

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| **Job Title** | **Principal Research Fellow** |
| **School** | **Sustainability Research Institute (SRI)** |
| **Grade** | **H** |
| **Location** | **Docklands Campus** |
| **Reporting to** | **Director of SRI** |
| **Key working relationships: Internal** | **Blue/Green Infrastructure research teams** |
| **Key working relationships: External** | **External Partners and Organisations** |
| **Contract type / Hours:** | **Permanent /0.6FTE (can go up to 1fte)** |

Build your career, follow your passion, be inspired by our environment of success

**#BeTheChange**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

The University of East London is one of the most diverse and vibrant universities in the global capital. Our pioneering and future-focused **careers-first** vision is making a positive and significant impact to the communities we serve, inspiring our students, our staff, our alumni and our partners to reach their full potential.

Founded in 1898 to meet the skills needs of the 2nd industrial revolution, we are implementing [Vision 2028](https://www.uel.ac.uk/about/vision-2028) our ambitious 10-year strategy to reshape the face of education through collaborative initiatives alongside industry partners.

Our mission remains to foster inclusive pathways to career readiness for students of all backgrounds whilst driving positive change and measurable impact through our research, global partnerships, and innovative educational models.

We are building an environment of success where colleagues are supported to achieve, and our community can flourish and thrive. We are an accredited Investors in People Award Institution and have achieved the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing Award. As the only University in London to have achieved Silver Awards in Athena Swan Gender Equality and in the Race Equality Charter, we continue our journey to address and reduce barriers to opportunity.

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE:**

Since its launch in 2001, UEL’s Sustainability Research Institute (SRI) has brought together research and development of innovative eco-efficient technologies and processes, focusing on changes in the physical infrastructure that benefit the environment and promote a carbon-neutral society. Over the last ten years, the SRI has successfully delivered a wide range of publicly funded research projects, undertaken a number of consultancy contracts and contract research initiatives, and built an excellent international reputation by applying ground-breaking research and development in the real world.

**RESEARCH**

At UEL, we believe the best research happens through collaboration. Our vibrant research institutes act as specialised hubs where experts connect across disciplines to tackle real-world challenges and drive meaningful change. Our academics are committed to high-quality research, reflected in the fact that 92% of UEL's overall research was recognised as world-leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised.

SRI’s work focuses on a range of emerging research fields and pressing urban and rural sustainability challenges and is centred on three key themes:

* Blue/Green infrastructure: spanning areas such peatland ecology and conservation, the design and monitoring of urban green infrastructure, and invertebrate conservation.
* Sustainable materials and resources: encompassing materials engineering and circular economy.
* Sustainable Society: covering adaptive governance, community engagement, climate change adaptation behaviour, and net-zero transition.

**JOB PURPOSE**

We are looking for an established researcher with an interest in peatland ecology, land use change and environmental impact to join the SRI. The successful candidate would take a leadership and mentoring role within the Green Infrastructure team, developing, and supporting research activity, including leading, and providing support across several ongoing projects. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced researcher to join a multi-disciplinary team working on transformational sustainability projects across the UK, Europe and globally.

The successful candidate will understand the broad range of ecological and socio-economic issues increasingly associated with nature-based solution approaches to land use change, with a specific focus on peatland and agricultural landscapes. They should be able to identify problems, and propose solutions and strategies, and will be able to communicate these in a clear way to a range of audiences. As environmental initiatives are increasingly impacting on, and making use of, economic factors, the successful candidate will be experienced in the evaluation of land use/habitat condition change and/or using socio-economic analysis (SEA) and recognise the implications of their implementation within the environmental context. We are looking for someone who will thrive in a multi-disciplinary collaborative research environment focused on supporting external stakeholders solve real-world challenges and will be able to innovate using their ecological and/or socio-economic expertise.

This role is currently funded at 0.6 FTE, with flexibility in working arrangements that can be explored during the application or interview stage. For candidates who already hold research funding or can demonstrate a strong track record in consultancy, there is the potential to expand the role to full-time (1.0 FTE), subject to discussion at application or interview. We welcome applications from candidates at all career stages and are committed to supporting the development of research and consultancy activity as part of the role.

**KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

* Conduct qualitative and/or quantitative research on several on-going projects (including taking a leadership role on work-packages).
* Conduct appropriate scientific analysis within our projects.
* Write reports on findings and communicate them with experts and stakeholders from other fields.
* Liaise, lead, and develop collaborations with partners, colleagues and external stakeholders to achieve high quality results.
* Initiate and contribute to new funding applications.
* Take a lead role in the SRI’s Blue/Green Infrastructure team to enhance the presence of this area in our projects.
* Contribute to the SRI community, research, knowledge exchange, teaching, and income generation.
* Line manages, and mentor, early-career academics and research students with a particular focus on the Blue/Green Infrastructure research theme.
* Take a lead on research & consultancy income generation in remote sensing/peatland conservation.
* Support the SRI and UEL in the delivery of REF, KEF and TEF targets.

The duties and responsibilities outlined above provide a general overview of the range of tasks that a Principal Research Fellowat the University of East London may be required to perform. Please note that this job description is not exhaustive, and additional tasks aligned with the role's grade may be assigned as needed.

The job description may also be updated to reflect changes in circumstances, and employees will be consulted if any amendments are required.

**All employees must adhere to all UEL policies and regulations, demonstrating a commitment to equal opportunities within a diverse and multicultural environment. Employees are also expected to actively contribute to building and maintaining a positive reputation for UEL in all their professional activities.**

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The University's Core [Values](https://www.uel.ac.uk/about/governance/ethical-framework) are **Passion, Inclusion, Courage**, and they are at the root of everything we do and everyone in our community is expected to demonstrate them.

The table below outlines the essential and desirable criteria required to perform the role effectively. Candidates will be shortlisted based on how closely they meet these criteria.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Education and Qualifications** | Essential | Desirable | Criteria Assessed by |
| PhD or equivalent qualification in an ecology and/or geography discipline |  |  | A/C |
| Professional qualifications related to ecology and/or sustainability |  |  | C |
| Membership of professional organisations |  |  | I |
| **Experience and Knowledge** |  |  |  |
| Strong knowledge of sustainability, biodiversity, and/or environmental fields |  |  | A/I |
| Experience conducting peatland ecology analysis research |  |  | A/I |
| Experience designing and undertaking qualitative and/or quantitative research |  |  | A/I |
| Experience of research and/or knowledge exchange project leadership |  |  | A/I |
| Experience of managing early/mid-career researchers |  |  | A/I |
| Track record of successful PhD supervision |  |  | A/I |
| Track record in research/action research/consultancy income generation and project delivery |  |  | A/I |
| Comprehensive understanding of the national TEF, KEF and REF landscape |  |  | I |
| Evidence of high-quality impact from research outputs |  |  | I |
| An understanding of peatland ecology, peat soil carbon dynamics, or conservation |  |  | I |
| Experience working on international projects |  |  | I |
| Experience of working with non-academic stakeholders |  |  | I |
| **Skills/Abilities** |  |  |  |
| Excellent research skills including qualitative and/or quantitative methods and data analysis, appropriate analysis software, sampling methods, survey research and statistical analysis (data analysis software SPSS, NVivo, etc) |  |  | A/I |
| Excellent IT skills (MS office, etc) |  |  | I |
| Excellent interpersonal, networking, and communication skills |  |  | I |
| Research grant writing experience |  |  | A/I |
| Teaching experience including PhD supervision |  |  | I |
| Experience of statistical analysis programming and spatial analysis (e.g., R programming, ArcGIS) |  |  | I |
| **Personal Attributes** |  |  |  |
| Commitment to and understanding of equal opportunities issues within a diverse and multicultural environment |  |  | I |
| Ability to work on multiple projects at a time |  |  | I |
| Ability to work independently and as part of small and large teams |  |  | I |
| Good team player with willingness to mentor colleagues whilst also continuing own professional development |  |  | I |
| Commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards in research |  |  | I |
| Commitment to the promotion and advancement of the university |  |  | I |

**Further Information:**

UEL is an inclusive equal opportunities employer and are proud of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity achievements. We expect all employees of UEL to accept our EDI policy and will not tolerate discrimination in any form. As an employee of UEL, we expect you to follow all relevant Health & Safety policies.

We're a disability confident employer and value all applications. Please let us know if you require any reasonable accommodations throughout the recruitment process.

**Last Updated:** 01 October 2025