



Job title	Fixed Term Research Assistant in the Ng'ipalajem Project (Fixed term)
Grade	Research Assistant, Grade 5
Salary range	£27,116 - £31,406 per annum
Staff Group	Research
Department / Institution	Department of Archaeology

## Role Summary

Applications are invited for a 24-month, full-time, Research Assistant.

*Starting Date:* between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

## Background and Context

Applications are invited for a Research Assistant position on the NG'IPALAJEM project, funded by the ERC, to work with Prof Marta Mirazon Lahr within the framework of a collaborative research project to investigate the evolution of modern humans in Africa. The project aims at collecting new palaeontological, archaeological and geological data in the field and in museums to tackle questions about human evolution in Africa in the last million years. Further information about the project and its collaborative partners can be found at: <https://www.palaeotrails.org/current-projects/ngipalajem/>.

The successful candidate will join the NG'IPALAJEM team, assisting the PI in the running of the project and implementation of the project's research and communication strategy. In particular, we seek someone who will be able to coordinate between the NG'IPALAJEM Cambridge team and collaborating researchers/institutions to ensure the successful running of the different research strands of the project, as well as to contribute to data collection, the maintenance of the project's digital output and documentation, and develop the project's social media strategy.

The position advertised is initially for 24 months, with the possibility to renew the contract for the duration of the project. The successful applicant will be based at the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, and be prepared to spend time in Kenya assisting in the collection of data or during the project's fieldwork.

## Job description

This is a key position in the project. While unpredicted duties and responsibilities may arise and be needed as the project develops, the position involves responsibilities towards for main aspects of the NG'IPALAJEM project – (1) Management, (2) Administration, (3) Research, and (4) Communication. The key duties within each of these are outlined below:

### 1. Project Management:

- To assist the PI, Prof. Marta Mirazón Lahr, in the running of the project and implementation of the project's strategy;
- To manage timelines and deliverables across NG'IPALAJEM'S research lines;
- To provide quarterly reports on the progress of the different research streams within NG'IPALAJEM.

### 2. Project Administration:

- To be responsible for communication with the institutions which fund and partner the project;

- To prepare and maintain timesheets of the project's personnel;
- To collate/submit receipts to the University's Finance Office, and monitor and keep a record of the project's expenditure;
- To assist in the preparation of applications for the necessary research permits and licences, including country-specific import-export permits;
- To assist in the organisation and planning of fieldwork and all project travel;
- To draft reports to funding and other bodies.

### **3. Project Research:**

- To work, under the PI's supervision, towards the development and maintenance of the project's database;
- To work with the PI on the development of an open, online platform, for the project's data;
- To keep a record of all geological, palaeontological and other samples collected during the life of the project, and to prepare these to be sent for analysis when appropriate;
- To assist the PI and others in the collection of palaeoanthropological data relevant to meet the project's objectives.
- To assist and in the completion of the project's scientific and outreach outputs.

### **4. Project Communication:**

- To assist the PI in the development and implementation of the project's social media strategy;
- To assist the PI in the maintenance and update of the project's website;
- To assist the PI and other project members in the development and delivery of outreach activities.

## **Qualifications and Experience**

Applicants should have a degree in archaeology, palaeontology, biology or a related field, excellent organisation skills, attention to detail, ability to work on their own initiative and as part of a team, excellent interpersonal skills, familiarity with field science in human evolution, computer skills (spreadsheets and databases), and excellent written and oral communication skills.

The position offers an opportunity to develop key skills in project management, digital data management, science communication (both to public and academic audiences), and research skills in human evolutionary biology and palaeontology, geology and/or archaeological sciences, including the writing of academic papers for publication. The successful candidate will join a team of researchers who are passionate about the subject, and are committed to open access and open data in science and improving inclusion and diversity in research. The role is suited to an individual interested in pursuing a career in research related to human evolution, or in research project management, or in science communication.

## **Selection criteria**

### **Essential**

- BA or BSc degree in archaeology, palaeontology, biology, or a related field;
- Ability to synthesise key information from a broad range of published and unpublished sources;
- Evidence of experience in research and/or research project(s);
- Evidence of excellent writing skills in English;
- Evidence of excellent computer skills and familiarity with standard office software;
- Excellent organization skills in managing deliverables, researching and identifying priorities, drafting, reviewing and critiquing project reports and documents;
- Evidence of a strong sense of order, ability to work systematically alone and with others;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Evidence of ability to complete tasks in accordance with a realistic timetable;
- Willingness to spend periods of time abroad if needed.

### **Desirable**

- Interest in human evolution, and African palaeontology and prehistory;
- Interest and experience in relational database construction/maintenance;

- Interest and experience with website design and maintenance;
- Interest and experience in 3D morphometric capture and analytical techniques;
- excavation or other relevant fieldwork experience;
- knowledge of other languages, particularly Swahili;
- a valid driving licence.

## Work Environment

The Department of Archaeology at Cambridge comprises approximately 35 permanent academic staff, 50-60 postdoctoral researchers, and nine major laboratories, as well as the world-renowned McDonald Institute, Duckworth Laboratory and Cambridge Archaeological Unit. The McDonald Institute hosts an exceptionally dynamic community of internationally leading researchers, resident and visiting. Laboratories, library and other resources are world-class in quality and extent. The Department currently teaches approximately 70 undergraduates across several Triposes (Archaeology, Human Social and Political Sciences, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences, and Natural Sciences), and some 150 graduate students (reading for Masters and doctoral degrees). The resultant community is one of the most vibrant and interdisciplinary of its kind in the UK and internationally, and Cambridge is consistently ranked as among the best in the world across the breadth of the Department's constituent fields.

## Terms and Conditions

<b>Location</b>	Henry Wellcome Building, Fitzwilliam St, Department of Archaeology
<b>Working pattern</b>	Full time, 37 hours per week
<b>Hours of work</b>	Exact hours of work should be agreed with the project's PI
<b>Length of appointment</b>	This is a fixed term appointment for 24 months
<b>Probation period</b>	6 months
<b>Annual leave</b>	Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 41 days inclusive of public holidays. This entitlement is pro rata in the holiday year of commencement of employment and in the year your employment terminates.
<b>Pension eligibility</b>	Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). Pension scheme details, including information about the legal requirement for the University to automatically enrol its eligible jobholders into a qualifying workplace pension scheme from 1 March 2013, is available at: <a href="http://www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/">http://www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/</a> .
<b>Retirement age</b>	The University does not operate a retirement age for research staff.

## Screening Check Requirements

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK before you can start working for us. If you do not have the right to work in the UK already, any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon you gaining it. If you need further information, you may find the Right to Work page within the 'Applying for a job' section of the University's Job Opportunities pages helpful (please see <http://www.jobs.cam.ac.uk/right/have/>)

## Application Process

To submit an application for this vacancy, please click on the link in the 'Apply online' section of the advert published on the University's Job Opportunities pages. 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.

Applicants should submit a cover letter, of not more than 500 words, detailing how the relevance and appropriateness of their training, research background and experience meet the advertised specifications, how they meet the qualifications and their motivation for applying for the position. This should be accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- A Curriculum Vitae organised in the form of: educational background and degrees, other relevant formative experiences, previous employment (if appropriate), publications (if appropriate), grant track record (if appropriate), previous relevant research experience
- The names and contact details of **two** professional referees who can comment on the applicant's academic experience and research outputs.

The closing date for applications is 30 November 2021.

Selected candidates will be contacted by Prof Marta Mirazón Lahr ([mbml1@cam.ac.uk](mailto:mbml1@cam.ac.uk)) in early December 2021 and asked to submit :

1. A proposal, of not more than 1000 words, for the structure of the project's relational database taking into account its different disciplinary strands;
2. A proposal, of not more than 700 words, for the project's social media strategy.

and be invited to a first online interview to discuss aspects of the submitted documents. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a final interview soon thereafter. The position's start date is flexible from as early as 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and no later than 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Please address all enquiries about this vacancy to Prof. Marta Mirazón Lahr at [mbml1@cam.ac.uk](mailto:mbml1@cam.ac.uk).

## General Information

### The University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and most successful universities. We are a renowned centre for research, education, and scholarship that makes a significant contribution to society. The University is consistently ranked amongst the top universities in the world. Our affiliates have won more Nobel Prizes than any other University.

Our sustained pursuit of academic excellence is built on a long history of first-class teaching and research within a distinctive collegiate system. For eight centuries our ideas and innovations have shaped the world. Our principal goal is to remain one of the world's leading universities in an increasingly competitive global higher education sector. Today the University of Cambridge is at the centre of a cluster of over 4,300 businesses employing 58,000 people.

Our capital investment projects include the West Cambridge site, the North West Cambridge development and the growth of the Biomedical Campus in the south of the city. The North West Cambridge development includes the opening of a primary school – the first in the UK to be managed by a University. So we are deeply embedded in, and committed to serving, our local community. These are all conspicuous signs of a University that is not only adapting to new needs, but also anticipating the future.

### About Us

The University is one of the world's leading academic centres. It comprises 150 faculties and departments, together with a central administration and other institutions. Our institutions, museums and collections are a world-class resource for researchers, students and members of the public representing one of the country's highest concentrations of internationally important collections. The University has an annual income of £2 billion. Research income, won competitively from the UK Research Councils, the European Union (EU), major charities and industry, exceeds £500 million per annum and continues to grow.

The Colleges and the University remain committed to admitting the best students regardless of their background and to investing considerable resources both in widening access and financial support. The 31 Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities which appoint their own staff. Many academic staff are invited to join a College as a Teaching Fellow, which provides a further social and intellectual

dimension. The Colleges admit students, provide student accommodation and deliver small group teaching. The University awards degrees and its faculties and departments provide lectures and seminars for students and determine the syllabi for teaching and conducting research.

Our instinct for seeking out excellence and setting up enduring and mutually beneficial collaborations has led us to establish strategic partnerships across the globe. Whether it is the successful Cambridge-Africa Programme involving universities in Ghana, Uganda and elsewhere on the African continent; or the close association with the government of India to pursue new research in crop science; or the creation, with Germany's Max Planck Institutes, of a Cambridge-based centre for the study of ethics, human economy and social change – international partnerships are now an inextricable part of the University's make-up

## The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research

The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research is an independently constituted and endowed, world-renowned centre for advanced research in archaeology, based within the University of Cambridge's Department of Archaeology. Located on the Downing Site in Cambridge's historical city centre, the McDonald Institute serves as an interdisciplinary hub to further research by Cambridge archaeologists and their collaborators into all aspects of the human past. It does so by providing a shared intellectual home, offering Cambridge archaeologists a programme of seminars, workshops, conferences, publications and research grants. It is also the institutional base for a large and vibrant community of between 20 and 30+ funded postdoctoral early career researchers — some working independently others within larger projects. The building provides laboratory space for a wide range of archaeological research that crosses continents, periods and approaches in its exploration of the human past. The Institute supports archaeological fieldwork, archaeological science, material culture studies, and archaeological theory in an interdisciplinary framework. It produces the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* and publishes the McDonald Institute Monographs and Conversations series. The Institute's programmes are supported by a dedicated team of administrative and research-facilitating professional staff.

## The Department of Archaeology

The Department of Archaeology has approximately 35 academic staff with specialist interests in Archaeology, Biological Anthropology, Assyriology and Egyptology. The Department, along with Social Anthropology, Sociology, and Politics and International Relations, forms the Faculty of Human, Social and Political Science. In addition to a large number of post-doctoral research associates and PhD students, there are a number of Junior Research Fellows working in Cambridge, attached to colleges, who contribute to the life of the Department. The Department of Archaeology includes the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, the Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies and the Duckworth Laboratory.

Research and teaching in Biological Anthropology, the disciplinary context of this position, covers all the main fields of the discipline. Major fields of research currently active include human evolutionary studies, behavioural ecology, primatology, evolutionary genetics, cultural evolution and population dynamics, and human health and disease, past and present. The research and teaching in Biological Anthropology is closely aligned with that of the broader Department of Archaeology, particularly in Archaeological Science, Bioarchaeology and Palaeolithic studies.

There is a strong and large graduate body in the Department. The MPhil cohort is between 35-40, while the PhD body comprises more than 90 research students. MPhil and PhD students are admitted by the Department which arranges all their teaching and supervision. Lectures are open, so that students can take advantage of courses offered at several levels. There are three Biological Anthropology-based masters programmes – Human Evolutionary Studies and Biological Anthropological Science (the last is entirely by research thesis).

## Working at the University

Working at Cambridge you will join a diverse, talented and innovative community, with more than 18,000 students and over 16,000 staff from all walks of life and corners of the world. The University continually explores strategies to attract and retain the best people. It is committed to supporting its staff to achieve

their best. We are a fair, diverse and inclusive society and we believe our staff are our greatest asset. There is strong commitment to developing institutional leadership and supporting and encouraging staff development at all levels.

We offer a variety of roles including academic, research, professional, managerial and support roles. We also offer extensive benefits and excellent learning opportunities within a stimulating working environment. The University's estate is undergoing the most significant transformation in its history. Cambridge has been able to create a new science and technology campus to the west of the city centre, and is now expanding further to the north west of Cambridge including investing in affordable homes for University key workers and community facilities. Even with our continued development, the University remains within walking or cycling distance across the campus. The University is a major partner on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and we continue to redevelop our historic city centre sites demonstrating our determination to ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.

## Equality and Diversity

The University has built its excellence on the diversity of its staff and student community. We aim to be a leader in fostering equality and inclusion, and in promoting respect and a sense of belonging for all. We encourage applications from all sections of society. All appointments are made on the basis of merit. We have an Equal Opportunities Policy, along with a range of diversity networks for women, black and minority ethnic and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff. More details are available here:

<http://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

The University has a bronze Race Equality Charter aware, with framework for improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. Furthermore, the University's Athena SWAN award recognises and celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women.

## Living in Cambridge

From beautiful University and College buildings, museums and art galleries, quaint gardens and punts on the River Cam, to a vibrant restaurant and café scene, our employees are surrounded by the wonderful features of this unique city.

You can find a wide-range of high street shops and 3 shopping centres, with independent alternatives at the historic market and nestled within the passageways in the city centre. You will find a cinema, bowling alley, a nightclub and various live performances At the Cambridge Leisure Park, with further entertainment options at the Corn Exchange, Arts Theatre and the ADC Theatre. Further information can be found on the [Visit Cambridge](#) website.

If you prefer the faster pace of life, London is a 45 minute train journey away. For those travelling from overseas, Stansted Airport is just 45 minutes away and Heathrow Airport under 2 hours away. The University is a short distance from a host of other attractions such as Ely Cathedral, Newmarket Races and various wildlife parks and stately homes. Cambridge is also within easy reach of the beautiful Broads and coastlines of Norfolk and Suffolk.

### **Relocation Support**

The University recognises the importance of helping individuals to move and settle into a new area. We provide support and guidance to those relocating internationally or domestically to take up a post at the University of Cambridge, liaising with other University offices and selected partners to ensure comprehensive relocation support is available. This includes: accommodation, childcare, schools, banking, immigration and transport. If you would like further information, please visit <https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/>. The Shared Equity Scheme and the Reimbursement of Relocation Expenses Scheme provide financial assistance to qualifying new members of staff with the costs of relocating to Cambridge.

### **Accommodation Service**

The University Accommodation Service helps staff, students and visiting scholars who are affiliated to the University in their search for suitable accommodation in Cambridge. The dedicated accommodation team can provide access to a wide range of University-owned

furnished and unfurnished properties, and has a database of private sector accommodation available for short and long-term lets. For further information and to register with this free service please visit <https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/>

## What Cambridge can offer

We offer a comprehensive reward package to attract, motivate and retain high performing staff at all levels and in all areas of work.

The University offers a wide range of competitive benefits, from family leave entitlement, to shopping and travel discount schemes. Our generous annual leave package contributes to the positive wellbeing of our University employees. Sabbatical leave enables academics to focus on research and scholarship, whilst still maintaining their full salary. The University also has a [career break scheme for academic and academic-related staff](#), with additional flexible working policies for all other staff.

### Pay and benefits

The University salary structure includes automatic service-related pay progression in many of its grades and an annual cost of living increase. In addition to this, employees are rewarded for outstanding contribution through a number of regular pay progression schemes. The University offers attractive pensions schemes for employees, with an additional benefit of a salary exchange arrangement providing tax and national insurance savings. Payroll giving is also a simple, tax-efficient way for employees to make monthly donations to charity.

### CAMBens employee benefits

We offer a CAMBens scheme for University employees, providing access to online and in-store shopping discounts and cashback. With more than 2,000 participating retailers, employees can save money on a wide range of household expenses, from groceries and clothes, to holidays and insurance and much more. A range of local discounts are also available, helping employees to save money whilst also supporting local Cambridge businesses and a CAMBens Cycle to Work salary sacrifice scheme is also available, which enables employees to save money on transport costs. A 10% discount rate on the [purchase of train season tickets, bulk buy tickets](#) and an interest free travel to work loan are also available for staff of the University.

### Family-friendly policies

The University recognises the importance of supporting its staff. We have a range of family-friendly policies to aid employees' work-life balance including a generous maternity, adoption and shared parental leave entitlement of 18 weeks full pay and emergency family care support via My Family Care. Other family-friendly support includes: Our highly regarded workplace nurseries, a childcare salary exchange scheme and a high-quality holiday Playscheme may be available to help support University employees with caring responsibilities (subject to demand and qualifying criteria). Further childcare information can be found here:

<https://www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

The [Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group](#) is an organisation within the University run by volunteers whose aim is to help newly arrived wives, husbands, partners and families of Visiting Scholars and members of the University to settle in Cambridge and give them an opportunity to meet local people. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs supports the postdoctoral community within Cambridge. Further details are available here: <https://www.opda.cam.ac.uk/>

### Your wellbeing

The University's Sport Centre, Counselling Services and Occupational Health are just some of the support services available to University employees to promote their physical and mental wellbeing. There are many societies in Cambridge catering for almost every taste and interest. Whether you want to take part in a sport, participate in music or drama, pursue a hobby, or join a political group, you will almost certainly find that a society exists for this purpose. The University also hosts the [Cambridge Science Festival](#) and [Cambridge Festival of Ideas](#), as well as [Open Cambridge](#) weekend, which together attract over 50,000 visitors per year. The festivals are a great opportunity to get your first taste of public engagement, through volunteering, supporting hands-on activities or proposing a talk.

### Development opportunities

We support new employees to settle in through various activities. The encouragement of career development for all staff is one of the University's values and we put this into practice through various services and initiatives. Our Personal and Professional Development Department provides development opportunities and courses for all University employees. These include face-to-face sessions, online learning modules and webinars. Employees may also apply

for financial support to undertake training that will lead to a qualification. We offer reduced staff fees for University of Cambridge graduate courses and the opportunity to attend lectures and seminars held by University departments and institutions. The CareerStart@Cam programme also supports employees in assistant staff roles who do not hold higher education qualifications to develop their skills, experience and qualifications.

## Information if you have a Disability

The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. We will make adjustments to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability wherever it is reasonable to do so and, if successful, to assist them during their employment. Information for disabled applicants is available at

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/disabled/>