JOB TITLE: RESEARCH ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE FOR THE CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE FINANCE (FIXED TERM)

REPORTS TO: CCAF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Background

Cambridge Judge Business School is a world-class business school at the heart of the University of Cambridge. The School offers predominantly postgraduate degrees in management, finance, technology policy, and its full-time MBA programme is highly ranked in the world by the Financial Times.

Established in January 2015, the Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance (CCAF) is an international and interdisciplinary research centre dedicated to the study of alternative finance, focusing on new financial instruments and channels of finance emerging outside of the traditional financial system in the areas of alternative financing channels, alternative approaches to credit analytics and alternative payment systems. Examples of alternative channels are online 'marketplaces' such as equity- and reward-based crowdfunding, peer-to-peer consumer/business lending, and third-party payment platforms. Alternative instruments include SME mini-bonds, private placements and other 'shadow banking' mechanisms, social impact bonds and community shares used by non-profit enterprises, and alternative currencies such as Bitcoin. Three key research areas for the Centre are: online alternative financing channels, alternative credit risk modelling and alternative payment systems.

The role

As a quantitative researcher/data scientist, you will be joining a collaborative and fast-growing research team at one of the newest academic research centres within the School. This position is ideal for a motivated, self-driven and innovative researcher with a passion for academic research and expertise in applied statistics, data mining, analysis, visualisation and modelling.

Working closely with CCAF’s Director of Research and other team members, this role requires you to clean, aggregate and analyse large datasets from complex and multiple sources to inform the CCAF’s cutting-edge research in the fast-evolving field of alternative finance. It involves handling large volumes of transaction level data from online and offline alternative finance channels, utilising your interpretive and problem solving skills to process and efficiently derive data-driven insights and seeking patterns in large, noisy data sets using statistical techniques such as time series and regression analysis.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Research

• Developing research objectives and proposals for own or joint research.
• Contributing to the Centre’s alternative finance data collection process and working closely with alternative finance platforms, credit analytical and third-party payment providers in gathering and stewarding large datasets for academic and policy research.
• Mining, analysing and visualising data in multiple forms (e.g. granular-level transactional data, survey data, text and multi-media data) and presenting results in an accessible format.
• Building and validating a variety of statistical models, providing analytic support, and developing new criteria and/or strategies.
• Compiling appropriate data, applying multidimensional data aggregation across alternative financing models and various geographies.
• Summarising relevant academic research from online published and working paper databases.
• Writing up research work for presentation and publication.
• Continuously updating knowledge and understanding in field or specialism.
• Translating knowledge of advances in the subject areas into research activity.
• Managing own research and administrative activities.
• Assisting in the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies e.g. for funding or contractual purposes.

Teaching and learning support
• May assist in the supervision of student projects.
• May assist in the development of student research skills.
• May plan and deliver seminars relating to research area.

Liaison and networking
• Liaising with colleagues and students.
• Building internal and external contacts and participate.

Planning and organising
• Planning the use of research resources, laboratories and workshops as appropriate.
• Planning and manage own research activity in collaboration with others.
• Contributing to planning of joint research projects led by principle investigator.

The person

The ideal candidate should have the following qualities, skills and attributes. You are asked to provide a CV and covering letter demonstrating how your own experience meets these requirements.

• A PhD in a highly quantitative subject (mathematics, statistics, econometrics, physics, quantitative social science, quantitative finance, computer science, physics or engineering).
• Research experience with sufficient knowledge in the discipline and of research methods and techniques.
• Driven and committed, demonstrating initiative and self-motivation.
• Good time management and planning skills with a commitment to delivery.
• Programming/scripting languages (e.g. Java, C/C++, Python, Perl, PHP).
• Statistics analysis, data/text mining (e.g. Stata, SPSS, R, NLTK, Stanford NLP, Mallet, WEKA, Oracle Data Miner, R Rattle, IBM modeler etc.).
• Data visualisation and management (e.g. Spotfire, Tableau, SQL Server, MySQL, ArcGIS, GeoDa etc.).
• Social network analysis (e.g. Pajek, UCINET, PNet).
• Experience in data crawling and data scraping.
• Statistical natural language processing.
• Computational linguistics and statistical computing knowledge.
• Large and complex dataset analysis.
Benefits

The salary will be in the range £25,728-£38,833 per annum. There will be a three month probationary period. This is a fixed term appointment for nine months in the first instance. Holiday entitlement is 33 days per annum plus eight days of public holidays (full time equivalent).

Successful candidates at Research Associate level who have not been awarded their PhD by the appointment date will be under-appointed as a Research Assistant (Grade 5) employed on a salary of £28,936 per annum. Upon award of the PhD the individual will be promoted to Research Associate (Grade 7).

The full incremental salary range for the position is advertised in order to demonstrate the progression for the Grade. In the majority of cases appointments will be made at the Grade minimum; only in very specific exceptional circumstances can a higher salary be offered.

The University of Cambridge comprises more than 150 departments, faculties, schools and other institutions, plus a central administration and 31 independent and autonomous Colleges. It is one of the world’s oldest and most successful Universities, with an outstanding reputation for academic achievement and research.

With excellent benefits, extensive learning opportunities and a stimulating and attractive environment, the University of Cambridge is a great place to work. Our employees are eligible for a wide range of competitive benefits and services. We give them access to numerous discounts on shopping, health care, financial services and public transport. We also offer final salary pensions and tax-efficient bicycle and car lease schemes.

We have two nurseries and a holiday play scheme to help support those with childcare responsibilities and we offer various types of family-friendly leave to aid employees’ work-life balance. In addition we operate a number of initiatives to promote career development, health and well-being.

Further details can be found at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/benefits. There is also a range of information about living and working in Cambridge at www.jobs.cam.ac.uk.

Application arrangements

To submit an application for this vacancy, please search for this position on the University’s Job Opportunities website at www.jobs.cam.ac.uk and click on the "Apply online" button at the bottom of the relevant job description. This will route you to the University’s Web Recruitment System, where you will need to register an account (if you have not already) and log in before completing the online application form.

The closing date for applications is 10 December 2017.

Applicants are required to provide details of two referees. These will not be contacted unless the applicant is shortlisted.

Equality of opportunity at the University

The University of Cambridge is committed to a proactive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture and values diversity. Entry into employment with the University is determined by personal merit and by the application of criteria required for the post. No applicant for an appointment or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of sex (including gender reassignment), marital or parental status, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability (including HIV status), sexual orientation, religion, age or socio-economic factors.

The University has various diversity networks which help it to progress equality; these include the Women’s Staff Network, the Disabled Staff Network, the Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Network and the
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Staff Network. In addition, the University was ranked in the top 100 employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) staff in Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index 2011.

Information if you have a disability

The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities and is committed to ensuring fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. Adjustments will be made, wherever reasonable to do so, to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability and, if successful, to assist them during their employment.

We encourage applicants to declare their disabilities in order that any special arrangements, particularly for the selection process, can be accommodated. Applicants or employees can declare a disability at any time.

Applicants wishing to discuss any special arrangements connected with their disability can, at any point in the recruitment process, contact, a member of Cambridge Judge Business School's HR team who are responsible for recruitment to this position, on (01223) 339637 or by email on hr@jbs.cam.ac.uk. Alternatively, applicants can contact the HR Business Manager responsible for the department they are applying to via hrenquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk.