Postdoctoral Research Associate: Creative Skills and Workforce

Job title:	Postdoctoral Research Associate: Creative Skills and Workforce
Employer:	People's Palace Projects
Location:	People's Palace Projects, Queen Mary University of London, (Mile End campus)
Centre:	Queen Mary Centre for Creative Collaboration
Reporting to:	Director, Queen Mary Centre for Creative Collaboration
Salary:	£52,790 FTE (equivalent to QM Research Grade 5, spinal point 37)
Hours of work:	35 hours per week
Contract:	Fixed-term (8 February – 7 December 2027)

Context

The postholder will be based at People's Palace Projects (PPP), collaborating with the Queen Mary Centre for Creative Collaboration (QMCCC) team in Queen Mary University of London's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. PPP is an internationally recognised Queen Mary research centre that uses arts-based and participatory approaches to address social justice, health, citizenship and human rights challenges. QMCCC brings together research, industry, policymakers and communities to develop new approaches to challenges and opportunities facing the creative industries, with a particular focus on skills, workforce development, equitable innovation and inclusive growth.

The postholder will work across two closely connected projects: **Barking and Dagenham Asset Mapping - Repurposing Post-Industrial Skills for the Creative Workforce**, and the **Thames Estuary Creative Skills Taskforce**.

The Barking and Dagenham Asset Mapping project is a partnership between QMCCC, People's Palace Projects and Barking and Dagenham Council. The project will generate evidence to inform future investment in creative

industries employment pathways by Barking and Dagenham Council, with a particular emphasis on enabling good and sustainable jobs for local residents.

The project will pilot an asset-based approach to mapping creative industries skills, combining labour-market evidence with community research and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches. It will examine what constitutes good work in the creative industries for post-industrial working-class communities; identify existing industrial, technical, cultural and community skills and capabilities that could be repurposed for sustainable creative work; and identify where future investment in training, business development and creative industries infrastructure could be directed.

The Thames Estuary Creative Skills Taskforce is led by QMCCC with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Creative Estuary. It brings together partners from across the region to strengthen coordination around creative industries skills and workforce development and to develop a shared approach to the opportunities and challenges facing the creative workforce. Its focus is on developing shared regional approaches to challenges identified around skills and creative workforce data, the conditions for creating good work, improving employer and education sector collaboration, supporting the freelance workforce, widening access to creative careers, and the impact of AI on creative work.

The two projects are closely connected. The Barking and Dagenham Asset Mapping project will provide a focused pilot for an approach to identifying and mapping existing community skills and capabilities. The methodology and learning generated through the pilot will be shared with the Thames Estuary Creative Skills Taskforce and will help inform wider approaches to creative skills and workforce planning across the region.

The postholder will support research and delivery across both projects, combining primary and secondary research with policy translation and analysis, project management and administration, stakeholder engagement, and the development of research, policy, funding and public-facing outputs.

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Purpose

To undertake and support high-quality research, policy development and knowledge exchange relating to creative industries skills, good work and inclusive employment pathways through the Barking and Dagenham Asset Mapping project and the Thames Estuary Creative Skills Taskforce.

The postholder will undertake mixed-methods and participatory research within Barking and Dagenham, including literature and data review, community asset mapping, fieldwork and analysis. They will contribute to the development and testing of approaches to identifying existing community skills and capabilities, explore opportunities for these skills to be applied within the creative sector, and inform future investment and support planning for the Council - including inclusive hiring, training and employment practices to underpin the development of good jobs in the creative industries.

Alongside this research, the postholder will support the planning and delivery of the Thames Estuary Creative Skills Taskforce, undertaking research and policy analysis; supporting the administration and coordination of meetings, workshops and Task and Finish Groups; gathering and synthesising evidence; and contributing to research, policy and framework outputs. The role will connect place-based research with regional policy and workforce development, ensuring that learning from the Barking and Dagenham pilot informs wider approaches across the Thames Estuary.

The postholder will also be supported to generate co-authored and single-authored research outputs with the QMCCC team and to undertake funding bids to support their future career development.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. Barking and Dagenham Asset Mapping

Working closely with the QMCCC team and to scopes/briefs agreed with the project partners.

- Assess and synthesise relevant secondary data and research on post-industrial skills, good work in the creative industries, and relevant local data.

- Recruit, train and support local community co-researchers in research methods, ethics, and participation.
- Plan and deliver fieldwork with residents, community groups, employers, and education and training providers.
- Conduct interviews, focus groups, surveys, case studies. and participatory research.
- Map local skills and their potential for sustainable creative work.
- Develop case studies of residents' skills-transition pathways and implications for training, recruitment, and investment.
- Organise, code and analyse qualitative and quantitative data.
- Develop evidence-based recommendations for Barking and Dagenham Council.
- Support the communication and dissemination of the project's findings to relevant audiences.

2. Thames Estuary Creative Skills Taskforce
In close liaison with the QMCCC team.

- Provide research, planning and administrative support to the Taskforce and Task and Finish Groups.
- Plan meetings, workshops and engagement activity, including papers, evidence packs and actions.
- Review and synthesise in accessible form, evidence on skills intelligence, good work, diversity, education, freelancers and AI in the creative industries.
- Coordinate contributions from taskforce members, experts and partners.
- Turn evidence and discussion into practical recommendations.
- Support the communication and dissemination of the Taskforce's findings.
- Support collaborative research and funding opportunities.

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3. Connecting research, policy and regional practice

- Document learning from the Barking and Dagenham pilot for adaptation or scaling elsewhere.
- Feed findings into Taskforce skills intelligence, asset mapping and workforce planning.
- Translate community findings into accessible evidence for regional stakeholders.
- Balance community assets with employer and labour-market needs in recommendations for skills planning.
- Support the PPP and QMCCC teams with external communication including website updates, articles and webinars.

4. Research ethics, equality and data management

- Support ethics applications and ensure compliance with Queen Mary research ethics, data protection, safeguarding, risk assessment and integrity. Manage informed consent and secure research data.
- Promote inclusive, accessible and equitable research and engagement.
- Represent community knowledge, lived experience and participant voice appropriately.
- Ensure the work complies with PPP's policies, including those on Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, and Safeguarding.
- Compile statistics and reporting to stakeholders on the work as required on behalf of both PPP and QMCCC (including PPP's Board, Arts Council England funder reporting, and Queen Mary's internal reporting requirements).

The above list of responsibilities is not exhaustive, and the jobholder may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with the level of the role as reasonably requested by their line manager.

This job description accurately reflects the duties and responsibilities of the role at the time the job description was written. These duties and responsibilities may change over time without significantly impacting on the character of the role or the overall level of responsibility.

Person Specification

Essential

Qualifications

- A PhD, or equivalent professional research experience, in a relevant field such as creative and cultural industries, sociology, human geography, cultural policy, education, labour studies, business and management, or a related social science discipline.

Knowledge / Experience

- Experience of designing and undertaking high-quality qualitative or mixed-methods research.
- Experience of conducting literature, policy and evidence reviews and synthesising complex material.
- Experience of community-based, participatory or co-produced research.
- Knowledge of qualitative research methods, including interviews, focus groups, case studies and systematic approaches to analysis.
- Experience of collecting, managing and analysing research data in accordance with ethical and data-protection requirements.
- Experience of contributing to academic publications, research reports or other substantial research outputs.
- Experience of working on collaborative projects involving multiple partners or stakeholders.
- Knowledge of the creative and cultural industries, creative workforce or skills policy.
- Experience of Asset-Based Community Development, community asset mapping or place-based research.

Skills / Abilities

- Excellent research and analytical skills, with the ability to integrate evidence from academic literature, policy, datasets and lived experience.

- Excellent written communication skills, including the ability to produce clear academic, policy and public-facing outputs.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to build effective working relationships with community participants, academic colleagues, policymakers, employers and education providers.
- Strong planning, administration and project-coordination skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and meet fixed deadlines.
- Ability to plan and facilitate inclusive meetings, workshops, interviews and focus groups.
- Ability to work independently, use initiative and contribute effectively within a collaborative team.
- Strong attention to detail and commitment to robust, high-quality research and project delivery.

General

- Commitment to ethical and participatory research practice and to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Willingness to undertake regular travel within London and the Thames Estuary where project activities require.
- The ability to meet UK right-to-work requirements*.

Desirable

Knowledge / Experience

- Understanding of inequalities in access to work, skills or career progression.
- Experience of quantitative survey research or analysis of labour-market and skills data.
- Experience of policy engagement, knowledge exchange or producing outputs for policymakers and practitioners.
- Knowledge of the Thames Estuary, east London or comparable post-industrial communities.

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*Right to Work Requirements

PPP has a legal responsibility to ensure that all potential employees can provide documentary evidence of their legal right to work in the UK prior to commencing employment.

Visa Sponsorship

For those who do not have a right to work in the UK, PPP is a UKVI licensed sponsor and may be able to issue a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) to successful candidates who are offered skilled roles if they meet the eligibility criteria. The CoS enables candidates to apply for a Skilled Worker visa. Further information on the Skilled Worker visa can be found via: www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa.

Global Talent Visa Route

The Global Talent visa is an alternative route to sponsorship, directly applied for by the applicant. It is open to those wishing to work in the UK and who are a leader or potential leader in the fields of academia or research, arts and culture, and digital technology. Further information on the Global Talent Route can be found via: https://www.gov.uk/global-talent.

For additional information on both visa sponsorship and non-sponsorship visa routes, please visit the UK Visas and Immigration website: https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas.

Application Process

Diversity Monitoring

People's Palace Projects is a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England. As part of our funding agreement, we are required to send ACE diversity monitoring statistics for all our staff and all freelancers/contractors we work with. As part of our internal equality monitoring, we also monitor the diversity of candidates who apply for advertised roles, those who are shortlisted for interview, and those who are successful.

The information you supply will be kept anonymous. When we receive the survey back from you, we will give it an alphanumeric code and separate it from your written application, which will be assessed without reference to

the information disclosed on the survey. A list of names with codes will be kept securely for later analysis. Thank you for your participation.

People's Palace Projects is a Disability Confident Committed employer:

- All candidates disclosing a disability and who demonstrate that they meet all the essential criteria of the Person Specification will qualify for an interview.
- At the point of inviting candidates for interview, we will ask about any additional needs or adjustments that would be required to support your participation in the process.
- Our current staff team includes people who have disclosed disabilities.

How to Apply

To apply for this position, please submit an application form at this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YMP7GSH.

- Application deadline: **Friday 11 December (12.00pm)**
- Shortlisted candidates informed: **Wednesday 16 December**
- Interview (online): **Monday 21 December**

We regret that it will not be possible to inform applicants who are not shortlisted. If you have not heard from us by close of play 16 December, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.

If you have any questions or issues with submission, please contact a.mehta-brown@qmul.ac.uk.

Thank you in advance, and we look forward to hearing from you.