact of cutting-edge technology.

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Commitment to EDI principles and to the Organisation values

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OUR VALUES

The Alan Turing Institute is committed to equality diversity and inclusion and to eliminating discrimination. All employees are expected to embrace, follow and promote our [EDI Principles](#) and Our Values.

Our values



Trust

We create an environment where we have trust and can be trusted



Inclusivity

We expect our Turing community to contribute to a culture that is inclusive and free of barriers



Respect

We all have different roles, priorities and challenges but our shared purpose is the same



Leadership

Leadership is everyone's business; Turing leaders set the right tone and lead by example



Transparency

Everyone should understand the how and the why of our decisions and actions



Integrity

We are all ambassadors for the Turing's mission of changing the world for the better

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

If you are interested in this opportunity, please click the apply button below. You will need to register on the applicant portal and complete the application form. Please make sure that you submit a CV, a covering letter which outlines how you meet the job specifications, and a sample piece of writing (your thesis, a research paper, an article, etc.). If you have questions about the role or would like to apply using a different format, please contact us on 020 3970 2148 or 0203 862 3340, or email recruitment@turing.ac.uk.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: Thursday 14 July 2022 at 23:59.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This full-time position is offered on a fixed-term basis for a period of two years. The annual salary is £36,235 plus excellent benefits, including flexible working and family-friendly policies, <https://www.turing.ac.uk/work-turing/why-work-turing/employee-benefits>.

This role may be offered on a part-time basis.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Alan Turing Institute is committed to creating an environment where diversity is valued and everyone is treated fairly. In accordance with the Equality Act, we welcome applications from anyone who meets the specific criteria of the post regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We are committed to building a diverse community and would like our leadership team to reflect this. We therefore welcome applications from the broadest spectrum of backgrounds.

Reasonable adjustments to the interview process will be made for any candidates with a disability.

Please note all offers of employment are subject to obtaining and retaining the right to work in the UK and satisfactory pre-employment security screening which includes a DBS Check.

Full details on the pre-employment screening process can be requested from HR@turing.ac.uk.