Job Description:

Research Fellow ‘How to continue talking’ project

The Woolf Institute

The Woolf Institute is an independent charity affiliated with the University of Cambridge through our partnerships with the Cambridge Theological Federation, St Edmund’s College and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. We seek to build understanding and trust between Jews, Muslims and Christians, and between religious groups and wider society, through research, education and public engagement. We celebrated our 25th anniversary in 2023. The Woolf Institute is recognised nationally and internationally. Its Board of Trustees includes several high-profile public figures, and its Patron is HRH The Princess Royal.

Summary of the Role

The current Middle East crisis has affected relationships between Jewish and Muslim communities in Britain to an unprecedented degree. The atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists has shaken the Jewish community to the core, while Muslim communities feel very affected by the plight of the Palestinian people in Gaza. With tragic events continuing to unfold in Israel and Palestine, our newspapers and social media feeds are full of content that pull communities apart. British Jews are increasingly worried about their safety, while Muslims report frustration with the response by the British state to what they perceive as unjust reprisals against Muslims in Palestine.

As a consequence, many organisations and individuals have reported that regular interfaith gatherings between Jews and Muslims and previously well-attended inter-communal events are disrupted. Where there was previously open dialogue, interest in the Other and regular meetings, individuals now refuse to engage, and if people do meet, conversations quickly turn into heated arguments. Even sports events are disrupted by refusal to play with members of the respective other religious group.

To investigate the extent of this reported behaviour, we are proposing a study of the impact of the present situation on Muslim-Jewish relations in the UK, with the aim of identifying and highlighting case studies of continued or disrupted engagement and to provide organisations with guidance and productive ways forward in times of breakdown of relations.

The Research Fellow works with other Woolf staff members to develop suitable research methodologies and to identify and select individuals and initiatives to be interviewed in order to explore present forms of engagement in Muslim-Jewish dialogue. A second part of the job’s responsibilities combines the two different elements of the Institute’s work, research and engagement, and will involve supporting a number of events aimed at creating encounter.
**Working Pattern**

Monday to Friday, 37 hours on site at the Woolf Institute

**Line Management**

Reporting to Director of Education and Engagement

**Key Responsibilities**

**Main Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Carry out research and analyses for the ‘How to continue talking’ project with fieldwork in the UK.
2. Delivery of a handbook and toolkit with guidance of how to best continue Muslim-Jewish communal relations in Britain when communities are put under significant pressure.
3. Completion of one scholarly publication arising from the project.
4. Organisation of events relating to the Institute’s *Encounter* programme.
5. Delivery of media and social media output, podcasts, blogs and vlogs in relation to the project.

**Other Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Ensuring the project supports the overall mission of the Institute.
2. Possible teaching in summer schools and online programmes for the Woolf Institute.
3. Representing the Woolf Institute at appropriate events.
4. Other occasional tasks as requested by the Director of Education and Engagement and Management Team.
Person specification

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education and experience</strong></td>
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<td>PhD in a relevant field</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>established record of successful completion of research projects</td>
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<td>established record of academic publishing</td>
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<td>established record of public engagement</td>
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<td>previous experience as a researcher</td>
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<td>previous experience in higher education</td>
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<td>previous experience in interfaith relations</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge and Skills</strong></td>
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<td>expertise in an area of study related to Jewish-Muslim relations</td>
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<td>excellent verbal and written communication</td>
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<td>proficiency with standard office technology and software</td>
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<td>excellent organisational skills and attention to detail</td>
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<td>excellent time-management skills, including long-term planning as well as prioritising ongoing and emerging tasks</td>
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<td>self-direction and problem-solving skills</td>
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<td>creative, strategic, and/or analytical skills with an ability to suggest improvements</td>
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<td>ability to work independently and as part of a team</td>
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How to apply

Please send a covering letter and CV to enquiries@woolf.cam.ac.uk by the closing date of 19 March. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed on 26-27 March.