

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Senior Research Fellow / Designer-in-Residence

Grade: This post has been evaluated at Grade 7

Responsible to: Professor Nick Peres, Centre of Blended Realities

Job purpose

This Senior Research Fellow /Designer-in-Residence position will work at the intersection of design, healthcare innovation, and participatory research and is a unique opportunity to pioneer how creative practice can transform mental health services. Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CFT) and Falmouth University are collaborating on an innovative participatory research project, exploring how embedded creative practice can build organisational capacity for innovation in NHS mental health settings.

Working across CFT's community mental health services and Falmouth University's research facilities, the post holder will facilitate co-design activities with NHS staff and service users whilst simultaneously conducting rigorous participatory research examining how creative capacity develops in healthcare environments. This dual role combines hands-on design practice with scholarly inquiry, contributing to both immediate service innovation and longer-term evidence generation about creative approaches to healthcare delivery.

The role aligns with CFT's Clinical Strategy 2025-2030 commitment to integrating creativity and delivering care in non-traditional spaces (such as outdoor settings and community spaces), and with Falmouth University's mission to deliver experimental, environmental and societal impact through the fusion of creativity and technology.

Health and Safety at Falmouth University

The University takes health and safety matters very seriously. All staff have a responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions and omissions. They also have a duty to comply with the University's arrangements for health and safety. Staff with responsibility for others must ensure the proper enactment of University policy within their areas in line with levels of responsibility set out in the University's Health and Safety Policy.

Location

Hybrid role working across Falmouth University and partner organisation sites (e.g. NHS or other public/industry partners). The role requires regular on-site presence with partners alongside time based at Falmouth University for research, analysis, and dissemination.

Main duties and responsibilities

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Undertake advanced research as appropriate to the field of study or specialism, delivering internationally leading research outputs through the activity outlined below:

Embedded Design Practice (Months 1-3: 3 days/week at CFT)

Co-design facilitation

- Work alongside CFT staff and service users to identify service design challenges, particularly relating to delivering care in non-traditional spaces and outdoor settings
- Facilitate co-design workshops and activities that introduce creative problem-solving approaches sensitively within existing clinical structures
- Build trust and relationships gradually with staff teams, recognising the time required for cultural change in NHS environments
- Support small-scale pilots of creative interventions with willing early adopters
- Provide skills transfer through collaborative making and doing rather than formal training

Design development and prototyping

- Create design concepts and prototypes responding to identified needs using appropriate methods (sketching, CAD, physical making, wireframing, etc)
- Utilise Falmouth University workshop facilities (3D printing, laser cutting, vacuum forming, CNC, machining) and collaboration with digital visualisation / digital experiences within the Centre for Blended Realities to develop prototypes
- Test and iterate designs with NHS staff and service users in real-world clinical settings
- Document design processes, decisions, and learning systematically
- Manage materials, resources, and any outsourced fabrication requirements

Participatory Research Activities (Throughout placement)

Research design and ethics

- Collaborate with CFT staff, service users, and Falmouth researchers in co-design workshops to define research questions and evaluation criteria
- Work with CFT research team to align evaluation approaches with service evaluation frameworks
- Ensure appropriate consent processes are in place for all research activities
- Maintain ethical practice throughout, particularly when working with vulnerable populations

Data collection and documentation

- Maintain detailed reflective practice records documenting design activities, challenges, and learning
- Participate in regular reflective practice sessions with the research team
- Support data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation of creative interventions
- Gather evidence of impact on staff capability, service innovation, and organisational creative capacity
- Document both successes and barriers honestly to generate authentic learning

Analysis and synthesis (2 days/week at Falmouth, Months 1-6)

- Engage in ongoing analysis of emerging findings and themes
- Participate in collaborative data analysis sessions with CFT staff, service users, and researchers
- Contribute to developing understanding of how creative approaches are adopted (or not) in NHS contexts
- Synthesise learning about enablers and barriers to creative capacity-building

PLANNING AND MANAGING RESOURCES, PEOPLE

- To act as the primary point of liaison between Falmouth University and the Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CFT).
- To provide academic leadership to collaborators within the project, ensuring effective collaboration between departments and organisations.
- To independently plan and manage resources including; being responsible for the delivery of the research activity, co-ordinating multi-disciplinary teams and contributing to the management of external assessments.

TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT

- To contribute to a supportive and productive environment for staff and other fellows and research students, assisting in the development of staff research to meet the requirements of the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

LIASON AND NETWORKING

Relationship building and embedding

- Attend relevant CFT meetings and clinical discussions as appropriate
- Undertake an enhanced DBS check.
- Build effective working relationships with ward staff, clinicians, allied health professionals, and service users
- Navigate NHS systems, protocols, and organisational culture with sensitivity
- Identify champions who may sustain creative approaches beyond the placement period

- Work within CFT policies including infection control, health & safety, and confidentiality requirements

RESEARCH IMPACT

Knowledge Mobilisation and Outputs (Months 5-6: Full-time)

Academic outputs

- Co-author peer-reviewed journal article examining creative capacity-building as participatory research methodology with CFT clinicians, service users, and Falmouth researchers
- Contribute to development of participatory research toolkit for embedding creative practitioners in healthcare organisations
- Prepare case study documentation capturing both achievements and challenges
- Support development of policy briefs and practice guidance

Dissemination

- Co-present findings at participatory dissemination event showcasing creative interventions and research learning
- Present work at relevant conferences and networking events
- Contribute to accessible materials for diverse audiences (practitioners, policymakers, academics)
- Support planning for potential project continuation or scaling

Materials and resources development

- Create practical guidance, templates, and frameworks based on project learning
- Develop visual documentation and accessible materials communicating project findings

General duties and responsibilities

- To work within and actively support the equality and diversity policies and practices of Falmouth University.
- To notify a more senior member of staff of any errors or concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- To participate in the annual Performance Development Review process.
- To ensure that the university's cross-cutting themes of partnership, equality and diversity and sustainability inform all activity related to the role.
- To ensure communications systems and practices support effective management arrangements and promote good relations with staff and students.

- To work within a framework of effective governance, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations, legislation/policies and procedures.
- To be responsible for your own continuing self-development.
- To undertake other duties not specifically stated above, which from time to time are necessary for the effective performance of the University's business without altering the nature or level of responsibility involved.

Health & safety requirements

In relation to health and safety, you are responsible for ensuring that:

- You comply with safe systems of work in operation within your work area.
- You work co-operatively with other staff who have responsibility for health and safety requirements.
- You report any health and safety concerns to your manager or other responsible member of staff as soon as these are identified.
- You attend training as appropriate to your role (see the relevant health and safety training grid for requirements).
- You may be required to undertake duties as a first aider (for which a separate allowance is paid).

In relation to health and safety, you are responsible on direction and on behalf of the relevant management board lead for supporting the discharge of their duty as a member of the senior management team:

- To monitor effective safety implementation.
- To identify health and safety needs and requirements.
- For the care of all those affected by your acts or omissions.

You have a responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy environment for staff, students and other users of the areas of the University under your span of control, by ensuring that:

- Falmouth's safety policies and requirements are implemented and that resources are available to the staff under your control to ensure statutory compliance.
- Risk assessments are carried out for relevant activities (e.g. fieldwork, performances, exhibitions etc.) undertaken by staff and students within your area, and that any resulting actions are taken and that safe working practices are followed.

- The statutory compliance of those whose work you oversee.
- Health and safety policies and practices are implemented for areas under your control.
- Correct and timely communication of safety issues, both to your superiors and the staff that work for you, as relevant to your areas of responsibility is carried out.
- You work within a framework of effective governance, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations, legislation, policies and procedures.
- Staff within your area fulfill their responsibilities under the University's Health and Safety Policy, including any responsibilities as members of University Committees as appropriate.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Attributes	Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
Education and qualifications	<p>A PhD or equivalent professional experience and achievement at a comparable level</p> <p>Be a nationally/internationally recognised authority in the subject area</p>	<p>Industry experience in design practice</p>
Experience and knowledge	<p>A programme of personal research and practice in the area of design</p> <p>A strong academic track record and to have published in significant journals</p> <p>A proven track record in delivering research projects to deadline and quality</p> <p>Demonstrable Interest or experience of healthcare / public sector innovation</p> <p>Experience of participatory research methods</p> <p>Possess in-depth understanding of own specialism to enable the development of new knowledge and understanding within the subject area</p>	<p>Experience of acting as a project lead</p> <p>Experience of teaching at undergraduate level</p> <p>Experience of post graduate research supervision or post graduate teaching</p> <p>Experience of managing research budgets and resources</p>
Skills and personal requirements	<p>Proven effective interpersonal and communication skills including written, IT and oral presentation skills</p> <p>Proven ability to build relationships with a wide range of stakeholders for future activity</p> <p>Ability to successfully navigate complex institutional settings</p>	

	<p>Demonstrate proven ability to effectively lead teams</p> <p>Ability to work on several projects concurrently</p> <p>Demonstrate strong evidence of an ability to manage successful research projects and budgets</p> <p>Ability to stimulate and motivate students and staff</p> <p>Ability to critically appraise research evidence</p> <p>Ability to develop independent new research</p> <p>Willingness to contribute to the teaching of the departments as required</p> <p>Good attention to detail and highly organised</p> <p>A highly motivated, committed and effective leader, able to work flexibly, creatively, quickly and accurately when working to tight deadlines.</p> <p>Ability to balance the pressures of research, administrative demands and competing deadlines</p>	
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