



## KNOWLEDGE MEDIA INSTITUTE

### Research Fellow: Collective Intelligence Infrastructure Temporary appointment until 31 December 2011 – Vacancy ID: 5466

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#### Summary

The Open University's Knowledge Media Institute (KMi) invites applications for a 3 year *Research Fellowship on Collective Intelligence Infrastructure*. This position is in the context of the *Open Learning Network (OLnet)* – [www.olnet.org](http://www.olnet.org) – a joint project led by the Open University and Carnegie Mellon University, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Open Educational Resources (OER) movement aims to maximise the impact of free, high quality learning resources. *OLnet* is charged with building the capacity of researchers and practitioners in the design, deployment and assessment of OER. Specifically, we aim to build a social and technical infrastructure enabling new forms of networked research and scholarship in OER. This is currently conceived in terms of connecting people, mapping debates in key challenges facing the field, facilitating the exchange and evolution of OER design patterns and tools, and building a multimedia evidence-base of OER effectiveness.

This position is for an emerging research leader, able to coordinate with both the UK/US teams, and OLnet's global partners in developed and developing countries. Your task is challenging: *to conceptualise OLnet as a form of collective intelligence, and to architect a CI infrastructure from a human-centred computing perspective*. As detailed below, you wish to develop your research profile by applying your expertise in knowledge-building infrastructure to the demanding requirements of the OER movement. This post will also enable you to develop your skills in project management, leadership, dissemination, bid writing and PhD supervision.

The appointment will be made on the Academic Grade AC3 Salary Scales for Research Staff, ranging from £36,532 – £43,622 pa, depending on qualifications and experience. This post will be managed by Dr. Simon Buckingham Shum, one of the OLnet investigators, and leader of the Hypermedia Discourse team in KMi.

KMi is a highly successful interdisciplinary research centre founded at The Open University in 1995, and located in attractive premises at The Open University's main campus in Milton Keynes, UK. We offer a stimulating environment, widely acknowledged to be at the leading edge of research and development, particularly in semantic web technologies, multimedia and information systems, knowledge modelling and management, new media for learning and

sensemaking. KMi is part of the OU's Centre for Research in Computing, ranked as one of the top 20 research centres in the UK RAE 2008. The style, impact and content of our work can be seen at <http://kmi.open.ac.uk/>.

## Job Description

### Responsibilities

- Manage the design, implementation and maintenance of the CI infrastructure, managing and mentoring the developers, and liaising as required with internal and external parties;
- Review and critique the literature in collective intelligence, sensemaking, and e-scholarship as it applies to OLnet;
- Maintain strong relationships with the OER technical infrastructure community to ensure good integration with the current movement;
- Refine the project's technical objectives and methods, and work with team members to define user needs and storyboard interface ideas;
- Instrument the infrastructure to support the tracking of user behaviour in order to analyse OLnet's effectiveness;
- Contribute to project progress reports for internal and external audiences;
- Contribute to OLnet's fellowship mentoring programme with material on CI infrastructure;
- Track funding opportunities for synergistic projects, workshops, events, etc., and draft proposals;
- Disseminate the project's findings in appropriate forms for diverse stakeholder communities including OU/CMU groups, OER, Collective Intelligence and e-Scholarship. These will include peer reviewed conference and journal articles, a project blog, and presentations/demonstrations.

### Other duties

- Co-supervise at least one PhD student in a project within the field of collective sensemaking/intelligence;
- Support related projects, events and activities as a member of the OLnet Project, and the KMi Hypermedia Discourse team;
- Undertake such other activities as requested by OLnet's Director.

## Person Specification

### Essential

- A PhD, or equivalent experience, demonstrating your ability to conduct independent, high quality research;
- Knowledge of concepts and technologies relevant to collective intelligence and sensemaking;
- An international research portfolio with recent evidence of high quality dissemination, and involvement in communities relevant to the human-centred design of knowledge infrastructure;
- Expertise in delivering knowledge infrastructure, particularly at the intersection of Web 2.0/3.0;
- Enthusiasm for working with human-centred computing designers, and experience in negotiating the tensions between implementation-centred and user-centred design requirements;
- Evidence of research and project leadership skills to lead and coordinate collaborative tasks;
- Ability to organise and prioritise own work and the work of others in response to deadlines;
- A team player, working with a mix of colleagues, able to give and receive constructive feedback;
- Excellent interpersonal, visual, oral and written communication skills for giving demonstrations and research presentations.

### Desirable

- Familiarity with: the OER movement; knowledge management concepts; user-centred design techniques;
- Ability to contribute to new research initiative and grant proposals.

## **Working at The Open University**

The Open University transforms lives through education. It has become by far the largest university in the UK, now teaching well over 200,000 people every year. We have expanded our activities throughout Europe and our highly rated teaching materials are used by other institutions in many parts of the world. We are consistently achieving high rankings both in research and teaching quality assessments.

Teaching is through the provision of specially designed, high quality, materials encompassing traditional print texts, television, video, CD-ROM, internet and electronic conferencing together with first class personalised tuition, learning feedback and support.

The success of the Open University is due to our outstanding staff. There are around 13,000 staff (including 7,500 Associate Lecturers). Staff and potential staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.

We are also committed to the development of our staff to their full potential through lifelong learning, offering a range of formal and informal training and development activities to ensure that staff are able to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities and to help meet individual and University objectives. Our objective is that all staff undertake a minimum of 5 days development activity in each year

## **About Milton Keynes**

Milton Keynes <<http://www.mkweb.co.uk/home/>> is home to some major employers with Abbey National, Argos and The Open University having headquarters in the city. With businesses continuing to locate here, unemployment levels are among the lowest in the country. It is one of the fastest growing cities in the country with fantastic shopping facilities, and Xscape Snow slope, new skydiving centre and much more. Milton Keynes has excellent transport links with the M1 motorway and A5 running alongside the city. Milton Keynes is also on the London Euston rail line (an hour north of London and an hour from Oxford and Cambridge). Milton Keynes has just launched what it claims is the first commercial Wimax service in the UK.

## **Benefits and Facilities**

The following information provides a summary of staff benefits and facilities. Full details will be available when you join us.

### ***Staff development***

We have a strong commitment to providing training and development in and beyond your current role. This includes thorough induction into the organisation and regular reviews of your training and development needs. The objective is that all staff should undertake at least five days development activity in each year — this may include attendance at formal courses or other learning e.g. use of self-study material. We invest substantial time and money in our staff development provisions and we waive fees for staff wishing to study our own courses.

### ***Annual leave***

The annual leave entitlement is 30 days (33 days for academic, academic related or research staff) in addition to all Bank and other Public Holidays and an additional 3 days at Christmas when the University is closed.

### ***Pension schemes***

Staff have the option of contributing to a national final salary pension scheme and if they choose to contribute, the University contributes around 14% of salary. Full details will be sent with any offer of employment but any preliminary enquiries should be addressed to the Pensions Section, Human Resources +44 (0)1908 652431 or 652957.

### ***Relocation expenses***

Staff are normally expected to live within a reasonable travelling distance of their place of work. The University will make a grant towards expenses necessarily incurred for removals and disturbance, within certain rules and subject to a maximum payment. Full details will be sent with any offer of employment. The removal grant does not apply on appointments of less than two years duration.

### **Family friendly policies**

- Staff are entitled to 52 weeks maternity/adoption leave. Statutory maternity/adoption pay will be paid for a maximum period of the first 39 weeks, made up to full pay for the first 18 weeks, subject to minimum service conditions. Staff have the right to return to work at any time within 52 weeks of the maternity leave start date, again subject to certain conditions.
- Staff are entitled to a maximum of 10 days paid paternity leave in connection with their wife's/partner's confinement in any one leave year in addition to normal leave entitlement, again subject to certain conditions.
- Childcare Vouchers; we have introduced a salary sacrifice scheme to enable staff to take advantage of tax and NI exemption on up to £243 of childcare vouchers per month. The scheme is managed by Busy Bees. Further information will be provided on appointment.

### **Milton Keynes based staff**

- **Nurseries:** The Mulberry Bear Day Nursery & Pre-School is a purpose-built nursery on the Walton Hall campus. It is an independent charity supported by The Open University and managed by parents. OU staff applications are given priority but there may be a waiting list in some age groups. For further information, please telephone Milton Keynes +44 (0)1908 653867, email [mulberrybear-enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:mulberrybear-enquiries@open.ac.uk) or see their website at [www.mulberrybear.org.uk](http://www.mulberrybear.org.uk)
- There are a number of other private nurseries in the Milton Keynes area.

### **Facilities**

- Catering facilities providing meals, snacks and drinks.
- Open University Club (offering a number of club and society events, sports and social outlets).
- Occupational Health Department (located on site at Walton Hall) provides professional advice to individuals and managers on all work related health issues.
- NatWest; Bank sub branch on site at Walton Hall.
- Shop selling general provision on site at Walton Hall.

**Local Education:** Information on local schools can be obtained from the Learning and Development Directorate, Milton Keynes Borough Council on +44 (0)1908 253489 or visit their website at: [www.mkschools.net](http://www.mkschools.net)

### **Smoking policy**

Please note that smoking is not permitted in University buildings, bars and catering areas. Smoking is only permitted in designated outdoor areas.

### **How to apply**

The following guidelines are designed to help you submit a job application in line with our requirements.

#### **Covering letter or support statement**

Your covering letter or statement should clearly identify how you meet the person specification. Please ensure you provide relevant examples as evidence to support your statements.

You will need to read carefully any specific instructions concerning what should be included in your application (this will be in the additional information you have concerning the job). Please ensure you comply with these instructions, as if you do not the panel will not shortlist you.

The selection panel will consider how well the information you provide demonstrates that you meet the criteria identified in the person specification.

#### **Completing the application form**

It is in your interest to show how your experience and personal qualities address the person specification for the role.

Please ensure you complete all the sections of the form in full giving as much detail as possible, you are welcome to enclose your up-to-date curriculum vitae, but **CVs will not be accepted on their own.**

Once completed, you must sign and date the application form to confirm that the information and any attachments are correct.

### **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

If using the short (two-sided) version of our application form, please enclose an up-to-date CV with your application for employment. This should include details about the following, where applicable:

- Secondary and higher education (dates, educational establishment, examinations, results/grade and thesis title if applicable).
- Other technical, professional or occupational training/courses attended (dates, provider, type of training, subjects studied and qualifications attained).
- Membership of professional institutes or societies.
- Employment history (dates, details of your present and past employers, positions held with brief details of duties, final salary and reason for leaving). Please start with your present or most recent appointment. Remember to include unpaid or voluntary work as well as paid employment.
- Details of relevant publications (for academic posts).

*Please remove any information from your CV that might give an indication of your race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation as these details are irrelevant to your application.*

### **Disabled applicants**

The Open University welcomes applications from disabled people.

If you require any adjustments to enable you to attend the interview please ensure that you have either provided this information on your application form or contacted the Recruitment Coordinator to discuss your requirements.

If you are called for interview, please discuss any adjustments you may require to carry out the duties of the role with the interview panel so that the appropriate arrangements and any adjustments can be made if necessary.

(Under the Disability Discrimination Act, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.)

Please let us know if you need your copy of the further particulars in large print, on computer disc or on audio cassette tape. Access details for disabled applicants are available from the KMi Recruitment Co-ordinator.

### **Proof of eligibility to work in the UK**

There are legal restrictions on who may undertake employment in the United Kingdom. Residents of the European Economic Area and Switzerland are permitted to work within the UK, however citizens of other countries normally need to be sponsored by a UK employer and granted permission to stay in the UK by the UK Border Agency, in order to undertake employment with the sponsoring employer.

When applying to the UK Border Agency in order to sponsor someone, the University will be required to demonstrate that the job is at skill level S/NVQ level 3 or above, and that there are no other suitable candidates for the post who are 'settled workers', i.e. resident in any of the countries as stated above.

Candidates who are invited for interview will be required to provide proof of their eligibility to work in the UK by producing verifiable documents. Details of the required documents will be sent to those candidates who are invited for interview and the relevant 'original' documents must be brought along to the interview for checking and copying.

If you require sponsorship this will be processed should your application for appointment be successful. To find out what visas and permissions you may require in order to work in the UK please see <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/> or telephone +44 (0)114 207 4074, the general enquiries line is open from 09:00hrs to 17:00hrs, Monday to Friday, excluding UK public holidays.

### **Retirement age**

The Open University operates a normal retirement age of 65. It is normal policy to only accept applications from new applicants up to the age of 64 years and 6 months, provided that the applicant would be under the age of 65 when they commence work for the University. This is in line with the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

***Internal applicants only — information about references***

When completing the 'References' section of the application form, please ensure you specify your Head of Unit as your 'current employer', as he/she is responsible for providing this reference or nominating an appropriate alternative referee.

Please be advised that the employing Unit is responsible for requesting references from your referees.

***Completed applications should be returned to:***

Please email your application to Ms Ortenz Rose: [o.rose@open.ac.uk](mailto:o.rose@open.ac.uk)

Or by post to:

KMi Recruitment Coordinator  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
MILTON KEYNES  
Bucks MK7 6AA  
UK

***Application deadline***

Closing date for application: **13 March 2009**. Applications received after this date will not be accepted.

We are looking to appoint as soon as possible in 2009.

***Interview panel and date of interview***

The Interview Panel will be chaired by Dr. Simon Buckingham Shum. Interviews will take place during the week commencing **23 March 2009**.

The selection process for this post will be by review of applications by the Chair and selected members of the interview panel. There may be a telephone interview before a formal interview. We will let you know as soon as possible after the closing date whether you have been shortlisted for interview together with details of the interview format.

***Recruitment process***

If you have any comments or concerns about any stage of the recruitment process, please write to the HR Adviser — Support Services, Human Resources who will look into the matter.

***Contact info***

Informal enquiries may be made to:

Dr. Simon Buckingham Shum, Senior Lecturer in Knowledge Media, KMi  
E: [S.Buckingham.Shum@open.ac.uk](mailto:S.Buckingham.Shum@open.ac.uk)  
T: +44 (0)1908 655723  
Skype: sbskmi

**THIS POST IS OPEN TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPLICANTS.**

**Please let us know if you need your copy of the further particulars in large print, on computer disk, or on audio cassette tape.**

**Access details for disabled applicants are available on Milton Keynes +44 (0)1908 654901 (Minicom answerphone).**

**We promote diversity in employment and welcome applicants from all sections of the community.**