

Junior Research Fellow at the Woolf Institute Research project: 'Uncovering Fundamentalism'

Job description and person specifications

The Woolf Institute

The Woolf Institute is an independent, academic institution (Reg. Charity No. 1069589) with close links to the University of Cambridge. An Associate Member of the Cambridge Theological Federation, Woolf Institute staff teach on Cambridge University courses. The Woolf Institute also offers e-learning courses, conducts policy and academic research projects, and delivers public educational programmes and training courses to a variety of audiences.

The Woolf Institute strives for a world without prejudice or religious discrimination, where regardless of faith or background, people understand, respect and trust one another. In this vision people of different faiths, and no faith, constructively engage with one another, transforming their futures for the benefit of all. The Institute was borne of a very simple, and yet hopeful premise: that through robust scholarly study of the historical encounter between Jews, Christians and Muslims, we can better understand and guide our society at present, and thus inform and shape a more tolerant, respectful and collective future together. Since its foundation in Cambridge in 1998, the Woolf Institute has established a successful multi-disciplinary track record through academic research, in-house and on-line teaching, and innovative public outreach programmes.

Working closely with Cambridge University, and with a particular focus on the UK, mainland Europe, and countries around the Mediterranean, it is the Institute's combination of scholarship of the highest order with broadbased public education that makes it distinctive and a global leader in addressing one of the most pressing and rewarding challenges of our time.

Job description

Job Title: Junior Research Fellow

Reporting to: Founder Director

Salary range: £24k - £28k commensurate with experience, plus pension

Contract Specifics: Full time, two years

The role:

This is a two-year post which will combine two different elements of the Institute's work: one part of the job's duties will involve carrying out research into religious fundamentalism, notably

- Investigate religious fundamentalism(s) as religious and intellectual systems, their attractiveness and how and why they function as they do.
- Conduct a theological analysis of fundamentalist beliefs and practices

- Explore similarities and differences within and between fundamentalists and identify trends, including what prompts religious violence

A second important part of the role will be:

- Identifying policy implications of the research and preparing a policy paper with recommendations
- Dissemination of project findings including:
 - organising an academic conference towards the end of the project and editing conference proceedings in preparation for publication plus preparing online resources to reach a wider audience

The percentage of time dedicated to both of these job components will vary according to the needs of the projects and depend on how quickly the research will yield results which can be used for the policy component.

The JRF will work with the Founder Director and other Woolf Institute research staff on the project. The person should also feel comfortable working within a fastpaced work environment, in an Institute with a strong academic focus, and as part of a small staff.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1) Carry out research for the project 'Fundamentalism Uncovered'
- 2) Write at least two academic articles
- 3) Develop Policy Paper
- 4) Organise conference and edit proceedings
- 5) Work with Woolf Communications Officer to disseminate the research from the project to the public (such as a documentary, podcasts, blogs and vlogs and webpages).

Other Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1) Ensuring the project supports the overall mission of the Institute.
- 2) Teaching in summer schools and online programmes for the Woolf Institute.
- 3) Representing the Woolf Institute at appropriate events.

Person Specifications

Essential:

- Academic degree (BA, MPhil or PhD), preferably in theology and religious studies, anthropology, history, political science or sociology.
- Experience of Policy development.
- Expertise in at least two of the religions under review and knowledge of religious fundamentalism.
- Acquaintance with religion and belief landscape in the UK. Demonstrable networking skills within faith communities in the UK.
- Flexible and dynamic work ethos.
- A deep commitment to the recognition of diversity – particularly in relation to faith (and no faith); to constructive relations between individuals and groups of different backgrounds and beliefs.

- Excellent teamworking, interpersonal and co-ordination skills and ability to work in a collegial manner with other staff to ensure a connection between research and practice-based activities.
- Experience of working within a fast-paced work environment, with a strong academic focus, and as part of a small staff team.
- Demonstrable experience of persuasive written, and strong verbal communication skills. Good presentation skills.
- Vision and ambition of undertaking a comprehensive project combining research and policy. Occasional evening and weekend work (e.g. meetings/events) may be necessary.
- Ability to commute relatively easily to the Cambridge area.

Desirable:

- Experience in the creation and delivery of online materials.
- Experience in fieldwork and online dissemination.
- The ability to work autonomously, and show initiative and creativity in solving problems.
- Experience of faith communities in Europe and/or the Middle East.